

VOL. 5, ISSUE 1 | AUGUST 2025

IN THE LOOP

PhD in Social Welfare, The Graduate School and University Center,
City University of New York

@gcsocialwelfare



<https://socialwelfare.commonsgc.cuny.edu>



Summer's Final Chapter

We're in the home stretch of summer break, and I hope these remaining weeks are offering you moments of rest, reflection, and maybe even some writing momentum. Whether you're wrapping up research, preparing for teaching, or just savoring slower days, this time is a valuable bridge between academic years. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in person soon! In the meantime, here are a few key dates to keep in mind as we prepare for the Fall semester (all listed on the [GC Academic Calendar](#)):

- **August 18** – Registration begins for newly admitted students
- **August 18** – Last day to apply for a leave of absence
- **August 26** – First day of the semester
- **September 2** – Last day to apply for graduation in CUNYFirst for a September 2025 degree
- **September 15** – Last day for level changes
- **September 15** – Final day to deposit dissertation for a September 2025 degree

Wishing you a meaningful and restorative last month of break! - Barbra Teater, EO, PhD Program in Social Welfare

FEATURING:

- Message from Executive Officer
- Mina Rees Library Resources
- Student Achievements
- TLC Late Summer Institute
- Too Long, Didn't Listen
- The Virtual Town Square
- Student Spotlight

Mina Rees Library Resources

The GC's Mina Rees Library is full of resources to help with your PhD studies. Resources are available [online](#) and in-person at the GC. Librarians are available to answer your questions 24/7 through the [online chat](#), or you can schedule a free [one-on-one consultation](#). New to the GC, or just need a refresher? Attend one of the "Introduction to the library" online workshops. Register [here](#).

Student Achievements: June & July



Jamie Borgan presented at the Social Work and Sexuality conference held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in July of 2025. The research, Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Students in Practicum Education, is part of a collaborative project conducted with Jama Shelton, SJ Dodd and Gabriel San Emeterio.

Jamie was also awarded runner-up for the Grand Challenges for Social Work's Doctoral Fellow Awards for the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness.

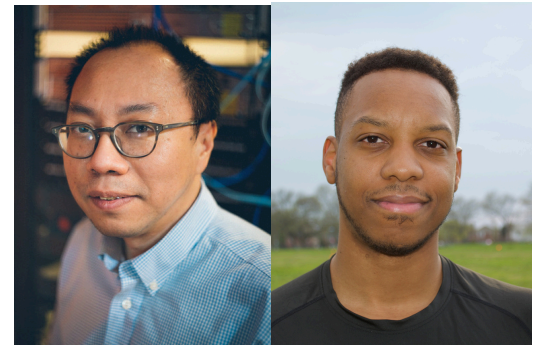
Michael Clements, Patrick Schelle, Shermira Busby, Shola Thompson, and Tracy Rho presented "Empathetic and Holistic Approaches to Self Care for Management" at New York Public Welfare Association 2025 Summer Conference

"Our group hosted a packed room of over 50 incredible public service professionals. In an industry where burnout is real and workloads are heavy, our session reminded folks that self-care is not selfish, its RESISTANCE!"



Acanthus Fairley's CSWE APM 2025 Conference presentation was a accepted: Hot Topic Presenter " Double jeopardy and disability: Analyzing age and race through a disability justice lens"; Acanthus also presented at JASA's 19th Annual Elder Abuse Conference "From silence to action: Using storytelling to combat elder abuse."

Weldon Lam and Rudy J. Innocent had their proposal "Rotating Funds and Networked Philanthropy: Two Models for Restructuring Philanthropic Funding Logic" accepted for presentation at the ARNOVA's 54th Annual Conference on November 20-22, 2025, in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Yaneth Lombana has a new publication:

Senreich, E., Saint-Louis, N., Lombana, Y., Quinones, J., & Chun, R. (2025). Latino College Students' Perspectives on Ethnic and Racial Identity Terminology Including Reactions to the Term "Latinx." Journal of Latinos and Education, 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2025.2532477>

Student Achievements: June & July



Ryan Savino has a new publication:

Bragin, M., Eckardt, E., Savino, R., Hajjar, R., Lewis, M. (2025). What does cash have to do with it? Learning from the experiences of child welfare-affected families receiving a time-limited unconditional cash transfer. *Child Welfare*, 103(1).
<https://community.cwla.org/store/ListProducts.aspx?catid=904756&ftr=103>

Shola Thompson had an abstract accepted for a round table at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 2025 Annual Meeting and Expo, taking place November 2–5, in Washington, D.C.

“Open Air Connections: Leveraging NYC Parks for Community Health Interventions through the Integration of Community Health Workers.” Community Health Workers in Public Health Education and Health Promotion (Session). Public Health Education and Health Promotion (Track). Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 10:30 a.m.



Ian G. Williams was part of a conference presentation:



Mandiberg, M. and Williams, I. (2025, July 9). The Economic and Social Development of Identity Communities of Highly Stigmatized Human Service Populations. *The Society for the Advancement of Socioeconomics (SASE) 2025 Annual Conference*. Montreal, QC.

Ian also had a proposal accepted for a conference this fall:

Muhlbauer, Z, Williams, I., Zhang, H., Pan, S., and Najm, H. [Accepted]. Read-Write-Prompt: A Focused-Inquiry Group Model for AI Literacy and its Discontents. *Open Education Conference 2025*. Denver, CO & Online.

Teaching and Learning Center Late Summer Institute

The Teaching and Learning Center will host a Late Summer Institute on August 22nd from 10am-2pm (in person, GC Room 3317) and on August 25th from 10am-4pm (individual consultations, online). If you are teaching a course this year, you may want to make use of this great resource. You can [sign up here](https://tlc.commonsgc.cuny.edu/).

The TLC will also offer several workshops and office hours sessions on teaching with the CUNY Academic Commons and Manifold, both of which are free and open sourced publishing platforms developed by CUNY faculty, students, and staff. Learn more at <https://tlc.commonsgc.cuny.edu/>



TEACHING & LEARNING CENTER
RW GRADUATE CENTER

Life Is Poetic: Lisa Ray on Disability, Voice, and Radical Hope

Sometime back in December 2023, I sat down in the YC Radio studio (CUNY York College) with Lisa Ray who is a radio engineer, poet, disability advocate, and just an all-around force. It was one of those conversations that sticks with you. Lisa shared her story with openness, humor, and power—covering everything from her days on Wall Street to living with multiple sclerosis and creating space for others along the way.



**Too
Long,
Didn't
Listen
(TLDL)**



Weldon Lam

Diagnosed after years of medical missteps and a major spinal surgery she never needed, Lisa, an African American woman, encourages everyone to trust their gut. Today, she's pursuing a graduate degree in Disability Studies at CUNY SPS, running her nonprofit Angels Hearts for Hope, and finds time to speak, write, and lift up others.

This episode explores:

Medical gaslighting, race, and the importance of self-advocacy
The spiritual and poetic dimensions of living with disability
Disability as a framework for rethinking aging, inclusion, and justice
Why storytelling (and laughter) is its own form of care

I've drawn on this conversation in two research studies:

A study on disability biography and the podcast medium, presented at The Graduate Center's Crip Craft and Kinships conference in Spring 2025.

A proposal submitted to SSWR 2026 (Washington, D.C.)—that frames podcasting as a form of social work praxis rooted in feminist, abolitionist, and disability justice traditions.

A follow-up podcast with Lisa might be forthcoming. Lisa's website: www.angelsheartsforhope.org. If you have time please check out the podcast at www.positiveconvo.com.



The Virtual Town Square



Ian Williams
**Program Social
Media Fellow**

Academic life follows a strange rhythm. We have the privilege of getting summers “off,” and also, the weight of all that we never seem to have time to finish during the school year awaits. Chief among these is writing. The Internet is filled with relatable memes about this never-ending catch-up.

Writing, as a process and a product, is much of what we do as scholars. As a friend recently put it during a co-writing session, we must materialize our thoughts into the minimum goal of “words on the page.” Though new technologies, from ergonomic keyboards to voice-to-text to generative AI, change these processes and experiences of writing, the core remains the same. We must sit with ourselves, our tools, and develop our craft. We must do the writing and make sense of our thinking.

For some of us, words flow easily into pages. For others, myself included, writing is a struggle - the simultaneously battle with our minds, the tools we use to write, the things we are trying to say, and the inner critics that can stop writing in its tracks. It can get a bit lonely, staring at a blank page.

At The Graduate Center, I've participated in and benefited from many writing support and accountability groups. I think it's time we had one for Social Welfare. This fall I plan to host a weekly “show up and write” session our space, on Thursday evenings. See the flyer for more details.

PH.D. PROGRAM

SOCIAL WELFARE

gc.cuny.edu/socialwelfare

 GRADUATE CENTER

Show up and write!

Fall 2025 drop-in co-writing

Thursdays 4:30-7:30pm

GC Room 6203.02 & online

If interested, email:

iwilliams1@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Student Spotlight: Jaclyn Reyes

Let's Have a Conversation with Jaclyn!

Why did you apply to the PhD in Social Welfare? During my master's program in Education, a class called Emancipatory Inquiry introduced me to the idea of being an activist-scholar. Inspired by thinkers like bell hooks and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and later interning at a humanitarian think tank, I saw how research could meaningfully impact communities.

Although I was never drawn to academia for its own sake, my professional and community work revealed gaps in knowledge that too often go overlooked. With a background in Art and Education, my work has long intersected with social welfare issues—social safety nets, migration, humanitarianism, and the politics of care. I chose this program for its openness to interdisciplinary praxis and its grounding in social welfare history and practice, offering a space to bridge research, organizing, and creative methods in service of community needs.



What has been your favorite course so far as a student? Why? Last semester, I took a class with Professor Jason Spicer called Organizing and Entrepreneurship for Social Change. I found it refreshing to be in a class that examined both grassroots and institutional dynamics in how groups organize for social change. My work background is quite varied—I've worked with international NGOs, nonprofits, and grassroots movements—and this course helped me put language to things I had observed over the years. It also helped me compartmentalize and better understand how these entities operate within larger systems. I'm grateful to Professor Spicer for creating a space that fostered such thoughtful and challenging discussions about organizing for change.

What leadership and/or employment positions do you hold within CUNY? I was a Graduate Fellow with the new Black, Race, and Ethnic Studies (BRES) program last year, and I'll be continuing as a Social Media Fellow this year. I'm excited to contribute to the effort of strengthening ethnic studies programs at CUNY and to be part of an academic space that models solidarity across different communities.

What is the focus of your research? My research examines how Filipino diasporic communities engage in humanitarian and development work connected to the Philippines, especially in response to disasters. I'm interested in the longer history of social welfare and humanitarian interventions in the country—from U.S. colonial policies to contemporary NGO networks—and how these histories shape today's diasporic activism, remittance economies, and ideas of home and responsibility.

What are you currently reading, watching, or listening to? I just recently finished reading Filipina Nobel Prize winner Maria Ressa's *How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for Our Future* and bell hooks's *Salvation: Black People and Love*. I'm usually reading a couple books at the same time, so I'm currently between *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov and *Authority* by Andrea Long Chu. The album I've had on repeat this summer is *For Melancholy Brunettes (& Sad Women)* by Japanese Breakfast. I also want to shout out art I enjoyed: both Edward Burtynsky and Sheida Soleimani shows at the International Center of Photography, painter Salman Toor's exhibition "Wish Maker," and the Alanis Obomsawin exhibition at MoMA PS1. For the Obomsawin show, I was particularly moved by the inclusion of children's artwork in the exhibition.

What's something we should ask you?: What's your answer? How does being an artist shape your scholarship? For me, art is not separate from research—it's another way of thinking, sensing, and imagining. My creative practice allows me to approach questions differently, often opening conversations that traditional research methods might not reach. Through visual storytelling, participatory projects, and public art, I can surface lived experiences, emotions, and forms of knowledge that aren't always legible in academic spaces. Art gives me tools to engage communities in co-creating meaning, rather than extracting information, and to imagine possibilities beyond current systems. I hope my work continues to build bridges between academic theory, community storytelling, and collective action, expanding what counts as knowledge and who gets to produce it.