

VOL. 5, ISSUE 2 | OCTOBER 2025

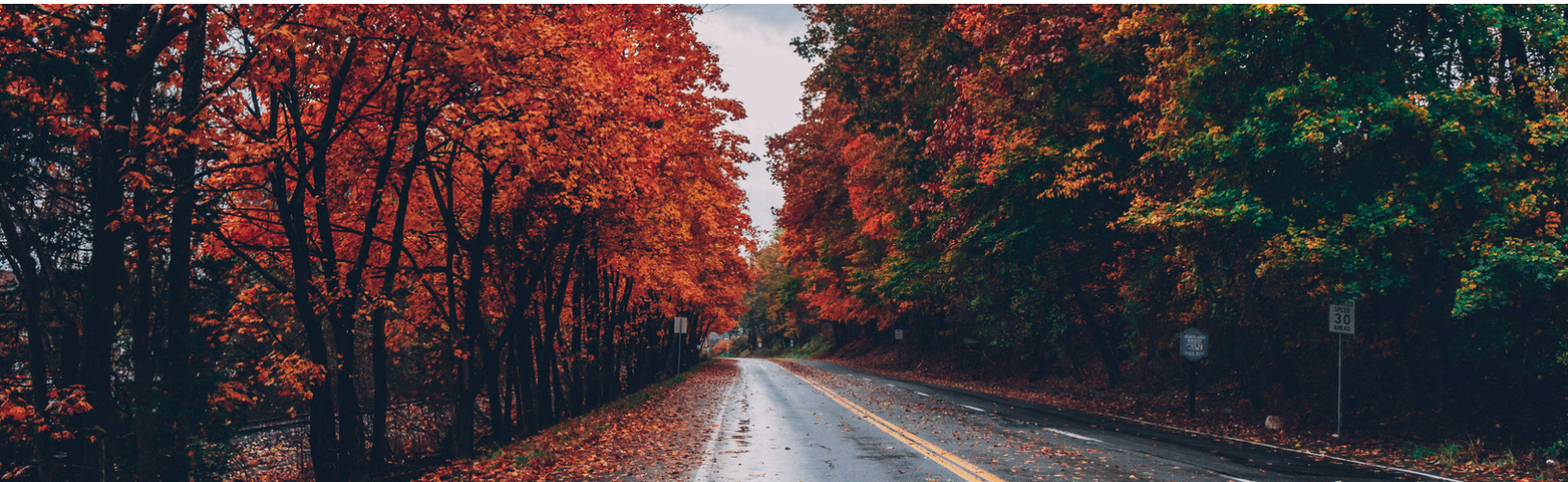
# IN THE LOOP

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

@gcsocialwelfare



<https://socialwelfare.commons.gc.cuny.edu>



## Where is this road taking you?

Welcome to the Fall 2025 semester! This is a time to reflect on where you are, what has led you to be here, and keeping an eye on where you want to go. The PhD journey is not a straight line. It's a path of discovery, challenge, and growth. Each course, program milestone, and conversation expands your perspective and strengthens your purpose. Wherever the road leads, you're shaping knowledge that impacts individuals, groups, communities, organizations, and society - the future of social welfare. Keep moving forward with curiosity and intention and be sure to find your team of support to journey with you or just cheer you on along the way. For the next cheer, join us this Wednesday, 10/8 from 2-4pm for Coffee Connection in Room 6203.02 - Barbra Teater, EO, Social Welfare



Fall 2025 new student orientation

## FEATURING

- Call for Student Funding: 10/17 deadline
- Student Achievements
- CSWE 2025 APM Student Presenters
- 10/15 Open House & 11/19 Info Session
- Community Corner
- The Virtual Town Square
- Digital Scholarship Resources
- Student Spotlight: Shawn Dougherty

## SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for our end of semester party on Wednesday, 12/17/25 at 6pm in Room 6203.02

## CALL FOR STUDENT FUNDING

We are pleased to announce a call for funding for all registered students. This can help support your presentation at an academic conference, or can be used to support you in your completion of data collection and/or data analysis (e.g., transcription costs; services of an editor) of your dissertation research. If you are interested in applying for funding, please complete the application form at:

[Call for Funding](#)

**Deadline is October 17, 2025**

# Student Achievements: August & September

**diana ballasteros** was the recipient of a 2024 National Science Foundation "Advancing Informal Science Learning" award for a 2 year co-design project on culturally responsive evaluation (completed year 1 of the Project as of August 31, 2025). As part of Year 1 of the project, diana presented at the Visitor Studies Association (VSA) Conference (virtual) in July & Association of Science & Technology Centers (ASTC) Conference (San Francisco) in August.

diana also has the following publications:

Ballesteros, D., Medellin, C, and Espacio: Familias y Comunidad (2025) ¿Dónde vive la ciencia en su comunidad?: How a community is using photovoice to reclaim local green spaces. *Social Sciences*, 14(1), 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14010013>

Letourneau, S. M., Aucapina, F., Ballesteros, D., & McMillan Culp, K. (2025). Building methodological capacity to consider visitors' intersectional identities in informal learning research. *Visitor Studies*, 28(1), 39–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10645578.2025.2483610>

Washington, Durrell M., Ribeiro Brown, B., Ballesteros, D, and Davis, R.L. (2025). Abolition and social work: Dismantling carceral logics to build systems of care. *Social Sciences*, 14(9), 535. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14090535>



**Nicole Bulanchuk** gave an oral presentation at the American Psychological Association on her nonprofit, Believe New York's first international project, a partnership with Good Health Community Programmes (GHCP; Kenya-based organization) to address the intersection of food insecurity, HIV/AIDS treatment, and women's mental health on women in rural Shinyalu, Kenya.

Citation: Bulanchuk, N., Yakhama, K., Fuentes-Miranda, A., & Kaiser, N. (2025, Aug 9). *Bridging Mental Health Gaps for Women: Lessons from NYC and Rural Kenya*. Oral presentation at the annual American Psychological Association meeting, Denver, CO.



**Shawn Dougherty** presented his paper "Nigerian Asuwada Theory, Mass Incarceration, and Restorative Justice Frameworks" at the annual meeting of the *Society for the Study of Social Problems* in Chicago in August.



**Julie Glickman** presented a workshop at the International Association of Maternal Action and Scholarship (IAMAS) conference in Boston this past June. Her workshop was rooted in Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. Boal devised multiple methods of social justice and political theater. Julie along with the workshop participants utilized Theatre of the Oppressed to explore issues related to pregnancy, maternity leave policies, motherhood, and bullying of mothers in the workplace.



**Kathleen McKenna** presented at the *Network for Social Work Management's Fourth Forward Thinking Summit*:

McKenna, K. (2025, September). "Building for Burnout: Trauma-Informed Strategies for Resilient Legislative Advocacy Campaigns". Network for Social Work Management Forward Thinking Summit, virtual.





# It's time to act.

Championing Disability Justice  
and Disability Joy in Social Work

CSWE 71<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE | DENVER, CO  
OCTOBER 23 - 26, 2025

Congratulations  
to our students  
presenting at CSWE's  
71<sup>st</sup> annual conference!



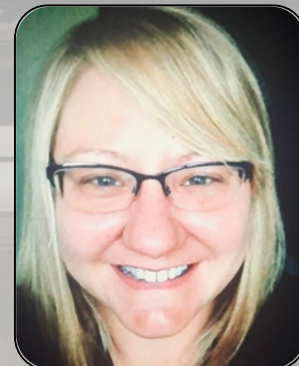
*Evelyn  
Bautista-Miller*



*Ghermira  
Busby*



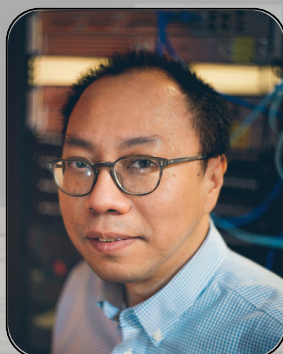
*Michael  
Clements*



*Kristen  
Gaby*



*Acanthus N.  
Fairley*



*Weldon  
Lam*



*Kathleen  
McKenna*



*Patrick  
Gohelle*



*Carla Gilva*



*Haein  
Gon*



*Ghola  
Thompson*



*Ian G. Williams*



# Curious about the Ph.D. in Social Welfare?

Meet faculty, program administrators, and current students at our open house events

**RSVP Required**

**In-Person: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 5:30-7pm ET**

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/events/phd-program-social-welfare-open-house-oct-2025>

**Online: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 5:30-7pm**

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/events/phd-program-social-welfare-virtual-open-house-nov-2025>

PH.D. PROGRAM

**SOCIAL WELFARE**

[gc.cuny.edu/socialwelfare](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/socialwelfare)

**GRADUATE CENTER**

## Leadership through service

To our volunteer student leaders for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Thanks for your service and your commitment to our community!

### PhD Program in Social Welfare Committees

#### Executive Committee:

Victoria Murray  
Kiani Oro

#### Admissions Committee:

Bobbie Watkins  
Kathleen McKenna  
Shermira Busby  
Patrick Schelle  
Eden Bamawo  
Julie Glickman

#### Curriculum Committee:

Michael Clements  
Lyrica Fils-Aime

### Doctoral and Graduate Students' Council (DGSC)

Michael Clements (Social Welfare Program Representative)

Weldon Lam (Social Welfare Program Representative - Alternate)

### Graduate Council (GC)

Ian Williams (Social Welfare Program Representative)

Kathleen McKenna (Social Welfare Program Representative - Alternate)



## Community Corner

Allow me to formally introduce myself; my name is Rudy Innocent, and I will be coordinating our events this year. I am a first-year PhD student in Social Welfare, and one of my passions is engaging in self-care and helping others do the same. My aim is to bring us together, fostering a united community within our program and strengthening our bonds through activities focused on self-care and connection.



**Rudy Innocent**

To help us better curate events to your interests, please take a moment to fill out the following survey: <https://forms.gle/sJLyN389QrAbf6cJ7>

If you have further recommendations outside of this form, please use our official social welfare recommendation form found here: <https://forms.gle/CLTX3F2bYN47ReWp8>

Your insights are appreciated and help us improve our programming and services available to students.

## The Virtual Town Square



**Ian Williams**  
**Social Media Fellow**

Sitting behind the wheel with much of our media and communications is a strange journey. Social media platforms are a seemingly inescapable parts of our lives today, and our academic identities. They are part of how we become known, how we get our stories, our work, and our research out there. They can help us scale audiences and impact, and find new publics. They're also tools that aren't built for our purposes; most platforms are optimized to sell ads and grab increasingly short attention spans. This can sit at cross purposes with academic inquiry, which necessitates slow reflection, careful examination, and thinking beyond 'hot takes', trends, and memes of the moment.

There is real value in using social media for community-building and public scientific discourse. A recent study reported that BlueSky is currently favored by scientists and academics for the quality of the discourse and conversation on their ideas. It carries the torch, in many ways, of what used to be Academic Twitter. I have personally experienced and benefitted from thriving discourse with colleagues, and as a doctoral student it's helped me expand my reach and networks.

At the same time, the hypervisibility that comes with social media carries some risks for individuals and organizations. Affective tensions and polarization in social media can gather attention very quickly, often not from kind or friendly audiences. Many platforms are rife with bots and [sock puppet accounts](#) that are used to stir up outrage, such as was the case with [Cracker Barrel's recent rebranding fiasco](#) where bots likely produced over 44% of all content expressing outrage over a new logo. Furthermore, the data we generate through interaction with and use of various platforms can counter academic goals. See, for instance, recent controversies with changes to [LinkedIn's](#) and [Academia.edu's](#) terms of service agreements.

We can achieve a lot through being online and staying engaged, but we also need to be safe and stay literate on the technologies to make informed choices about our uses. Next week, the Graduate Center is offering a hybrid workshop, "Connected & Protected: Making Smart Online Choices" on October 15<sup>th</sup>. I recommend attending. [Learn more here.](#)

## GC Digital Scholarship Resources

The Graduate Center contains a rich network of resources and communities focused on scholarly materials and praxis for the digital age. There are plenty of avenues to learn new skills, often offered by GC students who work as fellows with the Grad Center Digital Initiatives and Teaching & Learning Center. Check out some trainings and resources here:

[ITP Skills Labs](#)

[Digital Fellows workshops and drop in](#)

[Digital Scholarship hours](#)

[New Media Lab opportunities](#)

[CUNY TV production internships](#)

You can learn about many of these, and read useful guides, through the [Graduate Center Digital Initiatives CUNY Academic Commons Page](#). You can also [request an individual consultation with a Digital Fellow](#) if there's a particular digital skill you want to learn.

## Fall Public Programming

The Graduate Center hosts a range of public events and activities. Check them out in person or online - maybe bring a friend or a family member and show them a bit more about what The Graduate Center does? Check out more at [gc.cuny.edu/public-programs](https://gc.cuny.edu/public-programs)



# Student Spotlight: Shawn Dougherty



## **Why did you apply to the PhD in Social Welfare?**

*After I finished my MSW, It seemed unthinkable that I knew “enough.” At the same time my interests are broad enough that a PhD in Social Welfare seemed a better option than a more clinical degree such as a DSW. One of the great strengths of the program is that it allows students to study in various disciplines. I welcomed the idea of gaining greater expertise, and I think the desire to teach was also in the back of my mind. Although I hadn’t seen the GC building when I applied, the sentiment expressed on the outside windows, “A Graduate Center for the Public Good” was most likely in the back of my mind.*

## **What has been your favorite course so far as a student? Why?**

*It’s difficult to pick one. I learned a great deal from Prof. Blau’s policy course. I was grateful to take a sociology theory course, and finally read Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Du Bois. I would like to take a similar course in philosophy, and finally find out who those Hegel and Kant guys are that you hear so much about! My philosophy of law class very interesting, as is the law in society course I am taking this semester. The first examined legal vs. moral responsibility and the second examines “law on the books” vs. “law in action,” both relevant to my research interests.*

## **What do you want to do after you graduate?**

*I wrote in my application for the program, “I am interested in research and continued practice, always the two together” and that still stands. I would like to teach more, and also be involved in work on the “good” side of criminal justice. I would also like to be master of all I survey.*

## **What leadership and/or employment positions do you hold within CUNY?**

*This year I have started teaching a social work practicum course at Silberman. Additionally, as a “non-teaching adjunct” there, I am acting as the field supervisor for three students. I enjoy being able to comment on the philosophy and ethics of social work, as well as speaking about the usefulness of the former bane of my existence, process recordings.*

## **What’s something that people would be surprised to know about you?**

*I lived on an interfaith spiritual community in Florida for several years that was then highly involved with AIDS service work. At the same time, I was Executive Director of a regional AIDS service organization. For the three years before I moved to Florida, that interfaith community inspired me to volunteer as an inpatient visitor in the AIDS ward of Cook County Hospital, Chicago’s public hospital.*

## **What is the focus of your research?**

*I am currently refining my topic in restorative justice. I am interested in how restorative justice gives and requires agency from “offenders,” as opposed to incarceration, which destroys all agency. What offenders do with that agency, and if and how it leads to further expressions of agency, are of interest to me. The utility of restorative justice, in comparison to the destruction wrought by incarceration, is of interest to me.*

## **What are you currently reading, watching, or listening to?**

*Well, I’m reading restorative justice! I recently found Jacques Claessen, a Dutch restorative justice scholar who seems like a kindred spirit. I’m also reading Howard Zehr, who is considered the grandfather of restorative justice in the U.S. When I’m in the mood for a good horror story, I open the New York Times and read about the current administration.*