VERNE LAMARR LYONS MEMORIAL MSW SCHOLARSHIP
Supplemented through Social Work HEALS

Mervin Lawson Brandy
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Mervin Lawson Brandy is a second year MSW student in the Joint Master of Social Work Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. He is also a Graduate Research Assistant in the school’s Department of Social Work and Sociology where he focuses on behavioral research in the areas of racial health disparities. During his first year in the MSW program, Mervin was instrumental in developing the Social Workers in the Library Initiative; a partnership with the MSW program and the county library to place social workers in the library to assist with vulnerable populations in need. This initiative focuses on implementing therapeutic interventions in nontraditional clinical settings.

Mervin was born in the U.S. Virgin Islands and grew up in Connecticut where he attended Central Connecticut State University and majored in Sociology and minored in Gender & Sexuality Studies. As a Black queer cis-gendered male, Mervin has worked in HIV prevention and community health education targeting LGBTQ communities for the last eight years. He is committed to reducing the stigma associated with accessing mental health services, specifically therapy, within the African American & Black community. His goal centers on cultivating a movement that promotes diverse interventions as a form of collective healing, and a healthy alternative to faith-based practices for communities of color. Mervin is especially focused on supporting African American/Black gay, bisexual, queer and same-gender loving men navigate healthy relationships.

Bianca Hannon
Kennesaw State University
Bianca Hannon is an MSW candidate at Kennesaw State University. She graduated from Georgia State University (GSU) in 2018 with her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. After graduating from GSU, she started working at Hillside, Inc., which is a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility. As a behavioral specialist working with the treatment team to find what works best for the youth, she found her passion and decided to pursue her MSW. At Aniz, Inc., her first-year internship placement, she found another passion – working with adults who are HIV positive. When Bianca graduates in May 2021, she plans to specialize in working with African American women and youth who have suffered from trauma.

Aaron Quick
North Carolina State University
Aaron Quick is an MSW candidate at North Carolina State University. He graduated from Central State University, a Historically Black University, with a Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW), with honors, in just three years. Aaron will begin the MSW program at North Carolina (NC) State University fall 2020. He believes that earning his MSW at NC State will help elevate him on an educational, professional, and personal level. His goal is to develop a nationwide agency that works with urban communities on a micro, mezzo, and macro level to diminish the factors that are harmful to the mental health of LGBT youth of color. He wants to bring together a nationwide team of LGBT+ identifying social workers and counselors that will work with LGBT+ youth of color to help these youth become comfortable with their identities. Aaron also wants to help inform families who have adolescents that identify as LGBT+, of ways they can show support and encouragement to their family members.

Antonio Shallowhorn
University of California, Los Angeles

Antonio Shallowhorn is a second year MSW student at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs with a concentration in Social and Economic Justice. During his first year at UCLA, he interned at Wellness LA a community mental health agency where he found a passion for working with children and families in their Early Intervention division. Antonio will continue to carry out his passions working with children and families by completing his second year placement with the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services where he will help connect families to resources that strengthen family well-being and promote child safety. Antonio was raised in Long Beach, CA where he developed his passion for education, public health, and racial justice. Having earned his Master of Public Health Degree from Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA and his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology with a minor in African American Studies from UCLA, his passions and commitment to serve expanded. While earning his degrees, Antonio worked with high school and college students providing academic and emotional support as an academic advisor and program coordinator.

Fabiola Cuevas Flores
University of Chicago

Fabiola Cuevas Flores will begin the Master of Arts Program in Social Work and Social Welfare at the University of Chicago (UChicago) in the fall of 2020. As an undergraduate student at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), Fabiola majored in psychology and double minored in Chicano/a Studies and Applied Developmental Psychology. At UCLA, she also worked as a college advisor supporting Latinx youth in Pasadena, CA and was on the executive board for UCLA’s chapter of Ignite, a national organization that empowers women to become politically active. Through these experiences and her own experiences as a Latina and DACA recipient, Fabiola’s passion for social work grew. She plans to utilize the knowledge she gains through UChicago’s MSW program to address the school to prison pipeline that pushes Latinx youth into pathways society has unjustly created for them.

Nubia Paulina Grijalva
Arizona State University

Nubia Paulina Grijalva is an Advanced Standing Child Welfare MSW Student at the Arizona State University School of Social Work. Nubia was born and raised in the border town of Yuma, Arizona in a Hispanic household. She is a first-generation college graduate who earned her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work with an emphasis on the US-Mexico Border from Northern Arizona University Yuma Branch. While in school she worked at the TRIO KEYS Program at Arizona Western College where she engaged with college students who were low-income, first-generation or had a physical or learning disability and as a caregiver for people of all ages with cognitive impairments. She completed her undergraduate internship at Crane School District where she had the privilege to collaborate with teachers and staff to improve children’s social and emotional learning in elementary school. Nubia was accepted in the Child Welfare Education Program where she will be completing her graduate placement at the Department of Child Safety. Her passion for social work stems from her experiences working with vulnerable groups such as children, older adults, and minority populations. After gaining experience – and completing her MSW – she plans to return to her underserved hometown and contribute to positive changes in the community.

CONSUELO W. GOSNELL MSW SCHOLARS

Teresa Rivera Capcha
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Teresa Rivera is a rising final year MSW Student at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work. A Peruvian immigrant and a first-generation college and graduate student, Teresa’s passion for social work was shaped by her personal experiences witnessing domestic violence as a child. Her family was able to thrive by receiving therapy from social workers. She is passionate about working with refugees and immigrants with focus on domestic violence victims and survivors. She has experience working at domestic violence agencies advocating for marginalized populations to access legal and social services. Additionally, Teresa facilitated the Domestic Violence Task force- Latinx Subcommittee in Orange County, North Carolina with the intention to provide a space for key informants and stakeholders to convene, develop and implement strategies to bridge gaps in services and resources. As part of her previous MSW Internship, Teresa worked with refugees and helped create a group curriculum for Burmese and Karen women experiencing domestic violence. Teresa’s long-term goal is to start her own non-profit to help victims and survivors of domestic violence.
Adriana Reyes
Simmons University

Adriana Reyes is a first-year MSW student at Simmons University School of Social Work online program. She was born in Colombia and immigrated to the United States with her family when she was eleven years old. Despite language barriers and challenges at the beginning of her educational career, Adriana received her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Florida, Gainesville. Following graduation, Adriana volunteered for at-risk youth as a bilingual mentor in her community for two years and later became involved in providing health care practices to farmworkers in Southwest Florida for three years. In 2017, Adriana became a Child Welfare Case Manager for Hendry County, FL and served Spanish-speaking populations and nearby native tribes as well. In her most recent position, Adriana continues to provide and advocate for services for Spanish-speaking clients in Lee County, FL. These experiences have given Adriana the opportunity to learn about different trauma and challenges children and families face. In addition, it has highlighted the dire need for diverse and culturally competent services in the community and in policy development at the macro-level of social work. Through her employment and educational career, Adriana hopes to develop skills in Art Therapy and advocacy to advance policies that protect mental health resources for the Latinx and other marginalized communities.

Télyse Masaooy
Washington University in St. Louis

Télyse Masaooy is a first-year Master in Social Work/Master in Social Policy Danforth Scholar at the George Warren Brown School of Washington University in St. Louis. Télyse graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University in May 2019, where she studied Medicine, Health & Society and Sociology. For her on-campus work as a Head Resident Advisor, Chair of the Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Committee, President of Vanderbilt Tour Guides and Vice President of Native Americans in Tennessee Interacting at Vanderbilt (NATIVe), Télyse was named the Head Resident of the Year, Finalist for the Outstanding Senior Award and a McGill Awardee for Leadership Excellence. Her thesis on Racial Ambiguity and Clinical Care Quality received Highest Honors and the award of Outstanding Senior of the Sociology Department. After graduation, Télyse began working as a Health Policy Associate at Mathematica, a social policy research firm, where she focuses on maternal/reproductive health policy, early childhood research in Native communities and state-based Medicaid initiatives. As the daughter of two adopted parents, who endured the foster care system and were placed with white families, Télyse has grappled with her racial identity as an Asian/Pacific Islander (API) and American Indian for her entire life. Though she has no official tribal affiliations or connections with API cultures, she has dedicated much of her life to learning from the lived experiences of tribal communities and other people of color. Télyse plans to use her MSW/MSP to pursue climate justice and health equity policy solutions. She believes that leveraging the knowledge of Indigenous folks will help us mitigate the effects of the climate crisis while centering the voices of the most vulnerable among us.

Daliana Reyes
University of California, Berkeley

Daliana Reyes is a first-year MSW student and Child Welfare Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. She is also a first-generation Mexican American college graduate raised in Los Angeles, California. Daliana received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Applied Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2018. After graduation, she gained experience in the nonprofit human service sector and community mental health working in the Wraparound Program at The Help Group. During this time, she provided support to at-risk youth in the foster or juvenile justice system navigating individual rights, academic institutions, and social-emotional wellbeing. This year she will intern at Mount Diablo Unified School District, where she will empower students through cultural-competent practice and access to necessary mental health and special education resources in the public-school system. In the future, she will become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and continue to work toward eliminating mental health disparities and healing within Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Jonathan Ramos Santiago
University of California, Berkeley

Jonathan Ramos Santiago is a second year MSW candidate at the University of California, Berkeley and a first-generation college graduate. Prior to pursuing an MSW, he attended the University of California, Riverside where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Public Policy. He was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States with his family when he was two years old. He is passionate about serving Latinx communities having witnessed the challenges his family confronted to become documented and examining how anti-immigrant policies impact the health and well-being of Latinx children and families. He recently completed his field placement at La Clínica de la Raza where he provided individual therapy and co-facilitated support groups for survivors of trauma and immigrant stress. This year he will be placed at West County Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services where he will work as a Behavioral Health Intern. After graduating in May 2021, Jonathan will be working towards clinical licensure and pursuing opportunities to contribute to research in studies examining what aspects support and inhibit the well-being of Latinx and other marginalized communities.
Ángela Vela  
The University of Texas at Austin

Ángela Vela is originally from Laredo, Texas. She is a descendant of the Dolores de Las Minas community and is of Mexica ancestry. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor’s degree in Mexican American and Latinx Studies and English with a certificate in Native American and Indigenous Studies with honors. Ángela completed a thesis with the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Program on representations of health and illness in Latinx and Indigenous literature and has presented at different conferences and workshops on decolonization knowledge, literature, food history, and health since her undergraduate years. Ángela will continue to focus on the intersections of food justice and mental health for Indigenous and Hispanic communities—particularly with farmworkers, meatpackers, dairy workers, and LGBTQIA+ Two-Spirit youth. When she is not in school, Ángela enjoys learning about her grandmother’s Native foodways, medicinal practices, reading, and doing Aztec dance with their family.

Liliana Ventura  
West Chester University

Liliana Ventura is a first year MSW student and Graduate Assistant at the Dowdy Multicultural Center at West Chester University. Her family came to the United States from El Salvador during the violent civil war that caused many Salvadorans to flee in the 1980’s. Liliana is proud of her immigrant and working-class roots and constantly seeks opportunities to uplift other working-class communities and people of color. She decided to obtain an MSW after five years of working at non-profits in the Philadelphia region to use her Spanish language skills to fill a largely unmet need for bilingual and culturally sensitive therapists. Liliana will begin to address this gap in services in the Philadelphia region during her first year as an MSW student by interning at La Puerta Abierta, a non-profit organization that provides therapeutic and other supportive services to immigrants and refugees.

Victoria Wynecoop-Abrahamson  
University of Chicago

Victoria Wynecoop-Abrahamson is a second year MSW student at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Her concentrations are in mezzo and macro levels of social work with a focus on Global Social Development. Prior to this, she received her Bachelor of Science degree from Illinois College in Biology with minors in Chemistry and Psychology. She is a proud citizen of the Spokane Tribe and grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. After graduating from Illinois College, she served as a domestic violence advocate on her reservation for two years and discovered her passion to continue serving women who are afflicted by violence. Her populations of interest are Indigenous and Latinx women due to the social constructs of identities, borders, and policies that influence higher rates of violence against them. For her first-year placement, Victoria was placed at James H. Bowen High School in Chicago where she was trained in group facilitations for social-emotional awareness in teenage girls. For her second-year placement she will be interning at the Heartland Alliance Freedom from Trafficking program. After receiving her MSW degree, Victoria plans to continue pursuing a career that focuses on gender-based violence.

JANE B. ARON DOCTORAL FELLOW

Sicong (Summer) Sun, MSW  
Washington University in St. Louis

Dissertation: Racial/Ethnic Differences in the Relationship Between Wealth and Health

Sicong (Summer) Sun is a doctoral student at the Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned her MSW with a concentration of Social and Economic Development and a Research Specialization. Summer’s research agenda centers on how racial inequities in wealth and financial access—as understudied social determinants—fundamentally shape downstream determinants of health. Her research interests include social determinants of health, asset building and financial capability, as well as poverty and social mobility in both U.S. and global contexts. During her graduate study at the Brown School, she worked with four research centers on multiple research projects, including both foundation and NIH funded projects. Her scholarship appears at more than 20 research conferences and peer-reviewed journals, including Annual Review of Public Health, PLOS One, and Children and Youth Services Review. Summer’s dissertation investigates racial/ethnic differences in the relationship between wealth and health, as well as the mediating mechanisms through health behaviors and medical care.
Erica Eliason, MPhil, MPH  
Columbia University  
Dissertation: The Effects of Health Insurance Eligibility Policies on Maternal Care Access and Childbirth Outcomes

Erica Eliason is a PhD candidate at the Columbia University School of Social Work, specializing in Social Policy Analysis and Economics. She holds a Master of Public Health in Health Policy Analysis from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts in Health, Science, and Society from Sarah Lawrence College. Erica’s research focuses on financial exposures in health care and the effects of health insurance access on maternal, child, and reproductive health outcomes. She has published several manuscripts on the effects of health insurance on measures of financial stability as well as on reproductive health outcomes. Erica has substantial health policy research experience, with a background conducting Medicaid claims analysis and policy evaluation prior to entering her doctoral program. Her dissertation examines the effects of health insurance eligibility policies in the United States on access to care for pregnant women and childbirth outcomes.

Renee Andersen Garbe, MSW  
Arizona State University  
Dissertation: Intimate Partner Violence Over the Life Course: An Examination of Help-Seeking, Health, and Wellbeing Among Older Adult Women

Renee Garbe is a PhD Candidate in the School of Social Work at Arizona State University. She received her MSW from the University of Iowa and her BS in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to pursuing her doctoral degree in Arizona, Renee worked as a hospital-based medical social worker in Iowa where she contributed to the development of an outpatient social work program to meet the needs of a primarily older, rural population. During her doctoral career, Renee has been a member of research teams studying the effects of previously experienced trauma, dynamic social network characteristics, and multidisciplinary healthcare delivery on the self-efficacy of chronic illness management and patient wellbeing. She is also an instructor of BSW and MSW level clinical social work and research courses at ASU. For her dissertation, Renee is examining the trajectory and severity of Intimate Partner Violence events over the life course among older adult women and their impact on current physical health and mental wellbeing.

Daniel Green, MSW  
University of Southern California  
Dissertation: The Relationship Between Minority Stress, Access to Health Services and Health Disparities Among Sexual Minorities

Daniel Green is a PhD candidate at the University of Southern California (USC) Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. He received his MSW from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and a BSW from McDaniel College. A licensed clinical social worker, Daniel has worked primarily in healthcare settings supporting individuals living with chronic health conditions which heavily influenced his return to graduate school. During his doctoral training, he has been involved with multiple federally funded research projects examining the health and behavioral health of sexual and gender minority individuals. Daniel has also taught various courses at USC including Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families & Groups and Assessment & Diagnosis of Mental Disorders. His dissertation examines associations between experiences of minority stress and access to health services among sexual minority adults.

Yeqing Yuan, LICSW  
New York University  
Dissertation: Housing Stability Among Individuals with Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Receiving Assertive Community Treatment Services: A Mixed-Methods Study

Yeqing Yuan is a PhD candidate at the New York University Silver School of Social Work. She earned her MSW from Boston College and BSW from Eastern New Mexico University. Yeqing’s research is inspired by her prior clinical social work with homeless individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders, where she observed that individuals’ recovery trajectories are often shaped by many competing needs that are not fulfilled due to social and structural barriers. Yeqing’s program of research seeks to understand the complex needs among individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and to develop and test intervention strategies used to address these needs. Yeqing’s dissertation focuses on housing stability among individuals diagnosed with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. This mixed-methods study seeks to understand theoretically relevant factors that influence housing stability and to establish a conceptual framework that will inform future interventions to improve housing stability among the target population.

*Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS), is a collaborative project with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), generously funded by the New York Community Trust. The aim of Social Work HEALS is to improve the delivery of health care services in the United States by advancing education and training of health care social workers.
Shih-Ying Cheng, MSW
Washington University in St. Louis
Dissertation: Lethal Violence against Female Intimate Partners: Analysis of Recent Trend and Racial/Ethnic Differences in the U.S.

Shih-Ying Cheng is a PhD candidate in the School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. Her research interests include services and policies that address intimate partner violence (IPV), health and social service utilization among recent immigrants, and the implementation of evidence-based practice. Her dissertation study examines the associations of policy- and case-level factors and intimate partner homicide (IPH) over time with a focus on differences within and between victims’ sex and race/ethnicity subgroups. The study conducts analyses using the National Violent Death Reporting System, Restricted Access Database (NVDRS-RAD), and links data to Census and policy data (e.g., TANF benefit levels, IPV arrest policies, gun control policies) using the geographic indicator in the NVDRS-RAD. Latent class analysis (LCA) and mixed-effects multilevel modeling (HLM) are performed to identify patterns of risk factors among victims, perpetrators and other circumstances in IPHs and to investigate the differential impacts of policies on subgroups over time. The dissertation study aims to inform evidence-based policy making in preventing future IPH.