



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

College of Social Work



Social Work PhD Candidates

Fall 2021

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Message from the Director

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the dean and the faculty, I am pleased and honored to share with you a snapshot of the **University of Utah College of Social Work's** current PhD candidates "on the market." These are engaged teachers, passionate researchers, and exceptionally bright individuals who are dedicated to advancing the field of social work through their scholarly pursuits. Their skill and sincerity gives me great hope for the future of the profession, and confidence in the generations of practitioners they will educate and mentor. I enthusiastically invite you to "meet" each of these unique scholars through the following pages and to learn about the contributions they have already made to the critical mission of social work.



Warmly,

Christina Gringeri, PhD, MSW
Professor & Director of Doctoral Studies

PhD Candidates

Karla Arroyo, LCSW

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Dissertation: "Understanding Victim Advocates' Practices and Experiences when Working with IPV Victims who Use Substances: an Exploratory Study"

Karla Arroyo was born and raised in Mexico City where she earned her bachelor's degree in Economics from the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM). Karla moved to Provo, Utah in June of 1999 and earned a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Utah in 2006. Karla is currently enrolled in the PhD Program at the University of Utah College of Social Work. Karla has spent the last 10 years working with the Latino community in Salt Lake County and some rural areas within the state of Utah. Her involvement in the community has been direct clinical practice, community organization, and most recently she has focused on developing and expanding pilot programs offering counseling and peer support through telehealth. Her clinical practice has focused on trauma survivors, specifically, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking victims. Her research interests are in the area of the intersection of domestic violence and substance abuse. Karla is working full-time as the director of the Multicultural Counseling Center (MCC), an agency that provides counseling to individuals, children, families, and couples and that specializes in trauma survivors. Her practice utilizes a multidimensional framework, systems theory, and trauma-informed care when delivering interventions.

Malisa Brooks, MSW, CSW

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[Website](#) | [Curriculum Vitae](#)

Dissertation (working title): "Examining the Psychometric and Diagnostic Properties of the PCL-5 in Student Veterans"

Malisa is currently a research associate and clinician for the National Center for Veteran Studies, where she focuses on the assessment and treatment of traumatic stress disorders in both civilian and military populations. Her professional research program focuses on sexual trauma, assessment instruments, and the use of translational research to close the gap between research and clinical practice communities. She is passionate about the work she does training other mental health and social service professionals, for the state of Utah and across the country, in Crisis Response Planning for suicidal individuals. Additionally, she works part-time as a licensed therapist at a private practice in Utah, helping low-income women who are struggling with posttraumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. She is the former director of the Utah County Crisis hotline, where she was responsible for hiring and training dozens of crisis workers to handle calls from suicidal persons reaching out for help. Her educational background includes double majoring in both social work and psychology at Utah Valley University and completing a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Utah, where she is currently a fourth-year doctoral candidate pursuing a PhD in the College of Social Work.



Kwynn M. Gonzalez-Pons, MPH, CPH

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[Website](#) | [Curriculum Vitae](#)



Dissertation: "Improving Outcomes for Students Impacted by Partner Violence"

My overarching professional goal is to develop and implement creative solutions to prevent and respond to interpersonal violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. How I approach research is heavily influenced by the training I received during my Master of Public Health program, which emphasized the intersectionality of health outcomes with individual and community resources and political support, as well as socioeconomic factors like income, level of education, and childhood experiences. My dissertation research will examine if college students with relationship abuse experiences follow their proposed model of defining and redefining goals, taking action to achieve those goals, and reflecting on the impact of their actions in their journey to empowerment. I am also testing the effectiveness of myPlan, an interactive safety decision aid created by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, compared to a university webpage dedicated to interpersonal violence on campus. My goal with this research is to spark a research base focused on empowerment during and following relationship abuse, particularly among college students. From there, campus and community-based services can be better tailored to meet students' needs, and programming and services can continue to be representative of survivor voices and experiences.

Natalie Lecy, LCSW, MSW

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[Website](#)

Dissertation: "The Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences on College Graduation Rates by Generational Status"

Natalie Lecy is a PhD candidate, adjunct professor, and research associate at the University of Utah's College of Social Work. Her research is focused on mindfulness-based interventions and increasing inclusivity in higher education for first-generation and marginalized students through trauma-informed and student-centered approaches. Natalie is a licensed clinical social worker with over a decade of experience in clinical and community practice. Through her career she has secured over \$2 million in grant funding for program development, supervised teams of social workers, and facilitated community program development using a collective impact model. Natalie also operates a private practice utilizing mindfulness-based therapy while working primarily with LGBTQI+ populations. She enjoys enhancing her clinical practice through mindfulness-based research and vice versa.



Misty McIntyre Goodsell, LCSW

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[Website](#)



Dissertation: "Exploring the Relationship between ACES and Pubertal Timing for Adolescent Females: Analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health"

Misty McIntyre Goodsell is a person with a lot of questions. Questions are what led her to pursue her master's degree at the College of Social Work. Notebooks of unanswered questions and ideas for research continue pushing her education forward. In considering her path, earning a PhD in social work was the option that made the most sense to her. "Social work's core values mirror my own," she said. "Social justice and the empowerment of oppressed and/or disadvantaged populations is what drew me to social work. If the only end goal was to be a therapist and researcher, I could have earned my degree in psychology or psychiatry. The values of social work are core to my identity as a social researcher and clinician and, in my opinion, what separates social work from the pack." Her long-term career aspiration is to become a mental health therapist for Doctors Without Borders.

Hanna E. Morzenti, LMSW, MA

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[Website](#) | [Curriculum Vitae](#)

Dissertation: "Treatment Recommendations for Individuals with High Functioning Autism in the Criminal Justice System: A Delphi Consensus Study"

Hanna E. Morzenti is adjunct faculty and a doctoral candidate in the College of Social Work at the University of Utah. She received undergraduate degrees in Sociology and Criminal Justice from the University of Wisconsin, Superior, an MA in Criminal Justice from Washington State University, and an MSW from Northwest Nazarene University. Along with her extensive educational experience, Hanna has nearly two decades of practice experience, including seven years working as an LMSW. Her clinical skillset includes working with non-profit organizations and state governments to provide community-based mental health, skill building, rehabilitation, on-call crisis intervention, and conducting court-ordered evaluations. Hanna's interdisciplinary background provided the framework for her research interests. In addition to her publications on criminal justice reform and sex trafficking, Hanna's dissertation research focuses on alternatives to incarceration and typical criminal justice sanctions for individuals with high functioning autism. Hanna is passionate about sharing her clinical, academic, and personal experiences to enhance the education and critical thinking skills of future social workers.



PhD Candidates

Allison O'Connor, LCSW

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[Website](#)



Dissertation: "Utility of Animal Assisted Therapy for Maltreated Children"

Allison specializes in evaluation design and mixed-method analyses, with a particular focus on outcome measurement. Passionate about supporting community agencies to use data-driven processes for decision making and effective programming, Allison is additionally interested in child welfare, animal-assisted therapy, and field education. Allison is currently earning a PhD in social work, and researching utility of existing child welfare assessments for use in outcome monitoring. She has designed and conducted research studies at the University of Utah since 2009, and additionally provides clinical psychotherapy services to adults and families.



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The University of Utah College of Social Work
PhD Program
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