Welcome to the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work (WMYJSSW) at Clark Atlanta University (CAU). As I finish my second year as dean of this great school, I want to thank the many people, including my faculty and staff, alumni, friends, and community partners for their support as I have transitioned into this role. I am very honored to sit at the helm of the oldest school of social work at an HBCU, and the oldest in the state of Georgia.

I am reminded daily that social work is more important than ever. Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964, segregation and discrimination against people of color and vulnerable populations persists. Racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities continue to be front and center in our society. Families are being ripped apart. Gun violence in our schools and communities threatens our security. Police shootings of unarmed citizens, and the continued development and enforcement of oppressive policies challenge the values upon which this profession is built. Now, more than ever we need social workers to challenge injustices and work to alleviate human and social issues to effect positive change. I invite you to join us in this effort.

This report provides a snapshot of a few of the exciting initiatives in which WMYJSSW community has been engaged over the past year. Our BSW, MSW, and PhD programs continue to grow. We increased our research productivity to include relaunching our Center for Children and Families, increased student-engaged research activity, as well as faculty engaged research. Our two new faculty members bring new ideas to complement the cutting-edge teaching and research in which our faculty are immersed. Our giving also has increased thanks to the generosity of countless alumni, community members, and service agencies.

**OUR SCHOOL AT A GLANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Accredited school of social work in Georgia</th>
<th>And oldest accredited school of social work at a HBCU</th>
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<tr>
<th>Enrollment by Gender</th>
<th>Enrollment by Program</th>
<th>Enrollment by Race</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 13%</td>
<td>MSW 31</td>
<td>Non Resident Alien 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 87%</td>
<td>BSW 96</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino 0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PhD 164</td>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native 13%</td>
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<td>Black/African American 8%</td>
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<td>Other 0%</td>
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Center for Children and Families (CCF) is a policy and practice institute with a mission to improve the health and well-being of African-American children and families. CCF is guided by the Afrocentric perspective in providing direct practice, training, research, and policy commentaries to practitioners and stakeholders related to health, mental health, and community practice.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
The WMYJSSW Center for Children and Families is framed around interdisciplinary initiatives related to health, mental health and practice in a service capacity to community stakeholders and change agents. CCF serves as the connective tissue between scholars, practitioners, change agents and the community using models of change that are value critical, participatory and sustainable.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES
The Center is currently engaged in a practice and evaluation project with the On the Rise Financial Center that offers financial coaching to low income residents in the Vine City neighborhood of Atlanta. The project includes the field placement of two MSW students and one doctoral student with the Financial Center, facilitating case management and financial coaching services.

The Coding Community Initiative was one of CCF’s first initiatives to be adopted and implemented within the community of West End, Atlanta. Through this pilot program, a local software engineer, is offering instruction for African-American youth. The use of coding instruction seeks to improve the mental health (self-esteem and cognitive development) and school preparedness outcomes of pre-adolescent Black youth. This program infuses African-centered instruction into computer programming and community practice with the families of enrolled youth in a Saturday School format throughout the calendar year.

The Decarceration Initiative will also be one of CCF’s first adopted and implemented within the West End area. This partnership between CCF Fellow Dr. Eyitayo Onifade and the local community, employ diversion and restorative justice models to address minority over-representation in the justice system.

Community stakeholders can improve outcomes for African-American children and families by effectively mobilizing the subject matter expertise of Social Work practitioners and researchers, led by CCF Fellows. CCF Fellows will facilitate the development and implementation of demonstrated models of change from the Afrocentric perspective in related areas of health, mental health, and community well-being.
BSW PROGRAM CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The BSW Program received a $122,553 curriculum enhancement grant from Title III, to integrate technology in the BSW Program’s research classes. The goal of the program is to provide students with an understanding of how to incorporate research and technology into social work practice.

The Program’s Research I course is used as an online learning community to fill gaps in the existing program via offering innovative pedagogical approaches to curriculum content. The project incorporates a pre/post-test design with a student control and intervention group.

NVivo qualitative analysis software, web-based modules, and class exercises via MyLab are used to enhance students’ understanding of technology in research. The Sonia Tracking System also is used to monitor and track student’s field placement specific to the integration of research into practice. The project’s PI is Dean Jenny Jones, Mrs. Vivienne Mitchell is the program assistant.

SCREENING BRIEF INTERVENTION REFERRAL AND TREATMENT (SBIRT)

Darrin E. Wright, Ph.D., completed training MSW students on the Screening Brief Intervention Referral and Treatment (SBIRT) contract via Morehouse School of Medicine and University of Pittsburgh. Funding was granted through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

The goal of the SBIRT student training program is to effectively train healthcare profession students to identify and address substance use disorders among patients using an evidence-based method of screening and intervention. The project, which trained 32 MSW students in the field via a blended learning experience over a three year period (Fall 2015 – Fall 2018), provided students with dual credentialing. During the training, they completed two self-assessment assignments based on clinical encounters in which SBIRT skills were applied to clients in the field placement agency.
Clare Atlantic University was awarded the Garret Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant in 2017. Margaret Counts-Spriggs, Ph.D., associate dean of the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work and Joy Bradford, Ph.D., Director of the CAU Center for Counseling and Disabilities, serve as Co-PIs.

The grant is a three-year initiative totaling close to $300,000. The Initiative integrates and coordinates suicide prevention activities across multiple sectors and settings within the Clare Atlantic University campus community. The objectives of the proposed project are to: (1) develop a suicide prevention plan that will engage students, faculty, staff and administrators; and (2) establish a network of community health professionals to develop a sustainable campus-wide support structure to counter the prejudice, silence and denial that can prevent individuals from seeking help.

**The Role of Oxytocin Signaling in Depression and Suicidality in Returning War Veterans**

Corinne Warrener, Ph.D., is a research consultant with the Darwinian Laboratory for Neuroscience at Emory University. She and a team of researchers are examining suicidality among veterans. With funding support from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in the amount of $99,864, the team is examining the role of oxytocin and social bonds in suicide and depression among veterans of the most recent wars. The project takes a unique approach that combines social work with neuroscience to develop a better understanding of suicide in this high-risk population in order to develop better strategies to combat the problem.

**Educational Intervention for Prostate Cancer Awareness Among African-American Men in the South East Region**

Dr. Youseung Kim and Mustapha Alhassan received a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on a research project funded to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities health services research. The research program focuses on the educational intervention for prostate cancer awareness among African-American men in the South Eastern United States.

The project aims at informing high-risk African-American men in the Southeast region about prostate cancer knowledge, such as screening and PSA testing, through a community-based educational seminar. The project aims to examine the determinants of early prostate cancer screening among African-American men.

A total of 24 prostate cancer educational seminars were completed between April 2017 and August 2018. Approximately 491 African-American males attended the educational seminars and 308 survey questionnaires related to cultural barriers and mistrust of the health care system was completed.
Dr. Margaret Counts-Spriggs

Margaret Counts-Spriggs Ph.D., associate dean and associate professor, was awarded the 2018 Vulcan Teaching Excellence Award. This prestigious award is given annually by the Vulcan Materials Co., through the Georgia Independent College Association, to the faculty member who demonstrates strong scholarship in the classroom while providing leadership and support in other areas of campus life.

Dr. Counts-Spriggs teaching philosophy focuses on leading her students to the threshold of their own minds. Teaching is a conduit to push self-expression and to enable students to find their inner voice to express and find what is just.

As a social work educator, she believes that her students need to know that they control their own destiny and when they touch someone else’s life they are also touching their own. “I teach my students that problem-solving skills can be applied in all settings to include their personal and professional lives.”

Dr. Spriggs has worked at the University for 29 years. She has provide leadership and support to the school, university, the profession and the community.

Dr. Jenny Jones

Dean Jenny Jones received the Career Achievement Award in Child Welfare by the Child Welfare Track at CSWE AMP in Dallas, TX. The award is presented to a faculty member who has dedicated his or her career to scholarship related to improving the lives of children and families involved in the child welfare system. The awardee has a lifetime portfolio of dynamic transformational scholarship and service in the field of child welfare.

Dr. Youseung Kim

Youseung Kim, Ph.D., was awarded the Junior Career Achievement Award by The Korean American Social Work Educators Association. KASWEA is one of the standing caucus groups of Council on Social Work Education.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH FIELD EDUCATION

The Office of Field Education continues to grow in prestige and professional worth. Under the leadership and vision of the School of Social Work, the school continues its legacy of excellence and community empowerment through the field.

The Field Program engages in community partnerships and outreach opportunities throughout the metro Atlanta community. The Program is part of the Georgia Schools of Social Work Field Education Collaborative, which comprises CAU, Georgia State University, and University of Georgia. The collaborative trained 60 field supervisors on four modules of best practices in field education for AY 2017-2018.

Field Education Highlights

200 +

Agencies across metro Atlanta and surrounding counties provided field placements for 160 students.

MSW International Students Bridge Transition Program

Nine international students from Saudi Arabia completed the MSW Bridge Transition Program for international students educated outside of the United States. The students completed the clinical year of field practicum through a summer block placement, May 22 - August 24, 2018. The nine students completed field internships four days per week; 32 hours per week, Tuesday-Friday. Students completed internships at Grady Health Care Systems, Emory Dialysis, Meals on Wheels, and Empowerment Resource Center. The students completed 500 hours of field work needed in partial fulfillment of their degree requirement for the MSW program.

The field seminar class associated with placements was conducted through a blended learning experience with online and in-class meetings to ensure students an opportunity to integrate theory with practice during discussions and class exercises. This internationalization experience through field was a first for the School.
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Organization for Student Change (OSC)

The Organization for Student Change (OSC) hosted the following events during the 2017-2018 school year:

- Feed the homeless in Hurt Park
- Participated in the AIDS WALK
- Participated in the Miseducation of the Youth panel discussion
- Participated in the Socially Forming A King panel - Bringing awareness to the lack of black male involvement in the community
- Worked with APEC Family Foundation on a Community beautification project – built a garden on Cascade Rd.
- Veterans Day Clean Up Project – Worked in various locations.

CAU Research Symposium

Clark Atlanta University’s Center for Undergraduate Research and Creativity hosted its Third Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium which provides students from across the University an opportunity to showcase research and creative endeavors.

This year the School of Social Work students placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the Graduate Poster Presentations:

1st: Ariel Smith
2nd: Ohud Alsulami
3rd: Selima Morrow

Kamisha Lancaster

Ms. Kamisha Lancaster, a second-year MSW student, received the Atasha Murray Entrepreneurial Endowed Scholarship (AMEES). The AMEES scholarship established in 2016 by WMYJSSW Alumna Atasha A. Murray awards a second year graduate social work student whose desire is to become a business owner in the field.

EnChante Franklin

Doctoral student, Ms. Enchante Franklin, received the Delois Whitaker-Caldwell Tuition Scholarship and the Thaddeus P. Mathis Book Scholarship at the NABSW 50th Anniversary conference, April 3-7, 2018 in San Diego, California.

Justiss Singleton

BSW student Ms. Justiss Singleton received University honors for maintaining a 4.0 grade point average throughout her freshmen year.
The Monday Night Lecture Series was envisioned to focus on life lessons taught by the School’s first dean, Whitney M. Young Jr. for whom the school was re-named in 2000. Young served as dean from 1954-1960. He believed “that the life of every person should be heard and that opportunities should be available to all people to live better lives.” Hence, the lectures provide an opportunity for educational and social engagement between social work professionals and WMYJSSW students, alumni, affiliated agency supervisors, and other professionals.

2017-18 Speakers

**September**  
Dean Jenny Jones, Dean Clark Atlanta University, WMYJSSW  
**Topic – “Activism and Politics for Social Workers”**  
A social workers’ role in advocacy and policy practice; techniques and different forms of advocacy.

**October**  
Joy Jones James, MSW, Clark Atlanta University, WMYJSSW  
**Topic - “Life Lessons of a Social Worker”**  
The speaker shared her career trajectory in the profession; lessons learned, opportunities, and career choices.

**February**  
Daniell Lasure, Ph.D., Director, EdConnect  
**Topic - “Education, Policy and Social Work, Taking Scholarship to the Street”**  
The speaker’s testament regarding the realization a strong relationship between education and social work in assuring students’ to success.

**March**  
Gerry White, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, WMYJSSW  
Darrin Wright, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Director of Field Educations  
**Topic - “From the Souls of Black Male Social Workers”**  
The speakers shared their experiences in the profession from a black male perspective
Cynthia Simmons Turner

Cynthia Simmons Turner, Ph.D., graduated from Florida A & M University with a bachelor’s degree in social welfare with minors in sociology and criminal justice. She received her MSW from Florida State University with a clinical social work concentration. She obtained her education specialist degree at Kennesaw State University in teacher leadership for learning with a concentration in inclusive education. She has worked as a caseworker for Florida DFACS, and a project social worker with Duval County School System. Turner is currently employed as a school social worker with DeKalb County School District.

**Dissertation**

**A Study of Select Factors That Influence the Perceptions of School Social Workers’ Levels of Satisfaction with Their Professional Practice**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of school social workers’ levels of satisfaction and ways it is impacted by one or more of the following factors: the level of decision making, workload management, professional development, collaboration, and advocacy.

Sibrenna George

Sibrenna George, Ph.D., graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor of arts degree in 2011, a MSW (2012) and Ph.D. (2018) from Clark Atlanta University. Dr. George is currently a law student at Emory University. She is also in the process of starting a nonprofit organization that will provide services for teen mothers interested in obtaining post-secondary education.

**Dissertation**

**A Study of the Relationship Between School Support, Family Support, Community Support, and Postsecondary Education Among Former Teen Mothers in North Carolina**

This study examines the relationship between school support, family support, community support, and postsecondary education among teen mothers in North Carolina. The sample consisted of 218 participants who became a teen mother between the ages of 13-19 and have since attained postsecondary education. The variables analyzed included the following: school support, family support, community support, teen parenting programs, resilience, and mentoring.
Mona Aljohan

Mona Aljohan, Ph.D., is a citizen of Saudia Arabia. She received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in sociology from King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She co-chaired the Department of Social Work at the University of UMM Al-Quara in the City of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, where she also taught classes in the sociology curriculum, such as Urban Sociology and Population Studies.

Dissertation

A Study of the Impact of Tourism on the Environment and Jeddah Citizens’ Perceptions Toward Tourism in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

This study examined the impact of tourism on the environment and Jeddah citizens’ perceptions toward tourism in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A total of 115 participants participated in the study. The study results suggested that cleanliness of the city, crowding of the city, access to facilities, availability of water, and the quality of air and sea affect the perception of Jeddah citizens toward tourism. Particularly, both crowding of the city and quality of air and sea were significant predictors of perceptions toward tourism.

Jennifer Talley

Jennifer Talley, Ph.D., received her bachelor’s degree in sociology from Rutgers University in 1993 and her master’s degree in social work from Clark Atlanta University in 1996. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and founder of Comprehensive Consulting Services; providing clinical consultation services for social work agencies that serve consumers with mental health issues. Dr. Talley also works for the Atlanta Veterans Administration’s Fort McPherson Community Outpatient Clinic.

Dissertation

A Comparison of Coping Strategies Among Homeless Women with Children and Homeless Women without Children

The study compared the coping strategies between 64 homeless women with dependent children and 132 without dependent children. The women were recruited from homeless shelters around Georgia. MANOVA analysis was used to test the differences between both groups in their scores on the Coping Strategies Inventory scales (problem solving skills, problem reframing and ability to access social networks). The conclusions from this study suggest continued studies regarding the benefit of coping strategies among homeless populations.
Whitney M. Young Jr. 
School of Social Work

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