The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reaffirms the BSW & MSW programs of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University.

At its June 2022 meeting, the CSWE Commission on Accreditation (COA) voted to reaffirm the accreditation of the Bachelor and Master of Social Work Programs at Clark Atlanta University for eight years, ending in June 2030. Receiving an eight-year accreditation—serves as recognition by the professional accrediting body that the programs maintain a level of performance, integrity, and quality. It is a vote of confidence in the caliber of the program for both graduates and the public they serve, explained Jenny L. Jones, PhD, MSW, Dean and Professor of the WMYJRSSW.

"Accreditation provides professional judgement on the quality of the social work programs," said Dean Jones. "It ensures excellence and it is evident that our programs meet the highest level of practice in the field and allow us to be competitive with other social work programs across the nation. Guided by the Afrocentric perspective, the WMYJRSSW continues to develop social workers who are change agents in an ever-changing society."

27th Annual Hooding Ceremony

The School’s 27th Annual Hooding Ceremony was held on May 13, 2022. The faculty and staff recognized graduating students in all three programs. The Hooding Ceremony was followed by a reception in the Thayer Hall Quad Area. See the entire list of students honored along with viewing the ceremony by clicking here. Graduates received their diplomas at the 33rd CAU Commencement Exercise on May 14th held at Panther Stadium. View photos from the Hooding and Commencement ceremonies.

Faculty News

Dr. Margaret Counts Spriggs Promoted to Full Professor

Dr. Margaret Counts Spriggs, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, was promoted to the rank of Full Professor, effective July 1. Dr. Spriggs’s research interests include mental health awareness, aging, and women’s health.
Vulcan Teaching Excellence Award

Dr. Mustapha Alhassan, BSW Program Director, received The Vulcan Teaching Excellence Award. This award recognizes an outstanding faculty member who demonstrates strong academic skills in the classroom and provides leadership and support in other areas of campus life. Dr. Alhassan’s life work as a social work educator embodies the description of this Award. He states in his own words: My approach to teaching and learning is rooted in constructionism, which places emphasis on discovery learning through advocating student-centered teaching strategies where students use information, they learn to acquire more knowledge. It is my purpose to lead my 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, I want my students to know that they control their own destiny. When they touch someone else’s life, they are also touching their own. I teach that problem solving skills can be applied in all settings to include their personal and professional lives."

Data Science Initiative

Dr. Anita King, Assistant Professor received the Data Science Initiative Travel & Training Support grant to attend the RStudio Conference, held in Washington, DC. The conference, sponsored by the Atlanta University Consortium (AUC) Data Science Initiative, provides opportunities for participants to increase knowledge and skills using data science to solve everyday problems. The conference focused on RStudio, computer programming software, offers a robust open-source resource for analyzing big data. Dr. King, a social work scholar, uses big data to inform practice-based research and provide culturally relevant prevention and intervention services to diverse populations.

Research and Scholarship

Old Fourth Ward Project

Shonda Lawrence, PhD, LMSW, MS, Associate Professor, Director of the Ph.D. program at Clark Atlanta University, received a subaward totaling $106,000 from the Georgia Resilience and Opportunity Fund through Appalachian State University. The research project will be piloted in the Old Fourth Ward of Atlanta. This project will evaluate the impact of providing greater economic support to residents of one of Atlanta’s most historic and rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods. The project provides stipends for three Ph.D. student community-based Research Assistants: Desha Elliott, Simone Smith, and Aaron Quick. The students will be trained in ethical data collection methods and analysis to design research questions and interview scripts, and collaboratively analyze data. They will benefit from participation in the project in gaining first-hand experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination through published research in refereed journals. The start date for the project is Fall 2022 and will end in Summer 2024.

You can find out more information: https://www.econsecurityatl.org/
Kristie Lipford Wyatt, PhD, is a social epidemiologist with specialized training in health disparities, clinical research, and chronic diseases. Her work has appeared in the American Journal of Transplantation, Clinical Transplantation, Journal of Rural and Urban Research, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, and the edited book Black Men’s Health. Her teaching specialties include social statistics, urban health, medical sociology, and study design.

Dr. Vicky Hale joins the School of Social as a Lecturer in the Office of Field Education with over 35 years of practice experience in Child Welfare Services. She has served in many roles to include CEO and COO at Elks Aidmore in Conyers, GA. Dr. Hale’s areas of expertise are strategic planning, program development, implementation, and evaluation. She earned a B.A. degree in Psychology from Prairie View A&M University, MSW and Ph.D. degrees from the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work. Dr. Hale has a wealth of experience providing training and consultative work in the field of Social Work.

Welcoming New Faculty

Kristie Lipford Wyatt, PhD in Social Epidemiology

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Welcoming New Staff

B.B. Calloway, DEdMin joins the School as the BSW/PhD programs Senior Staff Assistant. Experienced with thirty years in meeting administrative needs in varied educational and community settings, Dr. Calloway brings to this position an outstanding legacy in high performance. Her doctoral research in Ministry, includes the global advocacy of administrative support personnel.

Dr. Wicky Rula joins the School of Social as a Lecturer in the Office of Field Education with over 35 years of practice experience in Child Welfare Services. She has served in many roles to include CEO and COO at Elks Aidmore in Conyers, GA. Dr. Hale’s areas of expertise are strategic planning, program development, implementation, and evaluation. She earned a B.A. degree in Psychology from Prairie View A&M University, MSW and Ph.D. degrees from the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work. Dr. Hale has a wealth of experience providing training and consultative work in the field of Social Work.