

Social Work Notes



Welcome!

We are excited to share our latest news and updates with you all.

Frist, a big congratulations to our 2025 graduates!

Front Row (L to R): Kiara Pierristil, Kirsten Wierzbowski, Alexa Smalls, Emma Snizek, Kylie Largeau

Middle Row (L to R): Claire Schroeder, Erin McClernan, Gabriella Giordano, Abby James-Vickery, Elizabeth Giacomazza, Grace Caton, Ariana Rice, Anahi Garcia, Theresa Craffey

Back Row (L to R): Emmanuel Moscoso, Carlos Gonzalez, Hannah Kelly, Kayla Lavatori, Katie Bickel, Cheyenne Brooks, Maxine Korte, Killian Montagnino, Yasemin Knott, Allyson Sanzo, Adriana Fatato, Tahnaokata Elijah

As a class, our graduates completed 10,800 hours of field work and 1,400 hours of group supervision over the course of their senior year. The students completed their field work throughout the Capital District at various agencies addressing a multitude of social needs with different populations. We want to send a huge thank you to all of our field educators for their time and the impact they had on our students!

Graduates gathered with friends, family and faculty at the 27th annual Social Work Celebration on May 17th to commemorate their time at Siena and celebrate their accomplishments. We are grateful to have been a part of their journey and can't wait to see how they act as change makers in their communities.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Class of 2025
Spotlights

MSW Update &
2026 Cohort

Program
Updates

Faculty/Admin
Updates

2025 Senior Awards



Kiara Pierristil

Kiara was this year's Major Field Award winner. She completed minors in French and Psychology. In addition to working as a Resident Assistant, Kiara was the Secretary of the social work club, a member of Habitat for Humanity, and a SOLID step-team participant. Congratulations Kiara!



Yasemin Knott

Yasemin was awarded the Gerald Irizarry Award for Cultural Diversity and Equity - Outstanding leadership, voice, and action in promoting cultural diversity and acceptance above and beyond the requirements of the program. She was also a member of the Social Work Advisory Board. Congratulations Yasemin!



Carlos Gonzalez

As part of the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), Carlos earned the HEOP Academic Excellence Award. Congratulations on all of your hard work Carlos!



Kayla Lavatori

Kayla served as the Social Work Club President. Thank you Kayla, for your leadership and contribution to the social work club!



Emmanuel Moscoso

Emmanuel served at the Social Work Club Vice President. Thank you for your time and support to the social work club, Emmanuel!



Kamily Figueroa

Kamily served as the Social Work Club Treasurer. Thank you for your time and effort in social work club, Kamily!

MSW Update



Welcome to the First MSW Cohort - Class of 2026

The social work department is excited to announce the Master of Social Work program has officially been awarded pre-candidacy status by the CSWE! Our first Advanced Standing MSW cohort began this fall with eight graduates from our BSW program. We are honored to have them back on campus to pursue their masters degrees. The program plans to have students in both the two-year and advanced standing tracks beginning fall of 2026.

Students shared why they chose to return to Siena for their MSW.

Katie - "I decided to go to Siena for my MSW because I had such a good experience in the BSW program. All of the professors are welcoming and willing to help when needed. I also had such a great experience at all the internships I was placed at. The community that comes with Siena social work really drove my decision to come back and complete my masters here."

Yasemin - "I value the knowledge and experience our professors bring, and the caring and supportive environment! I'm especially enjoying expanding my clinical knowledge."

Erin - "I decided to go to Siena for my MSW because I knew I would be surrounded by supportive classmates and faculty. This was something that I was extremely grateful for during my time in the BSW program, and I love knowing that this will continue while I work towards my masters."

Carlos - "I chose Siena's MSW program because of the familiarity of guidelines and professors. Acknowledging that the professors are driven to help guide students in their journey with social work really persuaded me to come back to Siena and get the education I not only wanted, but needed."

Adriana - "I decided to attend Siena's MSW program because of the community I was able to build during my time in the BSW program. I knew coming back to Siena for my MSW would not only further prepare me for working in the field, but also further my relationships on Siena's campus. Every single one of my professors have provided myself and others with a safe space to learn and grow."

Emma - "I love the close-knit community that the social work department creates and they genuinely care about your well-being."

Hannah - "I chose to attend Siena's MSW program because I knew I would be able to be with my peers from undergrad as well as my caring and supportive professors. Siena's Social Work Program is full of thoughtful and welcoming faculty, staff and students."

Lizzy - "I chose Siena's MSW program because of my strong connection to this supportive community. The social work department has offered me exceptional opportunities I wouldn't have found elsewhere. Through this program, I've discovered capabilities I never knew I possessed and developed my professional goals in ways I hadn't imagined possible."

Program Updates

We are a University!

The social work department attended University Day on September 18th to celebrate Siena's transition to university status. Graduate programs and summer scholars were highlighted as part of the celebration. Two of our advanced standing students, Erin and Elizabeth, represented our graduate program and shared why Siena's MSW program is unique.



The Department Has Moved...

This Summer, the social work department relocated to the second floor of Rosetti Hall in Suite 209.

The third floor held 12 years of memories that we will cherish forever. We made sure our jungle of plants, our artwork and gifts from our seniors moved with us! Please stop by to see the new space and say hi; we welcome more adventures, faces, and stories into our new home.



Faculty & Staff Updates



Carla Sofka

Dr. Carla Sofka retired from Siena after 25 years with the social work department, earning emeritus status. She was awarded the Matthew T. Conlin, O. F. M., Distinguished Service Award and the Raymond Kennedy Award for Excellence in Scholarship. During her time at Siena she taught 2,500 students, taught 12 courses, including her well known “Death, Diversity and Pop Culture” class, and had numerous publications, presentations, and service activities. During this year’s Social Work Celebration, Carla quoted Mr. Rogers; “Transitions are almost always signs of growth, but they can bring feelings of loss. To get somewhere new, we may have to leave somewhere else behind.” Carla shared how one of her greatest joys has been watching students grow personally and professionally. We will miss you Carla. Congratulations on your new journey!



Elisa Martin

Congratulations to Dr. Elisa Martin who was promoted to full Professor. Elisa started her journey with Siena in 2014 as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Elisa has many contributions to the department including the development of the MSW program and a founding member of the Interprofessional Complex Care Team. She is known for her work to bring self-care practice and awareness to campus, throughout the community and within the social work profession. When she’s not on campus, Elisa is often in her barn with her horses Tyler & Metta, acting as Mayor of her town, or spending time with her family. This semester you can find Elisa teaching SWRK 415: SWRK Practice with Groups, Interprofessional Complex Care, and acting as the MSW Program Director.



Kate Kaufman

Congratulations to Dr. Kate Kaufman who earned her Doctorate of Social Work from Simmons University in Boston, MA, with a specialization in leadership, advanced clinical practice, and pedagogy. Kate has been a part of the Siena community since 2010 and worked in the mission office and led health promotion initiatives before accepting a faculty position in the fall of 2024. Kate continues her work families of adoption and athlete mental health and performance. This semester you can find her teaching SWRK 454: Healthcare Communication Skills and SWRK 600: Assessment and Diagnosis.

Faculty & Staff Updates



Qiang Chen

Qiang Chen is excited to join the social work team as an educator and practitioner. He has seven years of experience teaching in BSW and MSW programs, and five years of hands-on work with children and families. Outside of work, he enjoys running, swimming, and skiing. Qiang looks forward to working with the Siena community to support student growth and success. This semester you can find Qiang teaching SWRK 200: Social Work Practice Skills, SWRK 315: Practice with Communities and Organizations and SWRK 615: Advanced Social Work Research.



Sarah Toledano

Sarah Toledano, LMSW is an educator, consultant, and community connector who helps people, organizations, and communities strive for their definition of success. She graduated with a bachelor's degree from Fordham University - College of Rose Hill, with her master's in Social Work from CUNY Hunter College, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Welfare at SUNY Albany. Sarah has worked for six years at Siena College's Center for Academic Community Engagement supporting students and nonprofit organizations in data analysis, program assessment, policy forecasting, as well as marketing and communications. She is currently the Director of Field Experience for the Social Work Department at Siena College. In her free time, Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband and three kiddos, supporting community nonprofits as a board member and volunteer, playing ice hockey with the Arctic Foxes, and watching the Mets, Knicks, Jets, and Devils. You can find her teaching SWRK 410 & 420: Social Work Field Education I & II.



Stacy Rogers '20

Stacy Rogers, LMSW is excited to be "home" at Siena as the Assistant Director of Social Work Programs. Stacy graduated from Siena in 2020 with her BSW and from the College of St. Rose in 2021 with her MSSW. Stacy has been working in medical and clinical social work roles, with a concentration in grief and loss and nature-based therapy. Stacy continues to pursue her clinical license and is passionate about bringing real life social work experience to the collegiate world. Stacy is a military spouse, has two teenagers and two fur-children. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and friends, going on adventures, and savoring a good cup of coffee. You can find her teaching SWRK 301: Internship in Social Work.

Thank you for reading!