UIS Human Services has recently been selected as one of the top Master's degree programs in Human Services for 2020!
Please see page 9 for more information.
Please give a short introduction of yourself.
I have been a registered nurse for twenty years and have truly enjoyed working in and around public health where I have worked in county, district, and state health departments. In my work with these departments, I was afforded the opportunity to work with refugees and immigrants from all over the world. This exposure to other cultures was life changing and they provided me with more wisdom than I could ever have provided to them. Additionally, I have worked under CDC grants with the WISEWOMAN and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Screening programs. These programs opened my eyes to the world of epidemiology, program evaluation, and public awareness and outreach. This awakening prompted me to earn my Masters of Public Health with a Community Health Education graduate certificate from UIS. I am blessed with the most supportive husband, who continues to amaze me with his patience and encouragement. We are the proud parents of our rambunctious Labrador who never misses the opportunity to remind us to get outside to walk and enjoy the outdoors. One of my most relaxing activities I get to do is riding my bicycle. I love riding my bicycle and try to ride as often as possible as I find it to be the best form of therapy! I am currently a Division Manager at the Illinois Department on Aging and oversee the Adult Protective Services Program and the Benefits, Eligibility Assistance, and Monitoring for Managed Care Organization and Community Care Program clients. I am truly blessed to be working for and with some of the best people I have ever encountered.

What are your career interests and goals?
As a nurse, I was only be able to help one patient at a time and usually only after they endured a disease or diseases that could have been prevented or at least minimized. Working under the CDC grants, I discovered that I not only enjoyed working with people, but I really enjoyed working on a macro level to improve programs, write policies, and use data to help drive program and process improvement. Helping people from a macro level allows me to assist more people and address situations preventively from a programmatic perspective. I enjoy the science behind public health in developing a project, collecting the data, and then seeing the results. Using the data allows us to see if the process is working, what can be improved, and what steps we can take to improve the program. To that end, my career goals are to improve the division I am currently overseeing with improvements in these programs. I see a great opportunity to mitigate risks for our population, work towards a preventative model instead of a reactive model, and improve the interagency collaboration to better utilize state and federal resources.

What attracted you to the HMS Department at UIS and more specifically your concentration?
I was attracted to UIS for my MPH because of the online option. As I worked full time, that was the only option that I could fit into my schedule. As I was familiar with UIS from my MPH, when my career took a deviation last year, I again looked at UIS for options to advance my career. I wanted to further my career in the direction of administration and found the HMS Department, specifically the Social Service Administration concentration as a possibility. Reading through the courses, I found my way! The fact that this concentration is fully online was the final selling point for me. After meeting with Dr. Sommers, I realized how much this program would be able to further my career goals of becoming an administrator, which would provide me with the opportunity to impact program change. As I was at a career crossroads, the HMS Department staff were helpful in assisting me with this transition by providing insight and feedback to my questions. I feel that my background as a nurse will only aid my administrative career in that I understand the medical factors that usually encompass human service clients.
Tell us about yourself.
I live in Lincoln, IL with my husband Nick. We have 4 children, 3 boys: Taylor (19), Kaleb (18), Nate (17) and 1 girl: Amie (15) and one puppy, Harley Quinn (2). I work full-time for the Illinois Department of Human Services as a Caseworker. I process intake and redeterminations for SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid in Logan, DeWitt, and Menard counties. I also own and operate a home based business that specializes in women's sexual health and wellness. I received my AA from Heartland Community College in 2012 and double majored in Criminal Justice and Psychology at University of Illinois Springfield in 2017. In my free time I enjoy traveling (Disney is one of our favorites), spending time with my family, playing with my puppy, and binge watching reality television.

What are your career interests and goals?
Prior to working for IDHS, I worked for Illinois Department of Corrections. Both of my parents worked for IDOC, my father in security and my mother in clinical services, and I have always felt a calling to that field. Ideally I would love to work at IDOC again, but in Clinical Services as a Corrections Counselor. I think that my background in social services combined with my education would be an incredible asset to the department. Eventually I would love to work in program administration for IDOC to help develop and implement interventions that assist offenders during incarceration and upon release, provide them with tools necessary to thrive, and ultimately work to reduce recidivism rates.

Of the courses that you completed within your concentration, which course did you enjoy the most? Why?
The course that I have enjoyed the most was Dual Diagnosis and Relapse Prevention (HMS 528). The textbook and associated literature that we used during that class was some of the most relevant material, as a matter of fact it is one of the few books that I have retained at the end of a semester and I have found myself referencing it frequently in my classes since then. I believe that one of the biggest hurdles in treating individuals with substance abuse is the presence of a mental health disorder, and the concurrent treatment of both is necessary for a successful outcome.

What motivates you personally and professionally?
One of my "other duties as assigned" while working at IDOC was certified urinalysis screener. While it was far from glamorous, I took solace in the fact that my integrity and attention to detail was ensuring that the people that had my six, and that of my brothers and sisters, were not under the influence of illicit drugs. In 2016, as I sat through my annual recertification training, an officer from Illinois State Police came to speak with us. He discussed a small town, close to Springfield, that was experiencing a heroin epidemic that was much beyond their ability to handle. As I listened to several of the stories, I suspected he was talking about my hometown. A few minutes later, he confirmed my suspicion. The small central Illinois town where I had grown up, made my home, established my career, and was still raising my family. In that moment I decided that I wanted to be part of the solution; not necessarily for the sole benefit of my hometown, but for humanity as a whole. The most effective way for me to do that was by working with one of the most underserved populations, men and women incarcerated in IDOC. Still pursuing my undergrad at the time, I added Psychology as an additional concentration and signed up to volunteer with Safe Passages. Safe Passages is a program that allows residents to come to the safety complex, surrender any drugs or paraphernalia in their possession without penalty, and be directed to a cooperating treatment facility. I also began attending and volunteering with the Substance Use Prevention Coalition that focuses on harm reduction, treatment, and prevention strategies.
Please give a short introduction of yourself.
My name is Stephany Trejos and I’m from Southern California. I’ve lived in Illinois for approximately 6 years. I have 2 young boys, ages 6 and 4. I received my bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Vanguard University of Southern California in Costa Mesa, CA. I obtained my Master of Arts in Human Services with a concentration in Child & Family Studies at UIS. I am currently pursuing my second master’s in Social Work with an emphasis in Advanced Clinical: Mental Health at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

What does your experience in the field look like?
I have always had a passion for helping others especially those that are underrepresented. I have been a volunteer and mentor for girls in gangs while living in Los Angeles, CA as well as been a tutor for children in low-income housing projects that are considered high risk. I have experience working with domestic violence victims specifically undocumented Spanish speaking women and children which allowed for me to have a better understanding in legal ramifications for violence against women, advocacy through housing, employment, education and child welfare. When I moved to Illinois, I worked within the child welfare system in specialized cases where children had been placed in foster homes and/or group homes across Central Illinois. Through this experience I was also able to work with older youth in the Independent Living Option/Transitional Living Program ages 18-21, specifically youth in care who were also young parents. I have been humbled enough to work with a diverse population from victims to perpetrators and have seen that they have many similarities but require different services.

What is your current job/role?
I am currently employed with the Illinois Department of Corrections and my primary duties are preparing male incarcerated individuals for their conditional release upon serving their sentences. Through this role I have been given the opportunity to utilize my experience and knowledge in pre-release and post-release planning for the incarcerated population. I have established coordination and networking with outside agencies to provide individuals with referrals and resources across the state. My goal is to help as best I can for a successful reintegration of the parolee to the community through different pre-release planning objectives and goals that need to be met prior to post-release.

Any information you would like to share with current students?
My advice to current and future Human Services students is to COMMUNICATE! I think that was one of my biggest challenges during my graduate program; feeling a sense of unknown and not realizing that I had the best support through my professors, advisors and peers. We’re all going to have bad days and remember SELF-CARE! Working within the social services field we get overwhelmed and try to help our clients but forget about ourselves. One benefit that this program has is the accessibility to the professors, advisors and utilizing your peers for guidance. It’s so important to engage and be a part of the discussions through in-person sessions and starting dialogue by bouncing ideas from one another. This program brings people from so many different fields and some outside of the helping profession, but through it you really do learn from one another and get the opportunity to network.
Tribute to Dr. Carolyn Peck

Recently, Dr. Carolyn Peck announced her retirement from UIS and the Human Services Department. Our department tips our collective hat to her and thanks her for her extortionary service to the department, the college, the university, the community and profession.

Dr. Carolyn Peck has served and taught at the University of Illinois at Springfield since Fall 2002. She was promoted to Associate Professor in Fall 2008. During her tenure at UIS, Dr. Peck has served with distinction. She was awarded the 2010 University Illinois Springfield Faculty Excellence given to a senior faculty member who is honored for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service; and for serving as a role model and mentor to other faculty. Dr. Peck was recipient of the 2014 Dorothy S. Kimball Award, which was established through the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland to honor individuals in a twelve-county area for outstanding accomplishment in the field of aging and on behalf of older adults and their caregivers.

Dr. Peck served on the University Tenure Review Committee from 2009 to 2012, and was a member of the UIS Chancellor’s search from 2010 to 2011. In addition, she was a member UIS Provost Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs Search, 2011-2012. She was also a member UIS College Education Human Services Dean Search in 2012. Finally, Dr. Peck chaired nine tenure track faculty department searches.

Dr. Peck recruited and secured Dr. Pauline Boss for the Continuing Education Conference entitled Loss, Trauma, and Resilience: The Myth of Closure with Ambiguous Loss. Dr. Boss is internationally known for her work on the subject of ambiguous loss. She conducted a six-hour workshop. Additional community sponsorship with Memorial Medical Center enabled CEUs to be provided.

Dr. Peck served as Lead Writer for University Department Program Review in 2014, and was Lead Writer for the University Department Assessment Report in 2016. She was a member of the Campus Sabbatical and Awards Committee, 2012-2016, and was elected Chair three consecutive years, and a member of the Campus Promotions Committee from 2016 to 2018 and was elected Chair during 2017 to 2018. Finally, Dr. Peck contributed to the profession and the community by giving 58 conference presentations and trainings and 18 publications since 2002.

Dr. Peck has been a steady hand at the helm of the Human Services Department for 18 years. We will miss her and wish her the best as she begins a new chapter in her life. Thank you again for your contributions to the department, the college, the university, your profession, and to the community.

Thank you, Dr. Peck
Internship Suggestions

You can find the answers to these questions and more by going to the HMS website. A description of the internship is listed under “Curriculum” and then “Degree Requirements.” You can also find FAQ internship information listed under “Students.”

If you are a semester away from doing your internship, we want to congratulate you on reaching this step in your degree. You have prepared a long time and have put in many hours to do your internship. We know you are excited and anxious about starting your internship. We are excited for you to get started. Typically, the best time to begin preparing for your internship is at the beginning of the semester prior to your internship. There are varying requirements depending on your concentration. Requirements are based on the focus of your concentration and are required to complete 400 hrs. For example, students in the ASA concentration are required to complete a 500 hr. internship. All other students are required to complete 400 hrs.

How do you begin the process? After reading the information on the website, explore with your advisor what is required for your concentration and where you might like to do your internship. Your advisor can provide information about contacting the agency where you would like to complete your internship. Different placements may have preferences about how to contact them. Many require a professional resume and often a placement interview. Prospective field placements want to know of your interest and competencies. Once the field site has accepted you, you need to complete several forms that establish a working agreement between you, the field site, and the university. In order to begin accruing your internship hours, you need to have completed and submitted the forms to your advisor. The forms require your advisor’s signature, your field site supervisor’s signature, and your signature. Following are the forms that need to be submitted: Request for Insurance, Preliminary Placement, Internship Contract, and Internship Application. In addition to these forms you need to submit a copy of your resume and provide a copy of your field site supervisor’s resume.

So, educate yourself about the requirements of your internship and contact your advisor at the beginning of the semester before your internship. Help us help you achieve this important step in your degree!
The department of Human Services is indebted to our wonderful Advisory Board Members who expertise informs our teaching and the content of our courses. Members come from a rich variety of backgrounds as noted below:

Cathy Annerino - Mercy Communities  
Denise McCaffrey - Prevent Child Abuse Illinois  
John Kelker - United Way of Central Illinois  
Mary Jane Forney - IL Department of Human Services  
Valerie Gebhardt - UIS Counseling Center  
Lisa Zuurbier - Illinois Department on Aging  
Mercedes Kent - Gateway Foundation

Summer Class

The following class is being offered during the Summer of 2020:

- HMS 591 - Fundraising in the Nonprofit Sector with Dr. Denise Bockmier-Sommers

More information can be found at: https://www.uis.edu/registration/courseSchedule/

Please check with your advisor about scheduling classes.
The University of Illinois Springfield usually holds a graduation ceremony in May of every year to celebrate and honor the graduating class.

Unfortunately, this year commencement ceremonies will not take place as scheduled in May due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Diplomas will be mailed, and UIS is exploring possible alternatives to honor the Class of 2020. Students will continually hear from President Killeen and Chancellor Koch about upcoming announcements in regards to the graduation ceremony.

For more information and to stay updated with announcements, please visit: https://www.uis.edu/commencement/

Students with questions concerning any of the information above or regarding graduation eligibility should contact Graduation at: (217) 206-7730 or registrar@uis.edu.
Suggested Conferences

Child and Family Studies
- NCFR (National Council on Family Relations) Conference 82th NCFR Annual Conference, Nov. 11-14, 2020, St. Louis, MO. https://www.ncfr.org/ncfr-2020

Publications

News

UIS Human Services has recently been selected by Intelligent.com as one of the top Master's degrees in Human Services for 2020! Within the Intelligent.com selections, UIS came in in first place at being the most affordable. UIS placed in the top 30 overall, out of 151 universities that were assessed.
Department of Human Services

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Suggestions?

If there is anything you would like to see added in the Human Services Newsletter? Do you have a story or experience you would like to be featured? Let us know!
Email Jane Carter: jcart6@uis.edu

Editors

The Spring 2020 Newsletter is brought to you by Jane Carter & Dr. Youngjin Kang. During the COVID-19 outbreak, faculty, staff and students were to finish the semester from a remote location.
We hope you enjoyed this semester's edition!