Greetings from the Department Chairperson and BSW Program Director Dr. Pamela Twiss:

We hope that this newsletter finds all of you enjoying good health and a fine summer. 2010-2011 was a very busy year for our program, with faculty, staff and students engaged in efforts on and off campus throughout the year. Our BSW degree program continues to be a very vital program at the University, admitting approximately 40 majors in the fall of 2010 and close to 30 at the beginning of the past spring term in 2011. Many of our graduates are moving directly into MSW Programs and taking advantage of Advanced Standing status based on their high GPAs. This dramatically reduces the number of credits needed to obtain an MSW degree. Speaking of Advanced Standing, if you graduated from our undergraduate program between 2007 and the present, remember that your undergraduate courses can be used as foundation content for an MSW degree if you have a high enough GPA and meet other criteria. There is a time limit, however. Our CalU MSW Program gives students a six-year time limit (from time of graduation with an accredited undergraduate degree). If you are planning on pursuing an MSW degree and have not yet done so, the clock is ticking. Please let us know if you have any questions about Advanced Standing for an MSW degree. Our BSW Program Mission requires that we focus beyond providing an education in the classroom. As social workers and members of the CalU community, we know that there is significant suffering occurring during these difficult economic times. Our students, through their social work student organizations continued during this past academic year to be engaged in a number of community service activities. If you are interested in supporting their efforts, please contact the Social Work Department and we can direct you to the student officers. The University is also trying to respond to the needs of our own graduates. The University is offering free assistance in locating jobs for CalU graduates as a service to our Alumni. If you are interested in these services, please contact Alumni Relations or Career Services. Faculty, staff and students in social work and other disciplines are also actively involved in the Northern Appalachian Network, a free membership organization that brings together faculty, staff, students and community members across the region to celebrate our region’s unique assets and to provide education and opportunities to discuss current challenges. This past year, social work faculty participated in three community education events focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with Marcellus shale gas extraction. We also had a one-day conference titled Celebrating Northern Appalachia in Word and Song this past April of 2011. If you are interested in more information on the Network, please contact me at twiss@calu.edu. If you would like to give back to the profession in other ways, consider serving as a field instructor at your place of employment. Field education (practicum) is a critically important part of your social work education. We are always looking for experienced social work professionals to serve as field instructors. Also noteworthy is the fact that the BSW Program received notification in July, 2010, that at the June meeting of the Commission on Accreditation, Council on Social Work Education, it received full reaccreditation for eight years.

Dr. Pamela Twiss, Dept. Chairperson & BSW Director

The MSW Program held two successful open house events this past year and participated in recruitment events at a number of venues. As a result, we will admit the largest number of students ever for the 2011-2012 academic year.
Please encourage anyone thinking about applying for admission in 2012, to send in their applications as early as possible beginning in September. Our deadline for applications is June 15, 2012.

Dr. Norma D. Thomas, MSW Program Director

Our BSW & MSW graduates and awardees in 2010-11 were:

**BSW Awardees:** The fall 2010 award recipients were: Ms. Emily Yahner for Academic Excellence and Mr. Matthew Piroth as the Outstanding Senior in Social Work. In May 2011, the Academic Excellence in Social Work award was given to Marisa Axel and the Outstanding Senior Award in Social Work went to Anthony Kane, Jr.

**Graduates:** Cynthia Andrews; Marisa Axel; Lauren Colosimo; Amber Harris; Kristen Hartmann; Tamie Henry; Emily Hite; Anthony Kane; Kaylee Keefe; Kristin Keefe; Krista Kelly; Erin Lawrence; Anisah Muhammad; Tara Nehas; Eden Olenik; Matthew Piroth; Samantha Pringle; Brandi Rathgeber; Samantha Cottrell-Reilly; Brittney Rose; Robert Salvati; Keshia Shelott; Amanda Starks; Jessica Stolarski; Calyn Tate; LaQueda Taulton; Rashon Taylor; Anthony Vaughan; Vincent Winn; Emily Yahner; Alyssa Yuhaniak.

**MSW Awardees:** Ms. Kelli McElhinney received the Academic Excellence Award and Ms. Gina Trunzo received the Outstanding Student Award.

**Graduates:** Lori Arthurs; Christina Cregut; Mindy Douglas; Rebecca Shetler-Fast; Elizabeth Fieser; Samantha Glagola; Doris Hanning; Kristi Harmon; Heather Holland; William Hovan; Jamie Hudak; Garrett Hoose; Heather Huemme; Katlyn Illig; Kelly McElhinney; Maureen Pauley; Marlene Pritchard; Michelle Russell; Kathy Sneeden; Amelia Spencer; Beth Sumney; Brandi Szabo; Kristi Taylor; Karen Thorhauer; Gina Trunzo; Danielle Warhola; Tania Williams; Darlene Wilson.

**Phi Alpha National Honor Society-Beta Nu Chapter.**

**2011 Inductees:**
- Kadie Leigh Baker BSW
- Nina Hatcher Basile MSW
- Lisa Cheri Cairo MSW
- Whitney Jean DiMaio MSW
- Elizabeth Audrey Comer MSW
- Maureen E. Griffin MSW
- Jessica Boyd Hackney MSW
- Kristina Nichole Hackney MSW
- Kristen Marie Hartmann BSW
- Tamie Rae Henry BSW
- Amy Lynn Lynch MSW
- Kaitlin Marie Illig MSW
- Selina Elizabeth Matis MSW
- Kelli Margaret McElhinny MSW
- Jessica Lynn Pugh BSW
- Amelia Catlin Spencer MSW
- Bridgette Anne Stepien MSW
- Shawna G. Sterling BSW
- Cari Lynn Stofko MSW
- Juliann Sutton MSW
- Sara Beth Thomas MSW
- Gina Marie Trunzo MSW

**Student Associations:**

**BSWSA**

The BSWSA officers for fall, 2010 were:
- President: Matt Piroth; Vice President, Dayna Damaso; Treasurer, Heather Jolley; and Secretary, Hanna Yauger. In spring, 2011 they were: President, Dayna Damaso; Vice President, Hanna Yauger; Treasurer, Heath Jolley; and Secretary, Marriles Saut.

The BSWSA officers for 2011-2012 are:
- President, Hanna Yauger; Vice President, Marriles Saut; Treasurer, Heather Jolley and
Secretary, Danielle Carolla. The organization participated in a number of activities including: creating and presenting holiday ornaments for seniors at the Center in the Woods for the closing BEL 2 grant fall activities; supporting the 2011 National Homeless Coalition Day by building a shelter using corrugated boxes; and sponsoring a Forensic Social Work Forum in April, 2011.

**GSWSA**

The officers for the Graduate Social Work Student Association in 2010-2011 were: President, Gina Trunzo; Vice President, Maureen Pauley; Secretary, Brandi Szabo and Treasurer, Christina Cregut. The GSWSA participated in a number of activities this past year including: Sponsoring a team and raising funds as part of the Alzheimer’s Memory Walk, Washington County; collected needed items for the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan; collected school supplies for the Mt. Zion Community Center in Daisytown, Pa.; and donated to the East End United Community Center Hats & High Tea fundraiser to support the Center’s after school and grief support programs.

The officers for the 2011-2012 academic year are Michael Jones, President; Whitney DiMaio, Vice President; Carie Stofko, Secretary; and Jessica Hackney, Treasurer.

Office for his work with the *Cal U Men United Program* and won first prize in the *Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest*. Twelve students in the *BSW Program* participated in the *Pennsylvania Association of Undergraduate Social Work Education (PAUSWE)* Conference in State College, Pennsylvania, April, 2011. The students attended seminars and networked, accompanied by *Dr. Margaret Christopher*.

**Melanie Smith**, BSW Student, was one of three undergraduate students selected to represent CalU at the PA State System of Higher Education 23rd Annual Undergraduate Women’s Leadership Institute “Fostering the Leadership of Women” Sunday, June 19 - Friday, June 24, 2011 at McKeever Environmental Learning Center. She is a member of the Kappa Beta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. on the CalU campus.

Five students in the *MSW Program* made poster presentations on the outcomes of their program evaluations as part of their SWK 808 Advanced Practice Research course at *Academic Excellence Day-April 20, 2011*. These five students were part of the Hartford Partnership Program in Aging Education Program.

**Other News:**

*Celebration of Social Work Month*

Ms. Geri Jones, Provost, Dr. Beverly Willison, honoree, Dr. Twiss and Dr. Kevin Koury, Dean, College of Education and Human Service Professions

On March 29th, 2011 we celebrated social work month by honoring the life and work of Dr. Beverly Willison. Dr. Willison served as a faculty
member in our undergraduate program and was instrumental to the success of our program and students. She touched the lives of our students and many others across the campus through her work on domestic violence issues, violence against women and sexual assault and trauma. She and our social work students pioneered and developed the Student Sexual Assault Response Team on our campus. Dr. Willison was an early supporter of the campus-wide Peace Project that addresses violence against women. She developed and taught our course on Human Sex and Society.

The March 29th event brought together members of our Board of Advisors, alumni, students, faculty and staff, including some from other disciplines who wanted to join us in celebrating Dr. Willison’s many accomplishments and her contributions to our University community. Proceeds for this event went to the Vulcan Social Work Scholarship Fund at the Foundation for California University of PA. Thanks to the generosity of those present, the fund now has approximately $7,000, helping us near the needed endowment level of $10,000. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Dr. Willison and all of those who attended and/or supported the event.

The Northern Appalachian Network (NAN) (multidisciplinary, across Colleges) hosted the conference Celebrating Northern Appalachia in Word and Song in April, 2011. The NAN also co-sponsored a panel discussion with the Student Wildlife Society on Marcellus Shale Gas Extraction.

The Rural Communities Institute co-sponsored with Entertainment Industries Pittsburgh, Pa., through a grant from the Staunton Farm Foundation, a Media and Mental Health Training at CalU on July 19, 2011. RCI in partnership with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has developed a certificate program for service coordinators who provide services in HUD buildings serving a predominately older population. The first certificates were issued in July, 2011.

Grants:

Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HPPAE):

Dr. Thomas and Ms. Sheri Boyle were the principal investigators for the Hartford Partnership Program in Aging Education Partnership Grant from 2008-2011. This was the last year of the $75,000 three year grant from the Hartford Foundation, to implement the HPPAE program, aimed towards graduating MSW students, competent to practice in agencies serving an older adult population. In total,

Pictured Jessica Myers, Angela Cramer, Dr. Thomas, Cecilia Driscoll, Barbara O’Savage & Holly Ciafoni (2008-2009)

Pictured Katy Blackburn, Sheri Boyle, Dr. Norma Thomas (first row); Garrett Hoose, Lori Dugas, Cassandra Simon, Mary Beth Kelley; Dr. Rosalie Smiley and Kimberly Jackson (2009-2010)
15 students participated in and graduated from this program. Their names are: Katy Blackburn; Angela Cramer; Garrett Hoose; Cecilia Driscoll; Lori Dugas; Heather Holland; Kimberly Jackson; Mary Beth Kelley; Kelli McElhinney; Jessica Myers; Barbara O’Savage; Cassandra Simon; Amelia Spencer; Karen Thorhauer; and Danielle Warhola. Many in this group are currently working in geriatric settings, providing leadership in the area of services to the senior population in our region. Quoting one of the graduates from the program that was providing care for her mother after she suffered a stroke: “I can tell you my social work skills and HPPAE definitely came in handy trying to find services for my mom”. Ms. Holly Ciafoni was the Graduate Assistant on the project for two years and Mr. Charles Richey was the Graduate Assistant during the 2010-11 academic year.

**Dr. Bernadette Jeffrey** is the principal investigator for the BSW Experiential Learning Program (BEL) grant in the amount of $4,000 for the period of July 1, 2010-June 30, 2012. As one of ten universities selected in this cycle, the goal is to implement hands-on opportunities with older adults and students who are likely to enter practice with older adults. The design is to introduce BSW students to the rewards of working with older adults and prepare them for work in our rapidly aging society. Dr. Jeffrey’s work is overseen by the RAISWE Committee and the project works in partnership with Center in the Woods, California, Pa.

**Benjamin Wiley Partnership Program**

Dr. Perry-Burney is the Site Director for the R. Benjamin Wiley Partnership Program which received a $6,500 extension to cover May-September 2010 and an additional $97,200 for summer 2011.

**Dr. Pamela Twiss** is a co-facilitator of the Northern Appalachian Network which was funded for a second year by an FPDC Learning Community Grant. Funding supported the April 11th conference, “Celebrating Northern Appalachia in Word and Song”.

**Faculty News:**

**Faculty Presentations and Publications:**

**Dr. Margaret Christopher** presented a poster on February 13th and 14th, 2011 at the conference of the Association of Maternal and Child Health and Family Voices National Conference at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The title of her presentation was: “Beneath the Radar: Identifying, Rescuing and Rehabilitating Exploited Children”. She also authored an article titled “How to Change Negative Emotions into Positive Action” in the July/August 2010 edition of Coping Magazine.

**Ms. Sharon Juli** presented “Promoting Independence in Elders” on June 21st, 2011 at the PHFA Housing Services Conference “Healthy Housing, Healthy Communities” in State College, PA. She will also present a webinar titled “The Assessment of an Older Person” for
the PHFA/Cal U Certificate of Elder Service Coordination on August 23rd, 2011.

**Dr. Gwendolyn Perry-Burney** was featured in the summer, 2010 California University of Pennsylvania publication titled “President’s Perspective-Supporting Student Success” for work with high school students through the R. Benjamin Wiley Partnership Program, a multi-year effort to help urban high school students prepare for, attend and do well in college. She was selected to attend the 17th Annual “Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring” in Tampa, Fl. on Oct. 28-31, 2010. This conference recruits diverse faculty for university departments and the Frederick Douglass Scholar. Dr. Gwendolyn Perry-Burney served as an official site visitor for the Council on Social Work Education, visiting Syracuse University in New York as part of the reaffirmation study for their joint Master’s and Baccalaureate degree program. She also escorted four male undergraduate students from the Cal U Men United program to the “Black, Brown and College Bound” Conference in Tampa, Florida.

**Mr. Bradley Schaffer**, presented a workshop titled “Jailed Veterans, Reentry and Associated Problems” at the Forensic Trends Conference in Washington, DC on June 2, 2011. He also has an article in a recent issue of PA Lawyers Magazine titled: “A Problem of Magnitude: PA Veterans and the Criminal Justice System”.

**Dr. Norma Thomas** participated in the Leadership Academy in Aging national initiative funded by the Hartford Foundation and administered by the New York Academy of Medicine in 2010-2011. The meetings were held in Portland, Oregon, Tampa, Florida, Long Beach, California and New York, New York. The graduation was held on June 18, 2011. She presented at the Alzheimer’s Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter Conference held at the Four Points Sheraton in Mars, Pa. on the subject of “Hoarding Behavior” in April, 2011. She presented on this same topic for the Long Term Living Training Institute, Hershey, Pa. on December 10, 2010. On April 20, 2011 she presented at the 43rd annual conference of the National Association of Black Social Workers on the topic of “Older African American Male Caregivers-The Untold Story”. On May 23rd she presented at the University of Chongquing, China on Growing Older in the United States on the topic of the “Aging System in the United States”. On June 8, 2011, she again presented on the topic of “Hoarding Behavior” for Greene County Human Services and the Southwest Area Agency on Aging. Dr. Thomas provided a poetry reading workshop at the Northern Appalachian Network Conference and was also a participant on the panel titled “Appalachian Identity”. Dr. Thomas was featured in the winter 2011 Cal U Review alumni magazine, discussing the MSW Program.

**Dr. Pamela Twiss** co-presented “The Other: Northern Appalachia” at the Appalachian Studies Association Annual Conference in Richmond, Kentucky. She also participated in a National of Social Workers Association – Pennsylvania Chapter panel presentation on “The Community Impact of Marcellus Shale Development” at Mansfield University on November 13, 2010. She presented “Over there: Never Here” (Appalachia) for the Faculty Professional Development Committee; she co-presented on the Northern Appalachian Network Learning Community for Academic Excellence Day, and presented as part of a panel on best practices in military social work at the Pennsylvania Association of Undergraduate Social Work Educators Association (PAUSWE) Conference in State College, PA (all in April of 2011). In addition, she participated in a film viewing and panel discussion focused on Marcellus Shale Gas Extraction on April 13, 2011. This event was so-sponsored by the student Wildlife Society and the Northern Appalachian Network. Dr. Twiss was appointed by the Council on Social Work Education to
serve on its new Research Commission for a period of 3 years. She was also featured in the “Professional Social Worker Spotlight” for ongoing support to the social work profession in the winter edition of the Pennsylvania Social Worker, a publication of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Alumni News

On Sunday June 27, 2010, now alumna Brandi Szabo was featured in an article in the Herald-Standard, crediting her advocacy in trying to get adequate housing for a family. Through her efforts, Habitat for Humanity held a groundbreaking for the home of a family in Uniontown. The full story was in the Sunday, June 27, 2010 edition of the Herald-Standard.

In February, 2011 we received word that Misty Shields was promoted to the coordinating position for the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom clinic for returning veterans.

Ms. Kay Dorrance, MSW 2010, BSW 2008, is now the Coordinator of the California University of Pennsylvania Women’s Center.

Ms. Tamie Henry was hired by Washington County Children & Youth Services and Ms. Anisah Muhammad was hired by Fayette County Children & Youth Services.

A number of you let us know that you passed your licensing exam. Congratulations!!!

Stay Tuned

This coming March of 2012, we will be honoring Dr. Virginia (Ginny) Majewski, Associate Dean of the School of Social Work at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana. Please make a note in your calendars and watch your mailboxes for news on this event. We are hoping to fully endow the Vulcan Social Work Scholarship this year from the proceeds of this event.

Please provide us with your current email address as this will be the last hard copy newsletter. Also, as a reminder, we are still in the process of endowing two scholarships—the Vulcan Scholarship and the Social Work Alumni Scholarship. Both will go to support BSW and MSW students. Please send your tax deductible contributions c/o Dr. Norma D. Thomas, 250 University Avenue, California, PA 15419 with the check made out to the Foundation for California University of Pennsylvania and the name of the scholarship in the memo line. Future students will greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

We thank Dr. William Dinello, Dean for the Executive Office, York College, Jamaica, N.Y. for his generous contribution of a book award that will be divided between 5 MSW students for the fall, 2011 semester.

Send us news items by emailing thomas@calu.edu or derocco@calu.edu.