

# WINTER 2024 SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

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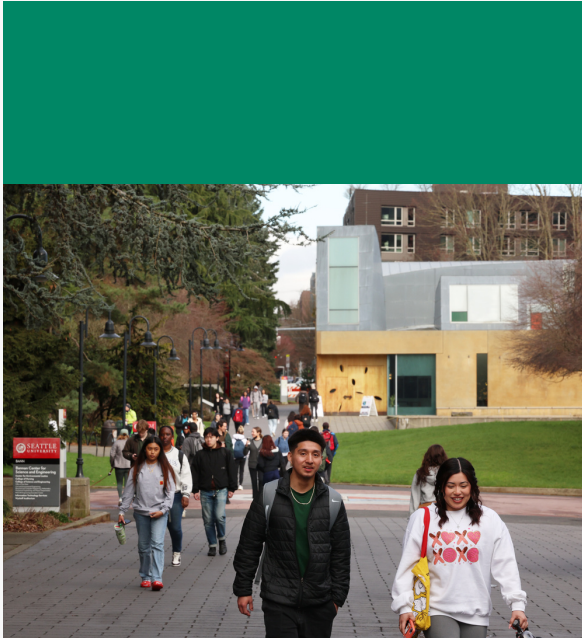
MSW student blog, weekly employment alerts, subscribe & find previous newsletters

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# NEWS

Winter 2024



## FOR SPRING GRADUATES STARTING THE JOB SEARCH...

Seattle U's Career Engagement Office offers individual career coaching appointments for crafting your cover letters & resume, grad school prep, salary negotiation, mock interviewing/interview prep, and more. [Schedule an appointment here!](#)

Also, be sure to [subscribe](#) to our Social Work Employment Alerts, sent out weekly via email.

## MSW PROGRAM APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN UNTIL MAY 19!

- Applications will remain open for 2024 until May 19, pending space in the cohort.
- View admissions requirements and learn about program options [here](#).
- For prospective students who have already completed an application, please keep an eye on your email for further communications!



# NEWS

Winter 2024

## SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT - WASHINGTON LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- The Social Work Licensure Compact bill has passed the House & Senate in Washington and has been now signed into effect by Gov. Jay Inslee. The legislation must first be passed by 7 states before interstate licenses will be issued to qualifying social workers in participating states. The bill has also passed in Missouri, South Dakota, and Utah as of March, 2024.



## FEBRUARY 2024 SOCIAL WORK LOBBY DAY - OLYMPIA, WA

In February, BSW & MSW students from Seattle University went to Olympia, WA for NASW-WA's Advocacy Day. Students attended the NASW-WA Policy Conference to hear social work-related legislative updates and met with their representatives to advocate for social-work related policy issues.





# FACULTY NEWS

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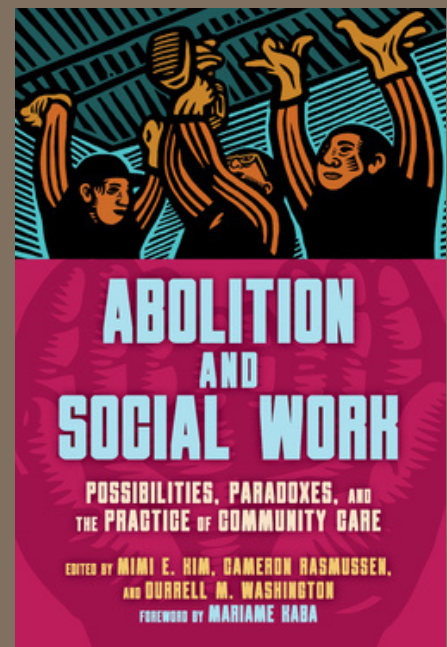


## Professor Sam Harrell - Upcoming Publication Release April 16th!

Prof. Sam Harrell, MSW (Mx./they) wrote a chapter on abolitionist reform for social work, which will be published in *Abolition and Social Work: Possibilities, Paradoxes, and the Practice of Community Care*, edited by Mimi E. Kim, Cameron Rasmussen, & Durrell M. Washington, foreword by Mariame Kaba.

The book will be available April 16, 2024.

» View/Pre-order ***Abolition and Social Work: Possibilities, Paradoxes, and the Practice of Community Care***





# ALUM HIGHLIGHT: SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ

*Written by Allison De Ocampo, MSW Graduate Assistant*



*Sebastian Sanchez, an alumnus of Seattle University's Master of Social Work program, currently works at the Public Defender's Office of King County.*

Equipped with a mental health practitioner certificate, he's currently not pursuing an LICSW. Introduced to social work by his pre-major counselor, Sebastian initially associated it with Child Protective Services (CPS). However, delving into social work teachings, he swiftly grasped its relevance to his interactions, particularly with youth. Sebastian was encouraged to pursue working with his population after growing up in Los Angeles around people who had been incarcerated before.

Reflecting on his academic journey, Sebastian mentioned two lessons that profoundly impacted his career. Inspired by Professor Joseph DeFilippis, he embraces the concept that "there is always more pie." This notion underscores the abundance of resources, compassion, and humanity available in advocacy, whether before judges or in advocating for government funding. Additionally, Sebastian embraces the belief that "everyone is your teacher if you are humble enough to see and receive it," recognizing the value in learning from individuals regardless of their background or position, fostering continuous growth, compassion, and empathy.



Entering the field after graduation, Sebastian encountered several eye-opening surprises that reshaped his professional outlook. Firstly, he realized that every day felt like a “final exam,” where you are bound to make mistakes. Sebastian is committed to acceptance of inevitable challenges. Moreover, he observed that the profession was not as glamorous as perceived, acknowledging the universal struggle and anxieties shared by everyone.

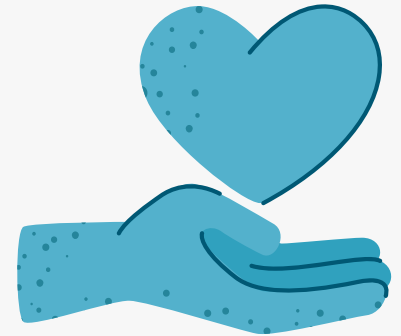
In his role, Sebastian finds representing clients in court to be both challenging and rewarding. From confronting clients to securing not-guilty verdicts, the emotional rollercoaster is real. He acknowledges meeting clients where they are at is important for sustainability.

Reflecting on his future career aspirations, Sebastian expressed a desire to explore teaching someday, viewing it as a natural progression in his professional journey. However, he remains grounded in the present, embracing each day without rushing towards the future. If Sebastian were to advise his student self on academics, he'd stress the importance of paying attention to human development, human behavior, and family classes, drawing on their knowledge daily.



# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ (CONT.)

Discussing the role of social workers in public defense, Sebastian highlights their multifaceted contributions within interdisciplinary collaboration. He emphasizes the fundamental importance of teamwork centered around the client. Sebastian describes the diverse divisions within the Public Defender's Office, from Municipal to District Court and Felony Division, as well as lesser-known areas like Juvenile and Dependency Courts, focusing on rehabilitation and community-oriented approaches for vulnerable individuals. He underscores the pivotal role that social workers play in these collaborations, bringing unique skills such as holding space for clients, understanding diverse perspectives, and communicating with accessibility and empathy. Sebastian contrasts the approach of social workers with that of attorneys, highlighting their prioritization of human connection over legal jargon and their ability to tailor communication to individual needs. He elaborates on the daily tasks social workers undertake, including deciphering client needs, interpreting body language, and advocating for services alongside other professionals. Sebastian emphasizes the extensive collaboration that extends beyond legal teams to include healthcare professionals and community members, as social workers work tirelessly to ensure fair representation for every client. Despite the challenges inherent in the role, Sebastian characterizes social workers in public defense as "Special Ops," navigating complex dynamics with dedication and compassion to uphold justice for all.



*Thank you, Sebastian, for sharing your perspectives with our social work community as a clinical social worker in King County's justice system & Seattle U MSW alumnus!*



# SOCIAL WORK MONTH

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March is **Social Work Month!** 2024's theme is "Empowering Social Workers." According to the [National Association of Social Workers](#), "Our nation needs social workers more than ever.

Homelessness is on the rise. The opioid addiction crisis has hit the United States hard, impacting all races, regions, and economic levels. Suicide, too has risen, according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

Social workers are uniquely qualified to handle these societal troubles. Social workers enter the profession because they truly want to help others. They go through years of education, training, and supervision so they can do the delicate but important work of meeting people where they are and helping them achieve their goals...

However, social workers need support to meet the high demand for their vital work. That is why the Social Work Month theme for 2024 is Empowering Social Workers!

...It is important for the public to support legislation and initiatives that empower and support the social work profession and improve their bottom line. This includes the Improving Access to Mental Health Act, student loan debt relief, and social work safety legislation."



# BSW STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: SOPHIA MERRILL



**Current Program/Year:** BSW Senior Cohort 2024

**Hometown:** Los Angeles

**Favorite Seattle Spot:** Oh goodness....There are so many but my all time favorite is a little neighborhood pub called Hopvine

**Current Practicum Placement:** Comprehensive Life Resources

**This year, you've started & begun facilitating a Social Work Club at Seattle U. Can you tell us more about what inspired you to create a Social Work Club at SU & your future hopes for the club?**

I started the Social Work Club in tandem with a few other students in my cohort who all felt that there were some gaps within the academic curriculum that could be filled through a student led club. Some of those gaps were hands on experience with populations students might be interested in working with one day, exposure to local efforts towards social justice and equity, introductions to individuals who have important experience and insight into the field, and a place to just connect with other students and build community both within the different cohorts and among different disciplines as well. It's been awesome to have people of different majors come in and provide a different perspective and opportunity to recognize how versatile Social Work is within any discipline. For example, a civil engineering major came to our club and we had a great conversation on how social workers can get involved in community conversations surrounding infrastructure impacting different populations within the city.

My hope for the club is that it can continue to grow and expand to further those interdisciplinary conversations and become a beacon towards social change within the Seattle University community and beyond. Social work is, at it's core, based on relationships and my dream is that this club can continue to emulate a deep desire to cultivate those relationships in a way that is healing, empowering and transformative for everyone involved.

**Are you involved in any other on-campus activities, clubs, or research at SU?**

Nope haha, this club has demanded a lot of attention and as a senior as well, I've found that I really only have the capacity for this one thing which I'm happy to give my undivided attention to. I am involved around the city however through volunteering and social events.

**What inspired you to go into social work, and why did you choose Seattle University's program?**

Oh this is a long story but I'll try to cut it back a bit. I always knew I was going to do something with my life that promoted healing and humanity. When I was in high school I toyed with the idea of becoming a therapist, but I didn't have a lot of drive or interest in continuing with school right after graduation so I took a LONG time off, about seven or eight years. During that time I experienced a lot of life through work, travel and the occasional course at a community college here in Seattle. When I realized I was ready to go back to school, I had recognized a thread connecting everything in my life that had felt fulfilling or that I felt pulled towards. It was working with people that influenced nearly every choice I had made up until then. I knew then that I would work towards a career in helping and connecting with others, building transformative relationships and healing myself in the process. I chose Seattle University because my mom and my aunt both went here and loved it. I also like the Jesuit traditions rooted in social justice and thought, what better place to learn about social work than a Jesuit college.

**Describe your role at your current practicum and what population you work with.**

I am placed at Comprehensive Life Resources in Tacoma which works with a wide variety of populations. It has an outpatient clinic for children and adults, an SUD program, homeless outreach programs, inpatient programs, psychiatric services and case management. I work within the adult and children's outpatient program and the school connect program. I mainly work with children which has been a major theme throughout my life and I can see myself continuing with as I further my career.

**Do you volunteer or do any social work activities outside of school?**

When I first started as a junior at Seattle University I was volunteering at a crisis line in the city and I loved it! If anyone is interested in gaining exposure within the field, I would HIGHLY recommend volunteering at your local crisis line. The training I received was invaluable and it exposed me to situations and conversations with people I never

# BSW STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: SOPHIA MERRILL (CONT.)

thought I would ever have in my life. It was beyond empowering. I unfortunately had to step away to focus on school but I'm back to volunteering with KEXP, Seattle's non-profit radio station which has an amazing emphasis on community work,



outreach to local artists and musicians, and really champions music in a way that feels tangible and important. I have also been helping individuals in the club connect with volunteering opportunities they feel drawn towards which has been very rewarding.

## **What has been the most rewarding or meaningful part of your time in the BSW program and/or social work in general?**

I would say the connections I have made with both those in my cohort and the faculty here at Seattle University has been some of the most meaningful I have made in my life. I've also gained an incredible amount of self-awareness within the structures of society, and how my positionality affects my practice within social work. Honestly, I feel like I'm working towards a degree in becoming a better more self-aware and socially involved person.

## **What would you like to do in social work after graduation?**

I was accepted into the Advanced Standing MSW program at the University of Washington, which I will start next fall! From there I'll work towards obtaining my License in Clinical Social Work so I can go into mental health counseling. After that, who knows? I love having this foundation of social work to then go and play and explore new areas of the field and be open to wherever I feel most drawn towards.



**What's one piece of advice you would give your younger self or future students if you could?**

One piece of advice I would give to my younger self and future students is learn to live your values. In living within your values and embracing every part of life that reflects those values back to you, fulfillment will follow. I've definitely had moments in school where I've had to reflect on what exactly my values are and realize that the life I was living was not in line with who I was or who I wanted to be. But every decision I have made that aligned with my values has led me closer and closer to what I'm meant to do and be in the world and it has been so incredibly validating.

**What personal qualities are you proud to bring with you as a social worker?**

I am proud to be open minded, kind-hearted, hardworking and just overall stoked about people. I love people and I love connection and being in community with others. It makes me feel fulfilled when I can welcome people into my life and in turn, be welcomed into theirs. Connection will always be the backbone of who I am and why I do what I do and I can't wait to see how that manifests in my future.



# MSW STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: TANNER GEORGE

**Current Program/Year:** MSW 2025

**Hometown:** Sumner, WA

**Favorite Seattle Spot:** A coffee shop named 'URL' is by far my favorite spot in Seattle and is located right next to the Seattle University Campus.

**Current Practicum Placement:**  
Bellevue College Neurodiversity  
Navigators



**Are you involved in any on-campus groups, clubs, or activities, and/or are you involved in any research?**

I am not involved in any clubs or on-campus groups however I mostly participate in a group study session with my cohort every Thursday at a local quiet spot called 'Chieftain'. This has been an ongoing tradition for the entirety of the program so far!

**Have you received any awards or scholarships? We want the details!**

I have only received a small scholarship through the school since joining the program therefore I find myself working over weekends and throughout the week to keep up with the costs of school and living. Since I missed the Balmer grant I will be applying for many more options before the start of my second year in the program.

**Where did you get your undergraduate degree and what did you study?**

Graduating in 2021 I was able to complete a B.S. in Psychology at Washington State University. I managed to change my major a few times until I finally settled on Psychology with minors in both Human Development and Anthropology.



# MSW STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: TANNER GEORGE (CONT.)



## **What inspired you to go into social work, and why did you choose Seattle University's program?**

There were a few deciding factors that seemed to line up for me to pursue graduate school. After graduating from WSU, I moved to Baltimore, MD, and found a job working with children on the autism spectrum. I found a calling in not only working with individuals in a therapeutic format but also working around families and how they can grow within their households. At this point, one of my mentors told me to pursue a higher degree in Social Work to not only expand on my own experiences but continue moving up to jobs with more responsibility and impact. I was then sold on an MSW degree! From there I knew I wanted to be back home in Washington and knew about the clinical social justice track Seattle University emphasized within its program. An MSW degree at Seattle University felt perfect for me and my goals!

## **Describe your role at your current practicum and what population you are working with.**

My current practicum is at Bellevue College Neurodiversity Navigators where I work as a peer mentor assisting students in navigating college campus resources and barriers they face in their education. The specific population I work with are individuals who identify as neurodivergent and mostly young adults who are not only new to Bellevue College but also new to college altogether.

## **Do you volunteer or do any social work activities outside of school?**

I am not completing any volunteer work currently; however, I am working on a project through my practicum. Outside of my meetings with the students at my practicum, two other people from my cohort and I have been working on a project to jump-start an alternative program at Bellevue College directly connected to students with disabilities and their educations through STEM-related fields.



# MSW STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: TANNER GEORGE (CONT.)

## **What has been the most rewarding or meaningful part of your time in the MSW program and/or social work in general?**

The most rewarding and meaningful part of my time so far at Seattle University has been the building of strong connections and relationships between me and my professors, classmates, and individuals from my practicum. As I move forward through the program, I am eager to keep growing the relationships I have while continuing to meet new people regularly. On a more personal route, I have received a few positive comments from the students I work with allowing me to not only feel more confident at my practicum but to feel more comfortable building on client rapport with new students.

## **What would you like to do after graduation?**

I would love to do a backpacking trip either here in the States or somewhere abroad as I have only left the country a few times. I enjoy basic hiking around Washington and would like to expand on my experience through long-distance travel. If I am not hiking, I will be job hunting and making sure to relax as much as I can before pursuing a career.



## **What's one piece of advice you would give your younger self or future students if you could?**

One major piece of advice I'd give anyone is that whenever it feels impossible to accomplish a major goal or task, it is almost always possible. When entering the program, I wasn't quite sure how I would do but so far it has been an amazing experience where I have grown as both an individual in Social Work and as a student. It has felt impossible at times moving through the program but the skills I have developed have allowed my goals to become possible.

## **What personal qualities are you proud to bring with you as a social worker?**

I try to bring a timely sense of humor, and a positive and compassionate demeanor to interactions with others. Additionally, I believe it is important to remain optimistic through daily stressors.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Virtual MSW Info Sessions

Join us via Zoom for an introduction to the MSW curriculum, program options, tuition, scholarships, and the application process. Bring your questions!

### Upcoming Dates

- *Thursday, March 28, 2024 - 12-1 pm Pacific*
- *Thursday, April 11, 2024 - 12-1 pm*
- *Thursday, April 25, 2024 - 12-1 pm*
- *RSVP here!*

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## Social Work Department Commencement Celebration

Students, mark your calendars for our social work graduation celebration happening in the week prior to commencement! See your email for more details.



## Seattle University Commencement Ceremony

- **Baccalaureate Mass** - Saturday, June 8th, 2024 @ 2 p.m., St. James Cathedral
- **Undergraduate Ceremony** - Sunday, June 9th, 2024 @ 11 a.m., Climate Pledge Arena
- **Graduate Ceremony** - Sunday, June 9th, 2024 @ 5 p.m., Climate Pledge Arena
- [More information here.](#)



## Latest MSW Student Blog:

### “SOCIAL WORK VALUES”

“Social work is a values-driven profession. Though social workers may vary in personal values and styles of practice, the field of social work maintains a set of core values to guide the profession and set a standard for practitioners. These core values, which the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) includes in their Code of Ethics, are service, social justice, dignity & worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.”

[READ](#)



## Employment Alerts

Sign up for weekly employment alert emails! Each Tuesday, we will send you a weekly email with a list of relevant employment opportunities. Employers, please send your employment opportunities to [SocialWorkJobs@Seattleu.edu](mailto:SocialWorkJobs@Seattleu.edu)

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