BECOME AN AGENT OF CHANGE
OUR PRIME PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO HELP PEOPLE.

DALAI LAMA
SOCIAL WORK IS ABOUT PEOPLE.
Social workers relieve human suffering; alleviate social and economic injustice; and ensure their clients’ social, economic and psychological needs are met. Social work is about being an agent of change.

You have the desire to help others, to make a difference, to effect changes that have an impact on the world … now you need the knowledge and skills to provide that help. Find it at Binghamton University — the place to pursue your master’s degree in social work (MSW).

Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, Binghamton’s MSW program trains competent and effective social workers in an empowering, inclusive environment. Our mission is to prepare social workers for autonomous, knowledge-based, advanced generalist practice within an integrated community of scholars, practitioners and learners.

We help students acquire a broad base of knowledge and skills to address the needs of families, individuals, groups, organizations and communities. Binghamton University is committed to education that furthers social and economic justice, as well as to developing professional social workers who will become leaders in a complex, multicultural society.

“Students in our MSW program benefit from small class sizes, individual attention and strong partnerships between the social work program and the community agencies where they receive hands-on social work training. Our faculty are committed to ensuring the success of our students, as evidenced by their high level of interaction with them in the classroom, the CCPA and the community we serve.”

Victoria Rizzo
Chair and Associate Professor, Social Work
Students are admitted for either full-time or part-time study in the 64-credit MSW program.

- Full-time students complete the program in two years — four semesters, 16 credits each semester.
- Part-time students complete the program in 3.5 years including summer course enrollment — six or seven credits each semester.

OUR APPROACH EMBRACES:

- An advanced generalist curriculum that trains practitioners for multilevel practice, engaging with individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations and service-delivery systems in identifying needs and strategies to initiate and produce change.
- A bio-psycho-social-spiritual-cultural perspective that integrates all five holistic elements across the curriculum through course content and field instruction.
- Lifespan development in which all courses integrate how issues may affect diverse clients in different contexts throughout their development and across their lifespan.
- Commitment to social justice that teaches how to apply strategies of advocacy and social change to advance social and economic justice.
- Service learning that involves collaborating with community agencies to meet specific service needs while enhancing student learning.

The Department of Social Work is part of the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) at Binghamton University. CCPA prepares graduates to work with individuals, communities and organizations for the public good. Our faculty members — prominent scholars and outstanding teachers and advisors — provide our students with a rich and rewarding academic experience. Our students are bright and accomplished.

GET ANSWERS ABOUT THE MSW PROGRAM

AMY EDWARDS
Department Secretary
aedwards@binghamton.edu

Amy Edwards has been with Binghamton University since 1999. She joined the Department of Social Work in 2006 after previously working in the Graduate School. She provides administrative support to faculty, staff and students.

BRIAN FLYNN, LCSW
Director of Admissions and Student Services
bjflynn@binghamton.edu

Brian Flynn has experience as a psychotherapist, an emergency room social worker and a disaster mental health volunteer. He is co-director of the Center for Trauma and Disaster Mental Health.
“Social work is an act of compassion and a commitment to foster change in many aspects of life experiences,” says Eva Denson ’91, MSW ’11.

Her own life experiences brought Denson to social work. She made a commitment to this field after working in two related ones: mental health and human services. In both of these areas, she gained critical experience working directly with people from diverse backgrounds.

“Many of these individuals were marginalized by social service agencies and deemed incapable of making or taking responsibility for changes in their lives,” Denson explains. “I learned that all human beings must be offered the necessary education and exposure to make decisions about the areas of their lives they are willing to change,” she adds.

A decision to change her own life brought Denson back to Binghamton University, where she received a bachelor of science degree in human development in 1991.

“I chose the MSW program at Binghamton because of its affordability, location and collaboration with community providers who share common interests, investments and goals,” she says. “I quickly developed a strong admiration for the individuals who practice in the field of social work, and the many sacrifices made to assist others in empowering their own lives,” she adds.

The most valuable thing Denson learned at Binghamton, she says, was “to apply theory to practice settings.” Field placement experiences at CASA/ACCORD, the Family & Children’s Society and the Southern Tier Aids Program gave Denson plenty of opportunity to do just that. Given her previous experience in human services and mental health, she was well prepared for the task.

Now, Denson is ready to tackle whatever challenges come her way. After all, change is what social work is all about.
THE MSW PROGRAM prepares students for beginning and advanced practice in social work in a variety of settings. The curriculum includes courses in human behavior and the social environment, social welfare services and policy, research methods, administration, practice methods, field education and special topics. Students learn to engage individual and community strengths to further the understanding, treatment and prevention of individual and social problems.

Our curriculum consists of two levels: the professional foundation and the advanced generalist curriculum. Students must complete the professional foundation before moving on to the advanced generalist portion of the curriculum. Students proceed through several course sequences during the program. The lists on page 5 show how our courses break down at both levels, for full- and part-time students.

SOCIAL WORK CAPSTONE PROJECT
The capstone project offers students the opportunity to integrate and apply learning to demonstrate mastery of social work knowledge, skills, practice behaviors, ethics and values necessary for evidence-based, advanced generalist practice. In their final week, students are presented with an advanced generalist case study and, working in teams, develop a poster presentation that illustrates their assessment and intervention in micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice.

MPA-MSW DUAL-DEGREE PROGRAM

Binghamton University offers students the opportunity to combine a master’s degree in social work with a master’s degree in public administration (MPA). By carefully structuring the sequence of courses, recognizing comparable course offerings and using courses in one program to count as electives in the other, the MPA-MSW dual-degree program allows students to complete both degrees in three years of full-time study, without compromising the professional standards of either program. The 42-credit-hour MPA program and the 64-credit-hour MSW program can be completed as part of a 93-credit-hour, dual-degree program (rather than the 106 credit hours required to complete the two programs separately).

The dual MPA-MSW prepares students for administrative positions in social service agencies. It also helps social workers gain the management and administrative skills needed for roles as supervisors, administrators and agency heads. Similarly, public administration practitioners recognize the need for specialized knowledge and skills to respond to an environment of increasing policy and organizational complexity within social welfare agencies. The program is designed to ensure students acquire both the management and social work skills necessary to excel in these environments.
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<tr>
<th>CURRICULUM FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS</th>
<th>CURRICULUM FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FALL, YEAR 1</td>
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<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 504 Foundations of Scientific Inquiry with Social Systems</td>
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<td>SW 505 Human Behavior in the Social Environment</td>
<td>SW 510 Generalist Social Work Practice I</td>
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<td>SW 510 Generalist Social Work Practice I</td>
<td>SW 515 Social Welfare Policy and Programs</td>
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<td>SW 515 Social Welfare Policy and Programs</td>
<td>SW 506 Psychopathology and Pharmacology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 591 Field Instruction I</td>
<td>SW 592 Field Instruction II</td>
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<td>SW 503 Diversity and Oppression</td>
<td>SW 515 Social Welfare Policy and Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 511 Generalist Social Work Practice II</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 512 Generalist Social Work Practice III</td>
<td>SW 506 Psychopathology and Pharmacology</td>
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<td>SW 506 Psychopathology and Pharmacology</td>
<td>SW 592 Field Instruction II</td>
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<td>SW 593 Field Instruction III</td>
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<td>SW 521 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals</td>
<td>SW 521 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals</td>
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<td>SW 522 Advanced Social Work Practice with Organizations</td>
<td>SW 523 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups</td>
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<td>SW 523 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups</td>
<td>SW 520 Evaluation of Social Work Practice</td>
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<td>SW 593 Field Instruction III</td>
<td>SW 594 Field Instruction IV</td>
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<td>SW 524 Advanced Social Work Practice with Families</td>
<td>SW 524 Advanced Social Work Practice with Families</td>
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<td>SW 525 Advanced Social Work Practice with Communities</td>
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<td>SW 520 Evaluation of Social Work Practice</td>
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FIELD INSTRUCTION is a pivotal and integral part of the MSW curriculum. In their field placements, students acquire practice experience, developing competence in the skills that will help them attain their personal and professional goals within a framework of social work values and ethics.

Field instruction consists of a professional foundation and advanced generalist training. In both levels, students spend 510 hours in the field and earn eight academic credits for field instruction by participating 15 hours per week for 34 weeks over two semesters. The cumulative number of hours of fieldwork totals 1,020. Students are expected to fulfill their field hours over the course of two weekdays, during regular agency hours, under the supervision of a licensed MSW-level field instructor. Both full-time and part-time students are expected to adjust their schedules to meet the field requirement.

Field instruction is one way the University demonstrates its commitment to the community. This is particularly important to a state university graduate social work program that is dedicated to providing competent service to the state’s disadvantaged populations. Through a close working relationship with a broad range of social agencies (falling within a 100-mile radius of the University), Binghamton’s MSW program can more clearly define the needs of the community.

SPECIALIZED FIELD PLACEMENTS

- **Promise Zone** interns are part of a dedicated team working with Broome County schools on systemic school-climate change by combining individual social-emotional support to students, community outreach to families and professional development for administration and staff. This community-school model has goals of establishing community schools across Broome County and ensuring that every child will succeed through collaboration with parents, schools and community partners.

- Each treatment model for our evidence–based practice field placements integrates best-practice interventions that are built on the concepts of recovery and empowerment for persons with a diagnosis of serious mental illness. In these internships, students learn skills proven through clinical research to be effective. The skills training...
Our MSW program offers a unique opportunity to earn a degree in a rigorous program delivered in a highly supportive environment. Our faculty are leading scholars in their areas, conducting cutting-edge research, while simultaneously committed to creating educational environments that maximize the learning of each student.

Laura Bronstein
Dean, College of Community and Public Affairs
Professor, Social Work

The Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training (MBHET) program, funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, prepares students to provide mental and behavioral health services for specialized populations. MBHET is offered in collaboration with other upstate New York MSW programs. Students accepted into the program receive enriched educational, training and career-development opportunities that focus on evidence-based interventions, trauma recovery, cultural competence and interprofessional practice with vulnerable populations. Some of the enhanced educational experiences are provided online and connect students with peers and presenters from across New York. Some placements are reserved for students enrolled in the advanced concentration year (including advanced-standing students).

The Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HPPAE) is a prestigious award given to students interested in working with older adults. Entry into the program recognizes students for their high academic achievement, leadership potential and social work skills. Part of an initiative under the national Gero-Ed Center, Binghamton’s HPPAE uses a rotational field model, where students are placed in one community agency for the academic year, but are also exposed to issues of aging across the continuum of human development from birth through end-of-life. Placements emphasize providing support to older adults that enhances their ability to continue living in their community. The MSW program and local providers in aging services work together to support students interested in (or who think they have interest in) serving older adults and their families. Through this initiative we hope to increase the number of students who specialize in social work practice with older adults.

provided in these treatment settings prepares students to enter a changing workforce by enabling them to deliver advanced, skill-based interventions.
THE INSTITUTE FOR INTERGENERATIONAL STUDIES (IFIS) was founded in 2009 to develop and implement interdisciplinary research that guides human-service programs that serve people across their lifespan. The IFIS supports University-community collaboration, program development, practice and public policy initiatives that result in effective partnerships that positively impact children, youth, caregivers, older persons and service providers.

IFIS RESEARCH CENTERS

- The Southern Tier Center on Aging is a partnership with Upstate Medical University and the Broome County Aging Futures Consortium. Its mission is to be a pioneer in interdisciplinary approaches to identifying, researching and fostering positive change in challenges confronting older adults and their caregivers.

- Through interdisciplinary research, practice, family engagement and outreach, the Center for Family, School and Community Partnerships enhances and sustains educational opportunities and quality of life for children, families and communities.

IFIS-AFFILIATED PROGRAMS

- The Center for Trauma and Disaster Mental Health provides professional/paraprofessional training in evidence-based approaches to trauma and disaster mental health.

- The Community Generativity Institute trains human-service professionals and community members in an expressive writing technique that has a strong evidence base for improving psychological, physical, social, behavioral and economic health. The expressive writing technique used by the institute (life-writing) fosters new levels of psychological integration that affect overall well-being.
Challenging the status quo leads to societal change

Self-described as “overly empathetic,” Alice Sounthala ‘11, MSW ’14, always wanted to be in a helping profession. Armed with a bachelor’s degree in human development, she worked in a few human service jobs. “But I always felt I was dispensable,” she says.

Seeking greater security, Sounthala chose to explore social work. She performed unpaid internships where she could shadow social workers.

“Through these internships, I got to work with people who held similar values as I do,” she explains. “These social workers were incredibly passionate about helping others; they were able to work effectively with their clients while also maintaining their emotions. I wanted to learn to do that.”

Once Sounthala decided to get her MSW, Binghamton was the only school she applied to.

“I didn’t know which area of social work I wanted to specialize in, so I was looking for a generalist program, which Binghamton offers. And after researching other schools, Binghamton made the most sense financially,” she says. “I was also extremely pleased with my undergraduate experience in the CCPA. I felt that if I chose Binghamton again, I would receive the same quality of education I received as an undergrad.”

Sounthala pursued her MSW full-time and graduated in May 2014. She quickly landed a position with The Neighborhood Center, a nonprofit agency in Utica, N.Y., that provides outreach, preventive, developmental and therapeutic human services to children and families in central New York. She joined the center’s Mobile Crisis Assessment Team, working as a crisis counselor serving Chenango County.

Binghamton’s combination of classroom instruction and field-service training were excellent preparation for the position, says Sounthala.

“My experience in the field gave me the opportunity to work with real clients in real-life situations, while my courses gave me a general understanding of the mental health population as well as taught me both specific therapeutic techniques and how to interact with clients in particular situations,” she explains.

“No one is more passionate about social justice than social workers. And, to create social justice, we must create social change. This happens by challenging the status quo and making policy changes in favor of those who are underserved and those who may not have the necessary tools to make changes for themselves.”

Alice Sounthala ‘11, MSW ’14 Clinical Social Worker
Fighting injustice through constant change

John E. Jones ’12, MSW ’14, has a bachelor’s degree in philosophy, politics and law. Perhaps that’s why a philosopher’s words come to mind when he discusses his profession. “Bruce Lee said, ‘Be like water.’ He meant you always have to be changing,” Jones explains. “As social workers, we’re trying to alleviate social injustice and we’re dealing with a system that’s dynamic. Problems are complicated and complex and they’re always changing. Social workers have to be agents of change because nothing remains static.”

Dynamic describes Jones, who has been working with Binghamton’s Promise Zone for more than two years, first as an intern (his first field placement), then as a graduate assistant and finally as an assistant counselor. He’s also seeking employment as a clinical social worker in a university setting.

Jones gained experience working with college-age clients during his second field placement, at Binghamton’s University Counseling Center. “At the University Counseling Center I worked with students dealing with various predicaments. It was the most challenging experience of my life, but it was worth it,” he notes.

With two required field placements and demanding coursework, Jones says the MSW program is “tough.” But he believes it’s ideal preparation for a profession that carries with it a heavy workload. “The field of helping people requires you to be able to do a lot of different things at one time,” he says. “In the MSW program you have to do that, too; it models what social work is really like.”

The ability to multitask is one of the valuable lessons Jones learned as an MSW student. The importance of remaining connected to the people you’re trying to help is another. But most essential, according to Jones, is the role empathy plays in any goal to change the world. He says, “If you want to make this world a better place, you must understand empathy and know how to practice it.”

“We’re living in a time of serious social injustice at a lot of levels, and as a social worker you’re trying to crawl through that system to alleviate all those things at one time. There aren’t a lot of people doing that work, so that puts a lot on you. You have to be able to handle that.”

John E. Jones ’12, MSW ’14
Clinical Social Worker
ADVANCED STANDING
Grads of a Council on Social Work Education-accredited undergraduate social work program may be eligible for advanced standing in Binghamton’s MSW program. Students must have received their bachelor’s degree within seven years of beginning the University’s MSW program. Advanced-standing students are given credit for up to 29 hours of coursework if they can demonstrate they received comparable educational content in undergraduate courses for which they received a grade of B or better.

A list of courses students may be given credit for, as well as additional details about advanced standing, are available at binghamton.edu/social-work/academics/advanced-standing.html.

TRANSFER CREDIT
Graduate courses successfully completed at another institution’s accredited MSW program may be accepted for credit toward Binghamton’s MSW degree, in lieu of any of the required courses, provided such courses covered content similar to that taught in Binghamton University’s required courses.

Elective credit toward the MSW degree cannot be obtained until students have completed their professional foundation coursework in the program.

Per the Council on Social Work Education, academic credit cannot be given for life experience or previous work experience.

Additional information about transfer credit is available at binghamton.edu/social-work/prospective/transfer-credit.html.
LEARN FROM THE BEST

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
Victoria Rizzo, Chair and Associate Professor
Tania Alameda-Lawson, Assistant Professor
Josephine Allen, Professor
Lisa Blitz, Assistant Professor
Cassandra Bransford, Associate Professor
Amy Edwards, Secretary
Brian Flynn, Director of Admissions and Student Services
Paul Gould, Visiting Assistant Professor
Sarah Hopkins, Lecturer
Suk-Young Kang, Associate Professor
Youjung Lee, Assistant Professor
Carrie Moylan, Assistant Professor
Sophia Resciniti, Director of Field Education

LEARN CLOSE TO CLIENTS AND AGENCIES
Binghamton University’s College of Community and Public Affairs is located in the University Downtown Center, which opened in August 2007. The $29 million, four-story, 74,400-square-foot facility features state-of-the-art classrooms, an Information Commons with computer workstations, work and conference areas, office space, a coffee kiosk and a student lounge. The building includes a three-story atrium with a view of the Chenango and Susquehanna rivers and offers wireless Internet access.

The center's location in downtown Binghamton puts faculty, staff and students close to many of the community agencies and organizations with which they regularly collaborate. This integration of University activities within the community puts students and faculty in proximity to community groups they can learn from and assist, enhancing opportunities for research and education.

BINGHAMTON OFFERS AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION AT A TERRIFIC VALUE

- U.S News & World Report has placed Binghamton as one of the nation’s top 50 public universities for 16 consecutive years.
- In 2014, Fiske Guide to Colleges rated the University a “best buy and one of the premier public universities in the Northeast, with a four-year graduation rate that is among the highest of any public university.”
- Kiplinger’s Personal Finance ranks the University #4 in 2014 as a best value among the nation’s public colleges for out-of-state students and #15 overall.
- The Princeton Review’s “2014 Best Value Colleges” lists Binghamton as #10 for public universities based on academics, cost of attendance and financial aid. In 2013 the publication noted that students become “well-rounded individuals who are globally aware and environmentally conscious.”
- Each year, alumni from the MSW program are among the students who achieve the highest first-time passing rates on New York state social work licensure exams.

APPLY BY FEBRUARY 1

Application documents are included in the back of this brochure. You can also find application information specific to the MSW program at binghamton.edu/social-work/prospective and Binghamton University Graduate School application information at binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/apply.html.
A few years ago, Sue Cardona, MSW ’07, joined the Department of Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center in Bronx, N.Y. After 18 months, she became a palliative care social worker in the Department of Family and Social Medicine. As part of an interdisciplinary team, Cardona works with patients and their families to discuss goals of care when faced with a life-limiting illness. She also provides bereavement support to patients’ families after their loved one has died.

“The hospital system is complex, and having an understanding of how it works is one way I can advocate for and with patients and their families,” Cardona says. “I see myself as an agent of change one patient at a time,” she adds. “As my career develops, I hope I become an agent of change beyond the hospital walls.”

Helping people through difficult times has always been Cardona’s intent. She initially thought it would be through psychology, but something was missing. “While I value my undergraduate degree in psychology, it left me asking questions about socioeconomic status, policy and how to implement social change,” she explains. “The search for answers to these questions led me directly to social work.”

And her search for the right program to earn her MSW brought Cardona to Binghamton.

“Binghamton University is well known for its academic excellence, and I was interested in the advanced generalist curriculum,” she explains. Cardona was impressed with the availability and flexibility of her instructors and the variety of field placements to choose from. “Not to mention, it all came at a financial cost I could manage,” she adds.

But it’s the program’s curriculum that really stands out, according to Cardona. “Studying from an advanced generalist practice curriculum has been the foundation of my career,” she says. “I still refer to my education and field experiences and apply them to my current work.”

“Binghamton’s social work program places great emphasis on the understanding and mastery of social work theory and how it applies to direct practice. While Binghamton is located in a suburban/rural area, the work translated into my current position in a major metropolitan city.”

Sue Cardona, MSW ’07
Healthcare Social Worker
Changing how society views offenders

“I see social work as a force for social change,” says Chris Titus, MSW ’11.

He focuses his career on a population often overlooked: juvenile and adult offenders and ex-offenders.

Titus volunteers at the Prison Support Network (PSN), a Binghamton graduate-student organization that helps those incarcerated nationwide. He joined PSN during his first MSW field internship. That experience brought Titus face to face with youth in New York’s juvenile rehabilitation system at MacCormick Secure Center in Tompkins County.

“MacCormick gave me a good opportunity to work with a population I really care about,” he explains. “Since it’s a closed facility, I also got to see things most people don’t.”

During his second field training, Titus was among the first University interns to work on the SHARE project, a multidisciplinary effort designed to create a safer school environment for children across Broome County.

“SHARE was an invaluable experience. I learned how to engage with different partners and how to set up a program,” Titus says. “It also helped me understand the clinical science of therapy and how important it is to understand the culture of the population you’re trying to help.”

Titus gained experience writing grant proposals through his coursework and intends to use that skill securing grant funding for PSN’s Off magazine, which publishes articles, essays, poetry and artwork created by prisoners across the country. He also hopes to obtain a grant for another group he volunteers with, the Broome County Jail Project, which assists inmates at the county jail.

“I became a social worker to change the way we deal with the social issue of crime and how we look at offenders and ex-offenders,” he explains.

“I’ve spoken to people who are considering Binghamton’s MSW program. I tell them you learn a lot, the teachers are good and you have great experiences. If you’re interested in social change and you want to go to grad school, Binghamton is a good place to go.”

Chris Titus, MSW ’11
Criminal Justice Social Worker
TANIA ALAMEDA–LAWSON, PhD, MSW
Assistant Professor
Tania Alameda–Lawson’s research focuses on advanced generalist social work practice with vulnerable children, families, schools and communities. She uses community-based participatory research methods to develop and test school-community-organizational innovations that support child, family, school and community well-being.

JOSEPHINE ALLEN, PhD, ACSW
Professor
Josephine Allen’s research involves comparative social welfare policy analysis and management, empowerment and family support, intergenerational communication around reproductive health issues with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS prevention and care, gender and international development, social justice and participatory action, critical race theory and cultural competence.

LISA V. BLITZ, PhD, LCSW-R
Assistant Professor
Associate Director, Institute for Intergenerational Studies Center for Family, School and Community Partnerships
Lisa Blitz’s research focuses on the development and implementation of culturally responsive trauma-informed approaches for schools, including school climate and pedagogy.

CASSANDRA BRANSFORD, PhD, LCSW-R
Associate Professor
Cassandra Bransford’s research focuses on attachment and trauma across the lifespan, authority in individual and organizational contexts, and critical social work practice.

PAUL R. GOULD, PhD, LCSW
Visiting Assistant Professor
Acting Director, Social Work in Healthcare Program
Paul Gould’s research focuses on clinical social work practice related to healthy aging and promoting interprofessional approaches to enhance healthcare. In addition to evaluating patient-related outcomes, he includes student-learning experiences as a component of his research.

SUK-YOUNG KANG, PhD, MSSW
Associate Professor
John A. Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar
Suk-Young Kang’s research focuses on mental health, especially depression, family caregiver issues, social justice and social work gerontology among Asian immigrant older populations.
YOUJUNG LEE, PhD, LMSW
Assistant Professor
Director, Institute for Intergenerational Studies
Center for Family, School and Community Partnerships

Youjung Lee’s work focuses on intergenerational caregiving, resilience of grandparent-headed families and interprofessional collaboration. Her research provides a deeper understanding of the multifaceted needs of grandparent-headed families in the United States and provides a cost-effective, evidence-based transdisciplinary model.

CARRIE MOYLAN, PhD, MSW
Assistant Professor

Carrie Moylan’s research focuses on both the prevention of sexual violence and the promotion of services that improve the health, mental health and criminal justice outcomes for survivors of sexual assault.

VICTORIA M. RIZZO, PhD, LCSW-R
Department Chair
Associate Professor
John A. Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar

Victoria Rizzo’s research focuses on social work practice at the intersection of health and aging. Her work examines the efficacy and efficiency of social work interventions in elder abuse, caregiving and chronic illness.

LEARN MORE
Explore additional information about the Department of Social Work, including academics, faculty, research, community collaborations, course descriptions and more at binghamton.edu/social-work.
Starting change from within

Kathryn Collins, MSW ’11, performed her second-year field placement in the general counseling program at the Family & Children’s Society in 2010. When it ended, she stayed on.

“I built up a caseload, working two days a week, and I provide therapy for individuals, couples and groups,” Collins says. “I am volunteering there in the same capacity because I want to keep providing therapy for my existing clients. I have added some new clients, and I am gaining valuable experience as a social worker.”

Collins came to social work by way of education. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English secondary education in 1989 and a master’s degree in literature in 1995, both from SUNY College at Oneonta.

“I was a teacher for 20 years, and I was fulfilled bringing literacy to children,” she explains. “But I realized that I was more concerned with helping children and their families with problems that distracted them from learning. I felt restricted by my role as a teacher, and I knew becoming a social worker would allow me to expand my capacity to help people.”

In January 2010, Collins participated in the MSW program’s service-learning project in the seventh ward of New Orleans, providing mental-health support and other services to children and adults affected by Hurricane Katrina. She says the experience was “transformative.”

Through her field and volunteer work, Collins is transforming others.

“I have been able to help individuals overcome crises and change lifelong patterns of destructive behavior. I have been able to help people change the way they perceive and think about themselves and the world,” she says.

“However, the most important changes were the ones I’ve made myself in my own life, and I think this is one of the greatest strengths I bring to the profession of social work.”

Social workers are trained professionals with the knowledge and skills to reflect, empathize, challenge, illuminate and motivate, while respecting the individual’s or community’s right to self-determination. Social work is work of the mind and heart that provides support to people in need.”

Kathryn Collins, MSW ’11
Clinical Social Worker
Making positive changes for kids

Sometimes kids need an adult to talk to about their hopes, their fears or their problems in school or at home. For the almost 500 students at Richard T. Stark Middle School in Conklin, N.Y., that person is often Dan Kosick ’00, MSW ’06, the school’s social worker.

Kosick understands how learning, behavior and social problems can affect a student’s success. So whether he is counseling students, training faculty, advocating for students and their parents, making referrals to community resources, helping shape district policy or performing another of his many responsibilities, his focus is always on identifying barriers that negatively impact students’ ability to learn and then working with students, families and the school to effect positive changes.

“It’s a social worker’s job to act as a catalyst and buffer for change, and that goes for any setting — individuals, groups or community,” he says. “It’s my job to promote appropriate change when needed.”

Kosick chose to become a social worker after spending time as a substitute teacher and working with at-risk youths in the University’s GEAR UP program (a partnership between Binghamton University’s Graduate School of Education and the Binghamton City School District that helps low-income students prepare to succeed in college).

“Social work just seemed to fit,” he says.

The program’s part-time offering was another good fit. “I had a lot of stuff on my plate,” he explains. “I have a family and I couldn’t stop working, so the part-time option was the only way I could get my MSW.”

“My field experiences were the most beneficial tools in preparing me for my career, providing me with the opportunity to use my education and skills in a real-life environment. Most importantly, they increased my comfort level with real-life social work, and that gave me the confidence to be successful in my current position as a school social worker.”

Dan Kosick ’00, MSW ’06
School Social Worker
GET A TOP-NOTCH EDUCATION

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY is a highly selective, mid-sized public institution, known for the excellence of its students, faculty, staff and programs. The University enrolls more than 16,000 students (approximately 13,000 undergraduate and 3,000 graduate) in programs leading to bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Binghamton's curriculum, founded on the liberal arts, has expanded to include select professional and graduate programs.

The University offers more than 100 major degree programs across its six academic divisions and is recognized as the most selective and prestigious university in the SUNY system. College guides such as the Fiske Guide to Colleges have dubbed Binghamton a “premier public university in the Northeast.”

Students actively take part in internships, study-abroad programs, honors programs, Division I athletics and many of the 250+ student organizations on campus. They enjoy attractive, comfortable living-and-learning residences, and they give faculty high marks for being approachable and inspirational.

Binghamton's faculty and students come from more than 100 countries, bringing with them different cultures and backgrounds and representing a wealth of ideas.

Binghamton is a highly regarded research university; yet, at the same time, is as accessible as a smaller school. Retention is well above national averages, and more undergraduates are admitted into nationally ranked, rigorous graduate programs than is the national norm for public research universities.
WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Details about Binghamton University’s MSW program are available at binghamton.edu/social-work or via telephone at 607-777-5999. Information about financial aid is available at binghamton.edu/financial-aid or 607-777-2428.
APPLICATION MATERIALS

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A bachelor’s degree from a college or university of recognized standing
- A cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of at least a B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale)
- Undergraduate studies that include a minimum of 24 credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences, with a minimum of 15 credit hours in the social sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science)
- Human service-related paid or volunteer experience
- Applicants will be required to participate in group or individual interviews

Completed applications must be submitted by February 1 for full consideration. Applications submitted after the deadline will be considered on a space-available basis. Students are accepted for fall admission only. The Social Work Department begins to accept applications December 1.

APPLY

Complete directions, helpful tips and links to required documents are available on the Graduate School website at binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/apply.html. You may also wish to visit the MSW program-specific application page at binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/academic-programs/overviews/social-work.html.

The following materials must be submitted electronically along with the application fee:

1. Online graduate degree application at binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/apply.html
2. Transcripts from each college/university you have attended
3. Three letters of recommendation from individuals who can attest to your potential for graduate study, such as those with whom you have worked in an academic, professional, volunteer or work-related capacity
   - The MSW program has a Letter of Recommendation document that must be used to evaluate MSW applicants; see pages 23–28 or go to binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/academic-programs/overviews/social-work.html
   - If you are a college student or a recent graduate, one letter must be from a college instructor
   - If you are or have recently been employed, one letter must be from an employment supervisor
4. A personal statement (6–8 pages)
   - Follow the guidelines in the Personal Statement for MSW Program document; see page 22 or go to binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/academic-programs/overviews/social-work.html
5. A résumé or curriculum vitae (maximum of 2 pages)
   - Include paid or volunteer experience related to human services
6. A signed copy of the Social Work Contract; see pages 29–30 or go to binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/academic-programs/overviews/social-work.html
   - By signing the above contract, you agree, if admitted to the program, to abide by the professional standards of social work as set forth by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
   - Review the Code of Ethics at socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp before signing the contract
7. A signed copy of the Certification of Information; see page 31 or go to binghamton.edu/grad-school/prospective-students/academic-programs/overviews/social-work.html

Notes:
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not a requirement for application to the MSW program
- Students interested in the MPA-MSW dual-degree program must submit two applications: one for the MSW program and one for the MPA program
PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

We ask that you write a personal statement and submit it with your application. This statement helps our admissions committee obtain a clearer picture of who you are, why you have chosen to enter the social work profession, your readiness for graduate education and what motivates you to apply to the MSW program. This statement, which is an important part of your overall application, should not include a detailed description of your entire life. Rather, it should briefly cover important experiences, interests and abilities as they relate to your seeking professional training in the MSW program. The statement should be divided into two subject areas — personal evaluation and career objectives — and it should be six to eight double-spaced, typed pages.

PERSONAL EVALUATION
Describe why you think you would make a good social work student and an effective social worker. In writing this description, please address the following:

- The significant life experiences that have led to the development of your personality and your value and belief systems
- Your readiness for undertaking graduate social work education — please address how you believe you will face the rigorous demands of coursework and field education (in the latter case, especially in terms of being able to handle the emotional and practical strain of dealing with client and community problems)
- Why you believe Binghamton’s MSW program is best suited to your needs, bearing in mind that this program has as its mission preparing social workers for generalist practice in public and private not-for-profit agencies
- Given the program’s commitment to meeting the needs and advocating for the rights of diverse clients and communities, please comment on your personal or professional experience with at least three of the following aspects of diversity: race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability
- Both your strengths and areas of your life that need strengthening in relation to the profession of social work

CAREER OBJECTIVES
Describe why you want to be a social worker and what you would like to do in the future.

Please answer the following questions:

- What do you hope to gain from graduate education?
- Why have you chosen to enter the social work profession?
- What are your professional goals?
- How do your career goals fit with the program’s mission? (refer to mission on page 1)
Name/title of recommender ____________________________

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and its amendments guarantee students access to educational records concerning them. Students are permitted to waive their right of access to recommendations. The following statement indicates the wish of the applicant regarding this recommendation.

☐ I waive my right to inspect the contents of this recommendation.
☐ I do not waive my right to inspect the contents of this recommendation.

Applicant's signature ____________________________

TO THE EVALUATOR

The above-named applicant is applying for admission to the Master of Social Work program at Binghamton University. Pursuing this program will require both an intensive program of graduate study and commitment to public and not-for-profit service with disenfranchised populations. The applicant has selected you as someone who can be helpful to the admissions committee in evaluating preparation for and readiness to enter graduate school.

To ensure the best and most appropriate outcome of the application process for this applicant, we ask that you be frank about both the applicant's strengths and limitations. Please answer the questions below as fully as possible. Additional comments are also welcome. Your prompt reply is appreciated.

- How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant? __________________________________________________________

- What do you consider the applicant's major strength(s) as a candidate for graduate education in social work?

- In what areas, and to what degree, does the applicant need to be strengthened to improve the ability to serve others in the capacity of social worker?
Please use the space below or an attached letter to elaborate on the ratings above or on any other matters you consider relevant to the applicant’s admission.

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**SUMMARY EVALUATION**

- [ ] I strongly recommend this applicant for admission and feel the applicant has the capacity to perform at a superior level in the MSW program.
- [ ] I recommend this applicant for admission without reservation, and am confident this individual will do well in the MSW program.
- [ ] I recommend this applicant with some reservations about the applicant’s ability to perform well in the MSW program.
- [ ] I feel the applicant’s qualifications for graduate study are marginal but the individual may do well with sufficient support and encouragement.
- [ ] I do not recommend the applicant for admission to the MSW program.

SIGNATURE     DATE

STREET ADDRESS     CITY STATE  ZIP CODE

PHONE     EMAIL ADDRESS
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Name/title of recommender

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**SIGNATURE**

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**STREET ADDRESS**

**CITY**

**STATE**

**ZIP CODE**

**PHONE**

**EMAIL ADDRESS**
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

APPLICANT’S LAST NAME ___________ FIRST NAME ___________ B # ___________

Name/title of recommender

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Continued on reverse side
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☐ I feel the applicant’s qualifications for graduate study are marginal but the individual may do well with sufficient support and encouragement.

☐ I do not recommend the applicant for admission to the MSW program.
SOCIAL WORK CONTRACT

I agree to the following academic contract:

Social workers serve a wide variety of client systems that could include the poor; victims and perpetrators of abuse; people with different sexual orientations; those with racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds; people of all ages; persons from diverse religious, spiritual and cultural backgrounds; and many other aspects of human diversity. Social work services should be provided without prejudice and/or imposition of the worker’s values on clients.

- I have read and understand the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and agree to adhere to the standards therein.
- I have read the Binghamton University Department of Social Work Performance Standards for Admission, Matriculation and Graduation (next page), and agree to adhere to the standards therein.
- I will continue my professional development through regular self-assessment of my academic and personal aptitude and performance.
- I will continue my professional development, taking seriously faculty assessments of my academic and professional aptitude and performance. This includes discussion with faculty about their observations underlying their evaluations and the steps I might take when improvement is warranted.
- I understand and agree that the faculty and staff may share with other faculty, staff and administrators, field instructors and other staff at field agencies, information about student situations in connection with professional development and academic concerns arising in the social work program. Faculty and staff will make every effort to keep confidential any student information that the faculty or staff member feels is not necessary to discuss concerning the student in connection with professional development and academic concerns. As appropriate, faculty and staff will discuss with students the scope of the information being shared.
- I will become familiar with all course and program requirements and accept responsibility for taking all required courses in the correct sequence.
- I understand that although I am admitted to the MSW program, if my professional development is deemed unsatisfactory by the social work faculty, the MSW program has the right and responsibility to request reassessment of my suitability for the program. The social work faculty, in turn, will provide academic instruction and professional advising to assist with the learning and professional development process.

SOCIAL WORK PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION, MATRICULATION AND GRADUATION

The Department of Social Work’s mission is to prepare social workers for autonomous, knowledge-based, advanced generalist practice within an integrated community of scholars, practitioners and learners. The principles that guide the program are:

- A focus on people’s strengths
- A celebration of human diversity
- The application of multisystem practice methods to promote human well-being and fair, equitable communities
- A commitment to social justice
- A focus on working with diverse clients from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual-cultural perspective across the entire lifespan
- A focus on social work practice and collaboration with clients and organizations in public and not-for-profit settings

The well-being of clients and the integrity of the social work profession are our top priorities.

To remain in good standing in the Social Work Department, all students, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, “…must not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance use, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.” (p. 23, NASW Code of Ethics).
The Department of Social Work has developed a list of performance standards for admission, matriculation and graduation that must be clearly and consistently observed and followed for students to be successful in the program. These performance standards are aligned with the Council on Social Work Education’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards competencies.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
Skills and Essential Behaviors
- Demonstrates an understanding of, adheres to and promotes the NASW Code of Ethics
- Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the value of diversity; works effectively and responsibly with people of differing races, ethnicities, abilities, ages, classes, genders, sexual orientations, religious beliefs and/or nationalities
- Shows respect and effectively advocates for the rights of others
- Demonstrates a commitment to ending social and economic injustice
- Maintains and demonstrates comprehension of professional boundaries
- Is committed to clients’ freedom of choice and self-determination
- Is consistently honest and demonstrates integrity by being truthful about one’s own background, experiences and qualifications
- Refrains from sexually harassing others; making verbal or physical threats; or abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal or sexual ways
- Refrains from being involved in sexual relationships with clients or participating in dual relationships with clients where conflicts of interest may develop or exist
- Utilizes clinical supervision effectively and demonstrates a willingness to ask for help

Descriptors/Examples
- Maintains confidentiality
- Demonstrates openness to working with diverse groups and individuals of different backgrounds including fellow students, colleagues and clients
- Asks supervisor and instructors for help when needed
- Follows through with commitments
- Maintains clear boundaries; for example, does not socialize with clients

SELF-AWARENESS
Skills and Essential Behaviors
- Demonstrates ability to acknowledge one’s own attitudes, beliefs, biases and personal and past experiences affect professional judgment, decision-making, thinking, behavior and relationships
- Shows willingness and ability to assess and reflect on strengths and identify areas for improvement
- Is open to feedback and constructive criticism
- Demonstrates a level of self-awareness and an ability to express how one is perceived by others
- Demonstrates the ability to self-critique and to assume full responsibility to protect peers, colleagues, research participants, clients and others from the adverse consequences of personal performance problems and behaviors

Descriptors/Examples
- Demonstrates self-reflection in class, internships, process recordings, group work and written course exercises
- Makes necessary adjustments to professional and/or academic workloads in the face of personal difficulties that may adversely impact the quality of academic work or practice with clients
- Takes initiative in gaining knowledge as needed
- Makes changes based on feedback and constructive guidance

COMMUNICATION
Skills and Essential Behaviors
- Communicates responsibly, respectfully and effectively with colleagues, faculty, staff, administrators, field instructors and clients
- Utilizes effective listening and empathic skills to establish rapport
- Demonstrates ability and willingness to listen to others and is open to feedback
- Advocates effectively in a constructive manner according to NASW guidelines
- Utilizes institutional channels first to effectively resolve conflicts
- Demonstrates respect for the professional expertise of fellow agency workers, students in class, and program faculty and staff

Descriptors/Examples
- Receives, comprehends and responds appropriately and timely to verbal, non-verbal and written forms of communication, including emails sent from the Social Work Department and field agency personnel
- Expresses feelings and ideas in a way that can be understood by others
- Participates cooperatively as a productive member of the classroom, agency task groups and teams
- Maintains commitments to clients, students and colleagues
- Voices opinions and feedback in a productive and non-judgmental manner
- Demonstrates effective, respectful ways to advocate for self and others
- Prepares written documents that are clear, concise, accurate and complete and that reflect correct grammar and APA citation and referencing guidelines
- Follows agency guidelines for record keeping

READINESS
Skills and Essential Behaviors
- Is open and committed to learning from colleagues, classroom instructors and field instructors
- Seeks out and utilizes help when needed and responsibly addresses one’s own health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance
- Is able to distinguish between facts and inference
- Is able to draw conclusions based on relevant information and evidence
- Demonstrates ability to think critically
- Demonstrates an ability to write clearly with appropriate grammar and sentence construction

Descriptors/Examples
- Takes initiative with basic tasks in agencies such as making phone calls, taking messages, calling agencies to gain information about their services and locating resources in the community
- Demonstrates ability to include relevant and applicable literature in presentations, research and written work
- Reflects comprehensive, inclusive and relevant data in client assessments
- Demonstrates use and knowledge when working with clients through the use of process recordings
- Demonstrates willingness to take initiative
- Can identify problem-solving steps to resolve challenges
- Able to communicate ideas clearly in writing

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR
Skills and Essential Behaviors
- Shows willingness and ability to effectively prioritize, manage and complete tasks on time and observe and meet deadlines
- Seeks professional help and consultation when needed
- Utilizes thoughtful and informed judgment in making professional decisions
- Demonstrates appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the educational process, including field practice experiences
- Is able to form and sustain professional relationships

Descriptors/Examples
- Arrives on time to all classes, meetings and field agency required hours
- Consistently follows through with commitments including group work assignments, fieldwork and assignments
- Demonstrates an ability to be flexible in responding to changing needs and priorities of the field agency and clients
- Communicates in advance whenever there is an interruption of planned attendance or task completion and identifies alternatives for task completion to instructors, field instructors, field liaisons and academic advisors
- Voices concerns to field instructor and/or liaison in a respectful manner and in accordance with agency and field protocols and policies
- Keeps field instructor, liaison, instructors and staff apprised of issues that may arise and works proactively with all parties to alleviate issues

I have read and understand this Social Work Contract and the Social Work Performance Standards for Admission, Matriculation and Graduation, and agree to adhere to the standards therein.

STUDENT’S NAME

STUDENT’S SIGNATURE    DATE
CERTIFICATION OF INFORMATION FOR THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

SECTION I
1. I am applying for:
   - the full-time MSW program (16 credits each fall/spring semester for two years)
   - the part-time MSW program (6 or 7 credits each semester for 3.5 years, including summers)

SECTION II
2. Have you ever been dismissed from an academic program or institution?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Have you ever been expelled, suspended or placed on probation by any secondary school or college you have attended for reason of academic dishonesty, or because of an offense that harmed or had the potential to harm others?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Are there such charges pending against you at this time?
   - Yes
   - No

If you answered “yes” to questions 2, 3, 4 or 5 in Section II, you must submit an explanation. You may use the back of this form or attach a separate statement.

NOTE: Applicants should be aware that some states, such as New York, may restrict or deny professional licensure for people with felony convictions, misdemeanor convictions or actions taken against them by a professional organization. Students having such a situation would benefit from consulting with their state’s licensing board before submitting an application for admission. The application will be subject to a more rigorous review by both the Graduate School and the Department of Social Work’s admissions committee.

In addition, students admitted to the program are required to satisfactorily complete one to two internships. Students must obtain malpractice insurance before they are placed with an agency; the insurance agency requires disclosure of personal information including convictions, and may or may not issue insurance coverage. For placement into an internship, agencies also require personal information and conduct background checks. Agencies have the right to refuse placement.

Therefore, Binghamton University’s Department of Social Work cannot guarantee licensure upon completion of the program. In addition, while the Department of Social Work will work diligently to place students, students admitted into the program are not guaranteed field placement in an agency, which is required for graduation.

Please indicate whether or not you agree to these terms.
   - Yes
   - No

I certify that all information, including all supporting documents submitted for admission to the Master of Social Work program at Binghamton University, is complete and true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to promptly notify Binghamton University of any changes concerning the information I have provided. I understand that providing false, misleading or incomplete information may result in the withdrawal of an offer of admission.

This application and any supporting material may be made available to the state board of licensure at the University’s discretion.
WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, IF IT IS NOT TO MAKE LIFE LESS DIFFICULT FOR EACH OTHER?

GEORGE ELIOT