

VPR Awards School of Social Work Faculty Three SFF Grants in 2016

The Vice President for Research awarded three Scholarship Facilitation Fund Grants to SSW faculty this calendar year. The grants, totaling \$2,000 per award, will facilitate the growth of extramural research and increase scholarly publications produced by faculty. In the spring of 2016, the VPR awarded three UConn School of Social Work Faculty including; one to Dr. Anne Marie Garran, Assistant Professor for the Casework sequence; one to Dr. Rebecca Thomas, Associate Professor; and one to Dr. Michael Fendrich, Professor and Associate Dean for Research.

Dr. Garran's grant entitled, "STEM, institutional bias, and retention of women of color in higher education." is a study of cultural disparity. There have been repeated efforts to understand and address the under-representation in higher education of women of color in STEM, particularly where retention rates are concerned. Along with implicit bias, sexism, and a lack of mentoring and support, faculty women of color in STEM often report feeling invisible and marginalized. They also cite a pronounced lack of work-life balance that differs from that of their male counterparts. Before institutions can implement programmatic or policy changes to support the success of women in color in STEM, they need to identify salient factors that undergird what contributes to these women's decision to stay or leave. Through the use of an online survey to collect data from the female faculty of color in STEM, this study aims to address this critical gap.

Dr. Thomas is using this award to expand her ongoing research exploring the role of immigrant and migrant business professionals as supports for families that they leave behind. Her grant entitled, "*Migration, Employment, and Remittances to Armenia* " focuses on understanding all aspects of the remittance process - the sending of cash or gifts by Armenia immigrants in the US back home to their families in Armenia. While previous work focused on interviewing the senders in the US, this work uniquely focuses on interviewing remittance recipients. Qualitative interviews will take place in Armenia in order to further understand how these transfers impact family life and family roles and to examine in detail what some of the perceived benefits and challenges of remitting are.

Dr. Fendrich's grant is entitled, "*From Mass Incarceration to Smart Decarceration: Towards a Collaborative Research Agenda @UConn.*" Dr. Fendrich will partner with his colleagues at other universities and with other UConn schools to develop a one-day research workshop on the Greater Hartford Campus focused on decarceration research – research on stemming the tide of mass incarceration. He will bring a social work researcher as a keynote speaker to present leading research on this topic. The aims of this grant are: 1) To foster and stimulate innovative Mass Incarceration research at UConn School of Social Work; and 2) To develop potential cross-departmental collaborations among workshop attendees and presenters to increase the viability of future extramural funding for Mass Incarceration research and effectuate decarceration efforts.