

SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL WORK AND RESEARCH

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025 ELECTIONS

Welcome to the SSWR Board of Directors 2025 Elections

The SSWR Board of Directors 2025 Elections are now open and will close on December 22, 2025, 11:59 PM PST. This year, there are open positions for one (1) Vice President-Elect, one (1) Secretary, three (3) Directors-at-Large, and one (1) Doctoral Student Director-at-Large.

Nominees for this year's elections are:

Vice President-Elect:	Beth Angell, PhD, University of Michigan Claudette Grinnell-Davis, PhD, University of Oklahoma
Secretary:	Kristie Seelman, PhD, Georgia State University Dorian Traube, PhD, Washington University in St. Louis
Director-at-Large:	Venera Bekteshi, PhD, University of Oklahoma Donte T. Boyd, PhD, The Ohio State University Brian Bride, PhD, The University of Alabama Susan McCarter, PhD, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Orion Mowbray, PhD, University of Georgia Lisa Schelbe, PhD, Florida State University
Doctoral Student Director-at-Large:	DeKeitra Griffin, MSW, Louisiana State University Whitney Zeigler, MSW, Clark Atlanta University

Each nominee has provided a biographical sketch and a vision statement, which we encourage you to read before you cast your vote. The proxy election site opens on **December 8, 2025, and closes on December 22, 2025, at 11:59 PM PST.**

HOW TO VOTE IN THE SSWR BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025 ELECTIONS **(VOTING DEADLINE: 12/22/2025) & NOTICE OF SSWR MEMBER SPECIAL MEETING.**

In accordance with the SSWR Bylaws, a Special Meeting of the Members of the Society for Social Work and Research, Inc. will be held via Zoom on January 5, 2026, 11:00 AM EST.

Members may cast their vote in one of two ways:

- **ONLINE:** Members may vote in the SSWR Board of Directors 2025 Election online through December 22, 2025. As a current 2025 SSWR member, you will receive an email from announcement@associationvoting.com with instructions for accessing the online ballot. If you need assistance or did not receive the email, please contact Kristen Reamy at kristen@sswr.org. As required by the bylaws, online voting is conducted through a proxy system. By submitting your online ballot, you authorize SSWR President Dr. Ramona Denby-Brinson to finalize the election results based on your proxy vote. During the January 5, 2026, SSWR Special Meeting of the Members, Dr. Denby-Brinson will report the number of proxy votes received by the December 22 deadline.
- **VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING:** Members may attend the SSWR Special Meeting of the Members via Zoom and cast their vote live on January 5, 2026, 11:00 AM EST. The Zoom meeting requires registration. Please [use this link](#) to register and receive the meeting link and join instructions.

If you have questions or encounter issues while casting your electronic proxy, please use the help form on the login page to send a support request directly to SSWR (kristen@sswr.org). Thank you for your participation!

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025 ELECTIONS

Descriptions of Open Board Positions (terms start February 1, 2026)

Vice President-Elect (Three-year term: February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2029)

The Vice President-Elect shall serve a one-year term as Vice President-Elect. The Vice President-Elect will assist the Vice President in the Vice President's role as chair of the Conference Committee. Immediately following the Vice President-Elect's term, the Vice President-Elect shall ascend to the office of Vice President.

The Vice President-Elect serves as a member of the program committee, plans and coordinates the pre-conference methodology workshops and provides direct support to the Vice President in planning the annual conference. The Vice President-Elect serves on the executive committee. The Vice President-Elect becomes the Vice President in the second year of their term. The Vice President serves a one-year term and chairs the conference program planning committee, which plans and coordinates the annual conference program. During periods when there is no President-elect, the Vice-President shall serve as President in the event of the President's resignation, lengthy absence, or incapacity until the office of President is filled according to the procedures applicable to filling vacancies among the officers. The Vice President serves on the executive committee. Immediately following a Vice President's term as Vice President, such person shall serve a one-year term as Past Vice President. The Past Vice President shall assist the Vice President in their duties and shall fulfill such other duties as directed by the Board.

Secretary (Three-year term: February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2029)

The Secretary shall serve a three-year term as Secretary. The Secretary shall: record, maintain and distribute minutes of all membership meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors; maintain the Society's corporate records; and fulfill the other responsibilities that pertain to the office of secretary. The Secretary serves on the executive committee.

Director-at-Large (Three-year term: February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2029)

A Director-at-Large may be asked to serve in the following capacities, i.e., chair or co-chair of the following committees: nomination and election committee; awards committee; committee on publications; communications committee, fund development committee, membership committee, social policy committee; research capacity development committee; volunteer coordinator for the annual conference; and members of ad hoc committees and task forces which support the work of the Society's Strategic Plan. Nominees should be prepared to take on one or more of these roles if asked by the President.

Doctoral Student Director-at-Large (Two-year term: February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2028)

The Doctoral Student Director-at-Large shall serve as Chair of the Doctoral Student Committee and represent student interests on the Board of Directors. The Doctoral Student Director-at-Large serves on the Conference Committee and plans the doctoral student panel and luncheon at the annual conference. Note that this position is currently reserved for a doctoral student. Nominees should have a minimum of two years remaining in their doctoral studies.

In addition to the above tasks, Board members are expected to be available for Board meetings before and during the annual conference, a two-day meeting in the spring, and monthly conference calls throughout the year.

Qualifications sought in Board nominees include:

- Leadership
- Support for and commitment to SSWR and its mission, vision, and values
- Experience and stature as a researcher
- Communication skills
- Availability and ability to fulfill commitments as a Board member

Nominee Profiles: Photos, Biographies, and Vision Statements

Vice President-Elect Nominee – Beth Angell, PhD



Beth Angell, PhD

University of Michigan, School of Social Work

Biography

Beth Angell is Dean and Phillip Fellin Collegiate Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Her research uses mixed methods to examine how people diagnosed with psychiatric disorders navigate mental health treatment and adjacent systems, particularly the criminal legal system. Her projects have examined processes of service engagement, mental health service user-provider interactions and relationships, sources and consequences of mental health stigma, and the impacts of mandated or involuntary treatment on therapeutic relationships and outcomes. Dr. Angell has received funding from a variety of Federal, state, and foundation sources, and her work has been published in a variety of journals in the fields of social work, psychiatry and the sociology of mental health, such as *Social Service Review*, *Psychiatric Services*, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, and *Social Science and Medicine*.

Dr. Angell joined SSWR in 1999 and has served as an abstract reviewer and cluster co-chair. She was inducted as a SSWR Fellow in 2018. Since 2020, she has served as Treasurer of the Social Work Collective to Advance Research (SCoAR, formerly known as the St. Louis Group), an organization of deans and directors that seeks to strengthen the capacity of schools of social work to advance and translate research for social justice impact at the practice, policy, and systems levels.

Dr. Angell received her M.S.S.W. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to joining the University of Michigan, she held faculty positions at the University of Chicago Crown School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice (2000-2008) and Rutgers University School of Social Work and the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research (2008-2018). From 2018-2022, she served as dean and professor at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, and in 2022 was appointed Dean of the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

Vision Statement

As a longtime SSWR member, it would be my honor and privilege to serve in the role of Vice President-Elect, working collaboratively with the Board to implement the vision of the SSWR 2024-28 strategic plan. The Board's ambitious goals of growing the organization into a new level of maturity could not come at a more important time, when the higher education research enterprise as a whole faces multiple existential challenges. Growing and nurturing social work research in a way that amplifies our impact, during a time of shrinking resources, will require our collective commitment to our SSWR vision and purpose and the development of effective organizational strategy.

With over a decade of administrative and leadership experience across three research universities, I am well positioned to contribute to this collective effort to strengthen and prepare SSWR for the future. Specific qualifications I offer to the Board that would further SSWR's strategic objectives include my experience in:

- Financial management
- Revenue stream development, including fundraising
- Building organizational infrastructure
- Teambuilding and team leadership
- Faculty and early career scholar development
- Strategic communications

Vice President-Elect Nominee – Beth Angell, PhD, Continued

As Vice President-Elect, enhancing the experience of SSWR's members is a major priority - particularly meeting the needs of emerging and early career scholars through conference and preconference offerings. Evolving the conference organization and format to meet the diverse needs of the membership is critical, including improving accessibility. SSWR must also continue to innovate and prioritize capacity building for social work scholars across the career life cycle, amplifying and building on initiatives such as the Innovation Incubator, Meet the Scientist Luncheon, and the new R.I.S.E. seminar for doctoral students with new mentoring initiatives for mid-career scholars. I would likewise prioritize engagement of and expansion of opportunities for leadership in SSWR, for example developing opportunities to engage early career scholars, SSWR members from MSIs, and international members in leadership in alignment with the SSWR Strategic Directions Plan.

In summary, I believe that this is a pivotal moment in SSWR's history as it prepares to expand its footprint and infrastructure. I would be honored to collaborate with the Board in working to offer robust support to our fellow social work researchers in their efforts to advance and translate rigorous social work science to promote a more just and equitable society.

Vice President-Elect Nominee – Claudette Grinnell-Davis, PhD



Claudette Grinnell-Davis, PhD
University of Oklahoma, Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work

Biography

Claudette Grinnell-Davis is an Associate Professor in the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma. A member of SSWR since 2010, Claudette has served SSWR as a presenter, abstract reviewer, moderator, discussant, and cluster chair. Appointed a SSWR Fellow in 2023, Claudette continues to be involved with SSWR supporting the Board through various initiatives, including re-visioning the SSWR Fellows program in terms of both prestige and service to the organization.

Dr. Grinnell-Davis earned a PhD in social work and psychology from the University of Michigan in 2014. Claudette has demonstrated success in receiving external funding, most notably from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Through this funding opportunity Claudette and community partners in Nebraska evaluated the implementation and impacts of that state's Indian Child Welfare Act, utilizing decolonizing methodologies and participatory action principles. Their research in Indian child welfare has been disseminated through presentations within affected communities, journal articles, news articles, and NPR podcasts. This work has also been awarded recognition by the Journal of Public Child Welfare for its timely impact on the field. Claudette continues to work with RWJF to improve its presence and reach with Tribal and Indigenous communities in culturally- and sovereignty-affirming ways.

Claudette is also a member of the leadership council under the University of Oklahoma's Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer, providing insight on issues of data sovereignty, downstream impacts of AI on humanity and personhood, and Institutional Review Board governance of AI in research.

Vision Statement

It is an honor to be nominated for the position of Vice-President At Large and to continue to represent members of SSWR who are at comprehensive regional universities or non-PhD-granting departments/schools of social work. Social problems are defined by local geography and history as much as from needs assessments. As a scholar dedicated to equity in scientific inquiry, I would work to improve networking, mentoring, and collaboration opportunities for SSWR members at such institutions, many of whom are early career, have higher teaching loads, or are rural or otherwise geographically isolated.

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Vice President-Elect Nominee – Claudette Grinnell-Davis, PhD, Continued

The primary responsibility of the VP Elect is the annual conference. In addition to my prior experience as a cluster chair, I also worked with the SSWR team at Travelink to promote both disability access and food equity for people with dietary needs. Thus, I have experience with both the scholarly and the logistical sides of conference preparation.

I intend to continue modernization of the conference to promote equity and participation, including the use of technology to promote attendance and connection not only at the annual conference but also year-round, with online events and networking opportunities. In addition to accessibility via technology, I will also continue efforts to elevate community-based participatory action projects at SSWR through improving the abstract submission process to make CBPAR projects easier to submit; training opportunities not only for faculty but also for community partners; and reduction of economic barriers for community partner participation.

Finally, I will work with the SSWR board to establish ethical guidelines for the use of generative AI in research presented at SSWR. While artificial intelligence brings with it real opportunity to do more thorough research, it also brings ethical concerns which, since many members of SSWR are social workers, we are ethically bound to consider and evaluate.

Secretary Nominee – Kristie Seelman, PhD



Kristie Seelman, PhD
Georgia State University, School of Social Work

Biography

My name is Kristie Seelman, and I am an Associate Professor of social work at Georgia State University, a public research university in Atlanta serving a highly diverse student body. I earned my MSW and PhD degrees at the University of Denver.

My research uses critical theories and systemic perspectives to explore the agency, resistance, and resilience of LGBTQ+ populations, as well as ways to confront oppression related to gender and sexuality. I have held several leadership roles that have prepared me for filling the role of Secretary for SSWR's Board of Directors, including service as a BSW Program Director, faculty senator, and co-chair of the LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit track for the Council on Social Work Education. I recently served on the core leadership team that developed Georgia State University's 10-year strategic plan. In this role, I was responsible for maintaining all committee records, coordinating feedback efforts across the University's six campuses, and facilitating the strategic planning student advisory committee.

Having been an active member of SSWR for over 10 years, I am committed to SSWR's contributions to the advancement of social work research. I have been a presenter and symposium organizer at multiple annual conferences, a "Brief & Brilliant" speaker, a Coffee with a Scholar mentor, and a SSWR award reviewer.

Mentoring students about research is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. I have collaborated and co-authored publications with over 40 students across 12 years, from undergraduate to doctoral levels and across a range of disciplines.

My colleagues and collaborators frequently describe me as diligent, communicative, organized, tech-savvy, curious, inclusive, and driven by a commitment to social justice and social work values. Thus, I believe I would bring numerous strengths and professional experiences that prepare me for serving as Secretary for the SSWR Board of Directors.

Vision Statement

We are facing a time of great challenge for research and for science, especially for research that benefits marginalized communities. The need is greater than ever to forward SSWR's commitment to rigorous research for social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppressive practice, which are components of SSWR's 2024-2028 strategic plan. As Secretary, I will work to center these issues as part of our programming and advocacy.

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Secretary Nominee – Kristie Seelman, PhD, Continued

I am committed to ethical record keeping, accountability, and open communication with SSWR membership. I will advance discussions about the ethics of social work research – including the impetus for continuing social work research, even when funding opportunities are diminished, because of the value of sound, trustworthy scientific knowledge.

I will also strongly support SSWR's dedication to enhancing capacity building and professional development opportunities, especially for global scholars, doctoral students, and early career researchers who may face significant barriers to achieving their career goals. I will work to improve opportunities for them to connect to senior scholars through SSWR's programming in ways that build meaningful mentor relationships and would listen to their ideas for educational programming that best matches their needs.

I am someone who embraces learning new technologies, yet I think it worth having deep conversations about the ethical and environmental implications of the growth of AI in social work. I am also interested in bringing forward critical perspectives on topics such as how the business model of universities and research organizations may contribute to the burnout of social work researchers and doctoral students and strategies to prevent this problem.

I am excited about the direction of SSWR's strategic plan and would be honored by the opportunity to contribute to SSWR's goals and initiatives.

Secretary Nominee – Dorian Traube, PhD



Dorian Traube, PhD
Washington University in St. Louis, Brown School

Biography

Dorian Traube is the Neidorff Family and Centene Corporation Dean of the Brown School and a professor. Previously, Traube was a professor in the Suzanne Dworak Peck School of Social Work at the University of Southern California.

Traube developed Parents as Teachers@USC Telehealth, the first partnership of its kind between a national home visitation model and a university-based telehealth clinic. In doing so, she also established the first virtual home visitation program, offering a reliable home visitation model via video conferencing technology.

This program was chosen as a Named Commitment by the Clinton Global Initiative and was selected the winner of the Gary Community Investment/OpenIDEO Early Childhood Innovation Prize. The program was scaled from offering 1,000 home visits in 2016-2019 to offering 600,000 virtual home visits in 2020. On the workforce development side, the program initially trained 25 home visitors in virtual service delivery strategies and scaled to 12,000 home visitors by 2020. Traube's research into the telehealth program laid the foundation for a multimillion-dollar award from the Heising-Simons Foundation to make virtual home visitation available nationally during the COVID-19 crisis.

Traube's research agenda focuses on the utilization of technological solutions to provide early childhood health, education and parent support services. She has expertise in children's mental health, child maltreatment prevention, family support interventions and home visitation. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Parsons Foundation, Queenscare Foundation, and the Overdeck Foundation. Traube serves on the Board of Directors for Good Shepard School, Youth in Need, the Research Advisory Council for Parents as Teachers, and the Hermann Center Institutional Advisory Board.

Traube earned her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and her master and doctoral degrees in social work from Columbia University. She is a licensed clinical social worker in California and New York.

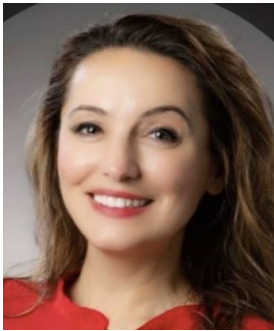
Secretary Nominee – Dorian Traube, PhD, Continued

Vision Statement

My vision as Secretary is to strengthen SSWR as a vibrant, inclusive, and dynamically responsive community. To realize this vision, I intend to center five commitments based on the SSWR mission statement and strategic plan:

1. **Elevate membership experience and engagement.** Building on Strategic Goal 2, I will champion initiatives to strengthen and diversify our membership—enhancing benefits for doctoral students, early-career scholars, international colleagues, practitioner-researchers and underrepresented voices.
2. **Advance research capacity for complex problems.** In alignment with Strategic Goal 3, I will ensure SSWR supports methodological innovation, fosters institutional research infrastructure, and positions our membership as trusted scientific partners for policymakers and practitioners.
3. **Ensure operational excellence and transparency.** Reflecting Strategic Goal 1, I will help streamline governance processes, strengthen our administrative capacity, and maintain fiscal health so SSWR can keep pace with the evolving demands of social work science.
4. **Enhance communications and global reach.** Guided by Strategic Goal 4, I will support expanding the Society's outreach—modernizing our digital platforms, broadening our media presence, and elevating the profile of the Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research (JSSWR) so that social work scholarship resonates locally, nationally, and internationally.
5. **Cultivate a culture of community and equity.** Grounded in our core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, human relationships, integrity, and competence, I will foster a collegial, inclusive SSWR—supporting emerging scholars, strengthening interdisciplinary connections, and partnering with lived-experience stakeholders to deepen the relevance and impact of our science.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Venera Bekteshi, PhD



Venera Bekteshi, PhD
University of Oklahoma, Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work

Biography

Dr. Venera Bekteshi is a dedicated leader within the Society for Social Work Research, where she has led Special Interest Groups for three consecutive years, currently serves as the Co-Chair of the SSWR Gender Cluster and has been a committed member of the SSWR Abstract Selection Committee since 2012. She was also selected to deliver the 'Brief and Brilliant' talk on the immigrant experience at the 2025 SSWR conference. An Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, her work is informed by her lived experience as a refugee who fled the Kosovo war at age 16. This early encounter with social injustice, ethnocentrism and gender-based discrimination cemented her commitment to addressing health disparities and empowering vulnerable populations.

Dr. Bekteshi is a unique scholar-practitioner who bridges the gap between research, policy, and implementation. Prior to her academic career, she served as an Associate Analyst for the New York City Department of Homeless Services, where she managed domestic violence services and oversaw a \$24 million portfolio of homelessness prevention contracts. Her macro-level experience extends to roles with the United Nations Development Program and directing a non-profit for immigrant communities, for which she received a Mayor's Award in New York City.

Her global perspective is grounded in tenured academic leadership roles in the United Kingdom, including serving as an Associate Professor and Director of Masters Programs in Research at the University of York and as a Research Ethics Officer at the University of Bath.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Venera Bekteshi, PhD, Continued

Dr. Bekteshi's research, which has been cited in high-impact journals like *The Lancet Global*, focuses on the social determinants of health disparities among immigrant women. Her award-winning *Lucha* project exemplifies her commitment to culturally sensitive, participatory research. She holds a PhD from Boston College, an MSW, an MPA from Columbia University, and an MA in Political Science, and is quadrilingual in Albanian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and English. Her forthcoming books are under contract with Oxford University Press.

Vision Statement

I am honored to be nominated for the position of Director at Large at the Society for Social Work Research (SSWR). As an active SSWR member, current Co-Chair of the Gender Cluster, and a researcher who has held tenured leadership positions in both the US and UK, I have a 360-degree view of the challenges and opportunities facing our profession. I am continuously inspired by the Society's work, particularly its robust 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. My vision is to leverage my unique executive, policy, and transnational experience to help execute this plan. I will focus on four key pillars that address SSWR's most urgent priorities:

1. **Advancing Anti-Oppressive and Participatory Research** Our data represents human lives. To fully honor this, we must move beyond extractive models. I will champion the "Antiracist & Anti-oppressive (ARA) research capacity" goal (Goal 3, Obj. 4) by supporting initiatives that foster community-based participatory research. My own *Lucha* project with Latina women is a testament to this human-centric approach. As our profession faces "efforts to minimize ADEI initiatives", I will be a staunch advocate on the Board for safeguarding this essential, justice-oriented work.
2. **Championing Global Scholarship and Defending International Researchers** SSWR's recent "URGENT" call to "Protect International Students" highlights a critical organizational priority. I am uniquely positioned to lead this fight. As a former refugee from Kosovo and a tenured Associate Professor at the Universities of Bath and York, I understand the US and European academic systems from the inside. I will be a powerful, authentic advocate for our international members, ensuring SSWR continues to benefit from the "linguistic and cultural access" they provide, thereby strengthening our "diverse membership" (Goal 2).
3. **Driving Policy Translation for Real-World Impact** SSWR's goal to become a "scientific solutions resource" for policymakers (Goal 3, Obj. 3) is critical. This requires leaders who have executable policy experience. In my prior role with the NYC Department of Homeless Services, I oversaw a \$24 million policy portfolio. I know what it takes to get research out of the journal and into the legislative briefing. I will work to expand SSWR's capacity to create "policy briefing pages" and forge concrete partnerships with service decision-makers.
4. **Mentoring for a Diverse and Equitable Research Pipeline** Our greatest asset is our people. To "Strengthen & Diversify" our membership (Goal 2), we must actively cultivate the next generation of researchers. As a former Director of Masters Programs in Research at the University of York and a long-time SSWR mentor, I am passionate about this pipeline. I will work to expand professional development opportunities (Goal 3, Obj. 1) for doctoral students and early-career researchers, with a focus on supporting scholars from marginalized and international backgrounds. In summary, my candidacy is based on a platform of proven leadership—as an SSWR insider, a transnational academic, and a real-world policy implementer. I am ready to defend our values, champion our members, and translate our research into the just, equitable world we all seek to build.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Donte T. Boyd, PhD



Donte T. Boyd, PhD
The Ohio State University, College of Social Work

Biography

Donte T. Boyd, PhD, is a tenured Associate Professor in the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University and a Visiting Research Professor at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) at the University of California, San Francisco. He is a nationally recognized scholar whose research focuses on suicide prevention, mental health, and HIV prevention among Black youth and young men, particularly young Black sexual minority men. His work is grounded in the Developmental Assets Framework and positive youth development, examining how internal and external strengths—like family support, community engagement, and coping skills—can be leveraged to reduce suicide risk, address stigma, and promote mental wellness among young men facing various social pressures.

Dr. Boyd is the Principal Investigator on an NIH R21 grant titled "The Influence of Developmental Assets on Intersectional Stigma and HIV Prevention Behaviors in Black MSM." This mixed-methods project explores how developmental assets and family relationships can buffer intersectional stigma and enhance HIV-related and mental health outcomes among young Black men who have sex with men. The first aim of this project—a latent profile analysis identifying developmental asset patterns among young Black sexual minority males ages 14–24—is currently in press at the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, showcasing the impact of a strengths-based approach.

With rigorous research training from various prestigious programs, Dr. Boyd has published over 70 peer-reviewed articles on HIV prevention, suicide, mental health, and health disparities. He specializes in quantitative and mixed-methods approaches, including latent profile analysis and longitudinal modeling. His long-term goal is to develop culturally grounded, asset-based interventions that prevent suicide and reduce mental health inequities, thus promoting resilience and thriving among Black youth and young Black sexual minority men.

Vision Statement

My vision is to advance a research agenda that uses social work science as a force for equity, healing, and systemic transformation—one that ensures young people, particularly Black youth and young Black sexual minority men, have the assets, supports, and opportunities needed to thrive. I am committed to producing rigorous, culturally grounded research that not only expands scientific knowledge but also drives tangible improvements in mental health, suicide prevention, and HIV-related outcomes. In pursuit of this vision, I aim to bridge research, policy, and practice by cultivating strong partnerships with communities, practitioners, and interdisciplinary scholars. These collaborations will allow me to co-create evidence-informed strategies that reflect the lived experiences and strengths of the populations I serve.

My vision includes building and sustaining research environments where emerging scholars—especially those from underrepresented backgrounds—are supported, mentored, and empowered to lead. I believe in fostering a culture of inquiry that values innovation, ethical rigor, and anti-oppressive approaches, while also uplifting community voices and promoting equitable leadership within the field.

Ultimately, my vision is to ensure that social work research does more than document disparities—it must challenge them, disrupt them, and create pathways toward justice. I aspire to produce work that informs policies, strengthens prevention and intervention models, and contributes to a national movement focused on resilience, dignity, and well-being for all young men. Through sustained commitment, community partnership, and innovation, I aim to help shape a future where strengths-based, culturally responsive research drives meaningful, lasting change.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Brian Bride, PhD



Brian Bride, PhD
The University of Alabama, School of Social Work

Biography

Brian Bride, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.P.H. is the Hill Crest Foundation Endowed Academic Chair in Mental Health and Professor of Social Work at The University of Alabama. His 30+ year career as a public health social worker, researcher, and educator has focused largely on the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative programs and practices in the areas of mental health, substance misuse, and HIV prevention and intervention. A Fellow of SSWR since 2017, Dr. Bride is particularly passionate about his research related to the mental health and well-being of the behavioral health and social services workforces. He is internationally recognized for his work on the conceptualization, measurement, and epidemiology of secondary traumatic stress and is currently focused on how organizational policies and culture can be leveraged to reduce the occurrence and impact of secondary traumatic stress and promote workplace mental health and wellbeing.

Vision Statement

I am honored to be nominated for Director-at-Large. For more than 30 years, my work as a researcher, educator, and advocate for evidence-based behavioral health services and workforce well-being has been shaped by SSWR's commitment to rigorous, impactful social work science. Since joining in 2002, the Society has been central to my growth as a scholar and leader.

As Director-at-Large, I will work collaboratively with the Board and membership to advance the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan through the following priorities:

- Drawing on decades of mentoring, I will support strong mentorship for emerging scholars - especially those from underrepresented backgrounds - expand training in innovative methodologies and create clearer pathways for mid-career leadership.
- I will enhance SSWR's ability to translate research into practice and policy by improving dissemination channels, encouraging research that addresses urgent community needs, and developing partnerships that amplify the profession's voice at state and federal levels.
- Building on my experience, I will support methodological diversity, elevate training in psychometrics and implementation science, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration to strengthen the quality and impact of social work research.
- I will work to broaden year-round engagement, improve accessibility for scholars at under-resourced institutions, and contribute to strategic planning that supports SSWR's long-term sustainability.

My commitment to SSWR reflects my belief that social work research must be rigorous, relevant, and responsive to the challenges facing our workforce, communities, and profession. It would be a privilege to serve as Director-at-Large and help build on SSWR's legacy while positioning the organization for an even stronger future.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Susan McCarter, PhD



Susan McCarter, PhD
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, School of Social Work

Biography

Susan McCarter is UNC Charlotte's 2022-25 Bonnie E. Cone Professor in Civic Engagement recognized for work that "profoundly affects the relationship between UNC Charlotte and the larger community in a positive and meaningful way." Dr. McCarter's career began in Virginia as a juvenile probation officer, adolescent therapist, and policy analyst. For over 25 years she has conducted research as a Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Scholar (now Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED)) and forensic social work practitioner. Nationally, Dr. McCarter testifies as a juvenile justice forensic expert, serves on the board of the Forensic Social Work Alliance (formerly the National Organization of Forensic Social Work), and convenes the Society of Social Work and Research's Criminal and Juvenile Justice Interest Group. Regionally, she co-founded the non-profit *Race Matters for Juvenile Justice* - developing their community data dashboard and Charlotte's first Racial Equity Impact Analysis, as well as the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium (a collaboration of UNC Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith, Queens University, Johnson and Wales University of Charlotte, and Central Piedmont Community College) dedicated to truth, racial healing, and transformation. She also served on Charlotte's Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Team and chaired the College of Health and Human Services' Faculty Organization. Professor McCarter teaches at UNC Charlotte where she co-facilitates the UNC Charlotte Racial Equity Skill Building Caucus and leads multiple funded research studies examining the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP), Juvenile Justice, and Racial Justice – she also speaks and trains on these topics worldwide.

Vision Statement

I am honored to be considered for a Director-at-Large position on the SSWR Board. My service to SSWR began, as it has for so many, as a doctoral student conference volunteer. Over the years, I have also reviewed conference abstracts, convened Special Interest Groups, contributed to the organization as a SSWR Fellow, and mentored students and junior faculty involved with SSWR. For the Grand Challenges, I co-authored the Eliminate Racism and Achieving Equal Opportunity and Justice – Juvenile Justice concept papers and also support Promote Smart Decarceration initiatives.

As socio-political tides ebb and flow, the importance of shared professional values remains constant. And SSWR's goals of operational excellence, a strong and diverse membership, the application of translational research to address complex social problems, and solid communication serve to tether and support all types and levels of social workers. My vision is that these goals be harnessed to:

- foster professional identity and culture;
- guide research education and decision-making;
- build trust and reciprocity;
- develop and retain committed and skilled social work researchers; and
- facilitate research accountability and ethics measures for the profession.

I believe that I can help forge a targeted business growth model; fortify institutional and organizational infrastructure; strengthen the annual conference, journal, and website; and support all types and levels of social work research for greater global and local results.

If selected, I will bring all that I have to build an inclusive and collective base, strengthen and amplify the diverse experience and expertise of social work research, and invest in building the future of the Society for Social Work and Research, collaboratively.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Orion Mowbray, PhD



Orion Mowbray, PhD
University of Georgia, School of Social Work

Biography

Dr. Orion Mowbray is a Professor at the University of Georgia, where he leads a behavioral health focused research enterprise that supports faculty and student scholarship across disciplines. He serves as Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work* and Associate Editor for *Social Work and Mental Health*. Dr. Mowbray earned his PhD in Social Work and Psychology from the University of Michigan and has been an active SSWR member since 2004, contributing as a cluster co-chair (Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Addictive Behaviors), abstract reviewer, moderator, roundtable panelist, and presenter. He was named an SSWR Fellow in 2025.

Dr. Mowbray's research focuses on mental health and substance use services operating within broader health and justice systems. His work examines how structural, interpersonal, and community-level factors shape service access and quality for vulnerable and underserved populations, including individuals under community supervision, medically underserved adults, and youth involved in the foster care system. He has established interdisciplinary collaborations with partners in public health, medicine, psychology, criminal justice, and multiple state agencies.

His research has been funded by multiple federal agencies, including NIH, BJA & SAMHSA. Dr. Mowbray and his teams have disseminated their findings in high-impact journals across social work, behavioral health, and public health, and their research has been featured nationally in NPR, Satellite Radio, and regional media outlets.

Vision Statement

I am honored to be nominated for the Director-at-Large position. SSWR has been my professional home for over two decades, shaping my development as a researcher and reinforcing my commitment to rigorous, equity-driven social work science. If elected, I will partner with the Board, committees, and members to advance SSWR's mission to promote a diverse, just, and equitable society through high-impact research. My vision aligns directly with SSWR's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan and centers on three priorities:

Elevating the visibility, dissemination, and translation of social work research. Social work produces rigorous, community-engaged research that addresses complex social challenges. I fully support SSWR's strategic focus on enhancing communications and research dissemination by expanding public-facing media platforms, strengthening digital dissemination, and increasing opportunities to share our research with policymakers, practitioners, and communities. I believe increasing the visibility of social work science will strengthen its role in shaping policy and improving well-being.

Strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration and building research capacity. Interdisciplinary research is one of my core values because I believe it is essential for generating solutions to complex social problems. I advocate for expanding capacity-building opportunities, including additional pathways for research mentoring, grant writing, media communication, and training in innovative research methods, to ensure scholars at all career stages may excel.

Advancing organizational health and member engagement. SSWR's strength lies in its diverse membership and its commitment to equitable participation. I will work to enhance the conference experience by advocating for diversity and equity in conference site selection, increasing travel support, and transparent reporting of acceptance rates and programming decisions. I also support initiatives that expand membership diversity, across disciplines and globally, to foster the rich intellectual environments social work scholars need to thrive.

SSWR is uniquely positioned to lead the development, dissemination, and translation of research that drives social change. I would be honored to contribute to this work as a Director-at-Large.

Director-at-Large Nominee – Lisa Schelbe, PhD



Lisa Schelbe, PhD
Florida State University, College of Social Work

Biography

Lisa Schelbe, Ph.D., MSW is an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Jeanene M. Janes Professor in Child Welfare at the Florida State University College of Social Work in Tallahassee, Florida. She also is a Faculty Affiliate at the Florida Institute for Child Welfare. Dr. Schelbe served as the co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* (2015-2023) and as the Editor-in-Chief of the *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) Alert* and *APSAC Advisor* (2020-2022). She also co-led the leadership council that developed the Child Well-being Research Network (CWRN; 2021-2023) that evolved from the Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being. Dr. Schelbe served as the inaugural Director of CWRN (2023-2024). At Florida State University, Dr. Schelbe served on the executive council of the faculty union, United Faculty of Florida – FSU, where she held several leadership positions (2014-2023).

Dr. Schelbe's research focuses on child well-being, specifically young people aging out of foster care with a special interest in their experiences with post-secondary education and parenting. She is a qualitative methodologist with experience working on interdisciplinary teams and community engaged research.

Dr. Schelbe has attended SSWR each year since 2009, when she was in her second year of her doctoral studies. As an assistant professor, Dr. Schelbe was recognized as a SSWR Fellow (2017). Dr. Schelbe earned her doctorate in social work from the University of Pittsburgh (2013) where she was a Doris Duke Fellow for the Promotion of Child Well-being (2010-2012). She received her MSW from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis (2002).

Vision Statement

My desire to serve on the Board of SSWR is anchored in my commitment to fortify SSWR's standing as a transformative and influential leader in social work research. My specific vision and priorities are to work to:

1. **Promote Development of All Scholars:** Strengthen mentorship, leadership, and training opportunities across all career stages of social work scholars, with a particular emphasis on nurturing the success of early career and student scholars.
2. **Foster Collaborative Capacity:** Contribute to capacity building by promoting a trans-disciplinary and inter-professional support network that advances collaborative team science and knowledge exchange.
3. **Transform Policy and Practice:** Accelerate the translation of social work research into actionable policy initiatives and effective social and health services, maximizing its impact to promote the well-being all people and the communities in which they live.
4. **Advance Research Methodology:** Support methodological innovation, especially by fostering community-engaged and participatory research approaches that are responsive to community-identified needs.
5. **Broaden Professional Visibility:** Collaborate to advance the visibility and stature of social work research by creating robust platforms for showcasing our diverse scholarship to the public, policymakers, and practitioners.
6. **Strengthen Organizational Health:** Support measures to improve SSWR's organizational health and access for all members, including advocating for resources to reduce financial barriers to participation.

In partnership with the Board and all of our dedicated SSWR membership, I pledge to work tirelessly to propel SSWR forward as a globally influential leader, driving impactful research and sustainable social transformation.

Doctoral Student Director-at-Large Nominee – DeKeitra Griffin, MSW



DeKeitra Griffin, MSW
Louisiana State University, School of Social Work

Biography

DeKeitra Griffin (He/King), licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), is currently attending Louisiana State University as a PhD student within the School of Social Work. King serves as a board member for national and local HIV advocacy networks, and president for the Association of Black Social Workers Louisiana State University chapter. He has been recognized for his service by attending the White House to an invitation only summit, and receiving service awards from the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) and the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW). DeKeitra uses his lived experience including living with HIV, survivor of date rape, former sex worker, experiencing homelessness, and survivor of intimate partner violence to become a stronger advocate with his studies.

Vision Statement

My vision as Doctoral Student Director-at-Large is to help SSWR serve as an environment where researchers feel grounded, welcomed, and able to grow, regardless of their identities, institutions, or lived experiences. SSWR's mission and strategic plan focus on equity, developing leadership, and building a community of scholars. These priorities will guide my efforts to create spaces that center the people and communities we serve.

As a first-generation, Black, gay scholar living with multiple, chronic health conditions, I have navigated the academic landscape without clear guides. I value connecting with peers, community, and national networks. These experiences shape my leadership approach, which is grounded in flexibility and accessibility. It is essential that we create spaces that support the individuals we serve.

If elected to the Board of Directors, my priorities include expanding opportunities and strengthening connections with minority-serving institutions and community-based research networks. In this role, I will continue to focus on access, wellness, and diversity in SSWR's programming. This aligns with the strategic plan's emphasis on member engagement, equitable approaches to research, and strengthening scholars across institutions.

I see SSWR as a space where people are not just welcomed, but encouraged to grow as leaders, scholars, and collaborators. By uplifting diverse voices, supporting student-led ideas, and remaining connected to members of the SSWR community, we can continue building a future for social work research to thrive.

Doctoral Student Director-at-Large Nominee – Whitney Zeigler, MSW



Whitney Zeigler, MSW
Clark Atlanta University, Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work

Biography

Whitney Zeigler, MSW, is a passionate and resolutely committed PhD student at Clark Atlanta University in the Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work. As an emerging scholar, her work centers the lived experiences, cultural knowledge, and civic engagement of Black Southern youth, with a focus on how restorative justice practices cultivate empathy, disrupt punitive logics in schools, and support more equitable educational outcomes. Her research interests span ethical storytelling, participatory methods, school-based intervention, and culturally grounded civic education, reflecting her dedication to community-informed scholarship that honors the dignity and brilliance of historically excluded young people.

Whitney's scholarship is shaped by a deep belief in research as a transformative practice. She is co-authoring a reflective manuscript on restorative practices guided by a collaborative critical reflection framework and recently contributed to a participatory community validation project that produced a co-authored manuscript submitted in August 2025. She has received numerous institutional and nationally recognized fellowships, including the Council on Social Work Education's Minority Fellowship Program as a Doctoral Fellow, which supports her commitment to advancing mental health equity in underserved communities.

Her practice background spans school social work, community mental health, higher education, and nonprofit sectors, and she has served as both a field instructor and adjunct professor. She is the lead developer of *Breaking the 4th Wall: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*, a forthcoming initiative designed to support first-generation doctoral students through community-building and knowledge-sharing. Across her career in social work practice, education, and community engagement, Whitney has remained steadfast in her commitment to advancing equity-driven research that uplifts marginalized voices and informs just policy and practice. As a proud alumna of the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, she continues to champion inclusive academic spaces, mentorship, and research that is rigorous and rooted in care for the communities it serves.

Vision Statement

I am grateful for the opportunity to be considered for the role of Doctoral Student Director-at-Large on the SSWR Board of Directors. My vision is shaped by deep respect for the collective wisdom of doctoral students, the transformative power of social work science, and our shared responsibility to advance equity, justice, and rigorous, community-informed research. I hope to strengthen SSWR's efforts to cultivate inclusive research ecosystems and expand leadership opportunities for emerging scholars, particularly those who are first-generation, underrepresented, or institutionally marginalized.

- 1. Centering Student Voice and Leadership:** I envision a doctoral community where students feel seen, supported, and connected across programs, identities, and research trajectories. As chair of the Doctoral Student Committee, I am committed to elevating student concerns to the Board, strengthening communication channels, and cultivating spaces where students lead with confidence and purpose. I aim to expand the visibility and impact of doctoral students across SSWR so that student contributions are acknowledged and strategically utilized.
- 2. Expanding Research Engagement and Capacity:** Aligned with SSWR's Strategic Plan and the mission of the Research Capacity Development Committee, I will broaden access to research training, mentorship networks, grant development support, and team-science opportunities. I will champion interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration, strengthen antiracist and anti-oppressive methodological skills, and explore a doctoral research micro-credential or certification to support foundational research competencies for emerging scholars.
- 3. Strengthening Community Through Collective Action:** I am committed to fostering a supportive and vibrant student community through intentional engagement, shared learning spaces, and meaningful dialogue. As a member of the Conference Committee, I will work to ensure that the doctoral student luncheon and panel promote connection, visibility, and belonging.

**SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL WORK AND RESEARCH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025 ELECTIONS**

I am running not only to represent students, but to serve alongside them—to listen, advocate, and cultivate a thriving scholarly community grounded in justice, collaboration, and possibility.