



DATE: May 24, 2012

TO: Dean James Herbert Williams and NADD Members

FROM: Dr. Kia J. Bentley, Chair, Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education

RE: Annual Letter to Deans & Directors

I am writing to you as the 2012-13 Chair of the Steering Committee of GADE, the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, which now has 83 member Universities from all over the world. I wanted to update you on our organization's developments and activities, several in response to feedback we heard from a series of "stakeholder chats" we initiated last year with 2-3 leaders of each of the major social work organizations. Indeed this letter emerged out of learning from Deans and Directors that you all wanted to receive a bit more information about our goings on. Please feel free to forward this annual letter to your faculty and doctoral students as you deem appropriate. Here are some recent developments and plans for the immediate future:

- 1) A New Purpose Statement for GADE. Last year as Chair-elect, I led a GADE Task Force on Strategic Initiatives that examined GADE's purpose statement and made recommendations to the members at our annual conference last month in Portland. We invite you to go to our website, gadephd.org, and click on GADE Constitution under the "About" tab to see a brand new Article 2. I think one of the most important changes is the addition of an explicit statement that **GADE is about promoting excellence in doctoral education.** Significantly, for the first time, our purpose statement affirms our role in supporting the success and professional development of doctoral students. The new purpose statement also affirms our major purposes as they relate to networking and information exchange among doctoral program directors and collaborating with sibling social work organizations to support the interests of social work/social welfare doctoral programs and the entire continuum of social work education. This new purpose statement is already guiding the development of a forward-looking budget and a mission-focused series of initiatives.
- 2) New GADE Event at APM for Doctoral Students. One of those new initiatives is a GADE - sponsored breakfast for all doctoral students attending the APM. This year it will be held on Saturday, November 10th (preregistration required). We have asked former Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Social Work Education* and past CSWE Significant Lifetime Achievement winner, Dr. Deborah Valentine (Colorado State University) to offer brief remarks on "Courage and imagination: Using your doctoral education to make a difference," and we will present the GADE Award for Student Leadership and Service to a deserving doctoral student(s). Last year's

winners from the University of Washington were recognized for infusion of social justice ideals into their program. This year GADE members themselves will serve as table hosts for this unique event that strives to deepen the doctoral community across social work education. Please encourage your own doctoral program directors and doctoral students to attend.

- 3) GADE Partnership Session at 2012 APM on the Emerging DSW. GADE will invite all who are interested in participating in a much-needed conversation about the DSW, as it is emerging in the discipline. Dr. Jeanne Anastas (NYU), NASW President and former GADE Chair, and Dr. Barbara Rittner (University at Buffalo), immediate past GADE Chair, will help guide the discussion of the history and current status of the degree, and then facilitate a dialogue on possible implications for the field. If your School is currently offering a DSW or is considering it, this session might be of special interest. Note that the Leadership Forum recently developed guidelines on the DSW which are posted on the GADE website now.
- 4) A Charge to a New Task Force on 2013 GADE Quality Guidelines. I have asked Drs. Donna Harrington (University of Maryland) and Chris Petr (University of Kansas) to co-chair a task force and lead an inclusive process to examine and update GADE's Quality Guidelines, which is the signature document that describes our organizational consensus on what "quality" looks like in research-focused doctoral programs (available on our website). This document, last updated ten years ago, has been an important resource for the field and used by many programs to direct the development of curriculum and governance structures or to guide program review and improvement. GADE members, Dr. Beverly Black (University of Texas Arlington) and Dr. Renee Cunningham (Washington University St. Louis) will round out the task force membership.
- 5) Expanded Collaborations among Social Work Coalitions. Alongside NADD, for several years, GADE has been an active and vocal member of several important social work coalitions, including ANSWER, the large coalition staffed by NASW focused on influencing national policy related to the profession at large, and The Leadership Forum, staffed by CSWE, which is the coalition of Chairs and Presidents of five education-related social work organizations. As many of you know, recent gatherings of these coalitions have addressed such issues as the relationship of licensure boards to social work programs, the status of the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young Social Work Reinvestment Act, voting rights initiatives among social work programs, and readying a consensus social work agenda for post-election realities .

GADE has enjoyed increased visibility at the annual SSWR conference. Last year, I offered a welcome at SSWR's annual Doctoral Student Panel, and for several years, GADE has honored the recipients of the GADE Doctoral Student Research Award at luncheons during the SSWR conference, most recently, a student from the University of Pennsylvania. Next year we will expand our activities at SSWR by hosting an invitation-only "reunion" reception for current and former GADE members, and will honor the next research award recipient. I note that BPD, the baccalaureate program directors group, and GADE also have an expanded relationship facilitated by regular attendance of GADE representatives at the annual conferences. At the

GADE conference last month, BPD members participated in a session focused on preparing doctoral graduates to teach in BSW programs. The speakers for this session were Drs. Elizabeth Keenan (Southern Connecticut State), Edith Frazer (Alabama A&M) and GADE member, Sandra Chipungu (Morgan State).

- 6) Success at 2012 GADE Annual Conference. The evaluations from our recent conference in Portland, Oregon are just in and it is clear that the conference was a smashing success. Over 92 percent of participants were very satisfied (65%) or satisfied (27.5%) with the conference and the “quality” of both the program and facilities was rated equally as highly. This year our conference, organized by Portland State University faculty Drs. Katherine Cahn and Dan Coleman, featured major plenaries by Dr. Karina Walters (University of Washington) on indigenous research, Dr. Aron Shlonsky (University of Toronto) on evidence-informed practice, and a session on translational science, informatics and interactive media by Drs. Michelle Mor Barak, Eric Rice and Maryalice Jordan-Marsh (University of Southern California). Small break-out sessions focused on such topics as how to embody social justice in our doctoral programs, recruitment & retention, dissertation management, workload, and encouraging student publication. Several of your faculty were key facilitators of those sessions, including Drs. Sheryl Kubiak (Michigan State University), Valire Copeland (University of Pittsburgh) and Jim Drisko (Smith College). As always, GADE offered a very popular and well-attended pre-conference workshop for new directors, which was thoughtfully organized again by Dr. Steve McMurtry (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

I want to extend a special thanks to the sixteen Deans and Directors who supported the quality programming at our conference with additional sponsorships of specific sessions or meals: University of Alabama, Boston College, University at Buffalo, UCLA, Case Western University, Catholic University, University of Denver, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern California, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Texas Arlington, the University of Toronto, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Next year the GADE conference is hosted by my own institution, Virginia Commonwealth University, and will be held April 4-6, 2013 here in Richmond Virginia at the famed Jefferson Hotel in downtown.

- 7) What's next for GADE? At our Business Meeting in Portland, we elected four new Steering Committee members: Drs. Laura S. Abrams (UCLA), Arlene Bowers Andrews (University of South Carolina), Jim Lubben (Boston College), and Chris Petr (University of Kansas). Continuing members are myself, Susie Spence (Jackson State University), Jill Berrick (University of California at Berkeley), Theresa Early (Ohio State University), Allison Zippay (Rutgers University), and Aloen Townsend (Case Western University). We elected Theresa Early as Vice-Chair and Allison Zippay as Secretary. One of the responsibilities of the Vice-Chair is serving as the chair of conference planning. After learning the ropes as Treasurer-elect, Aloen Townsend is the Treasurer and will

work with a subcommittee to develop a mission-based and forward-looking budget. Jim Lubben agreed to chair our Website/Marketing Committee and accepted an ambitious charge around new branding, significant enhancements to the web, and the development of a "visibility plan" for the organization. We want our website to continue to be a resource for information about doctoral student funding and academic employment. We also want it to become a more comprehensive and easy to navigate resource for doctoral program directors around model curriculum and exemplar policies, for example. We will also develop an updated logo and seal for our member Universities to add to their website if they like

Arlene Andrews and Susie Spence agreed to co-chair our Constitution Committee and will examine and report on how our sibling organizations select officers. This information will be used to either change or affirm the current election process of GADE. The Awards Committee will continue to be chaired by Jill Berrick and that committee will be tweaking our current awards program and working with others to plan new events at APM and SSWR where recipients of these awards will be recognized. Laura Abrams agreed to be our "go to" person to coordinate the new GADE reception at SSWR, and as I mentioned, Chris Petr is co-chairing a new Task Force on 2013 GADE Quality Guidelines.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside you and NADD in our social work coalition activities, and to working with you, and our GADE members and subcommittees, in advancing excellence in doctoral education. Your comments or questions on this update are most welcome: kbentley@vcu.edu.