



**2013 GADE Chair's Letter to Deans & Directors
April 2013**

**Dr. Kia J. Bentley, Chair 2012-13 (VCU)
Dr. Theresa Early, Chair 2013-2015 (OSU)**

The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) is an organization made up of approximately 80 social work doctoral program directors in the US, Canada and locations around the world who represent their member Universities. The purposes of the GADE are to:

- promote excellence in doctoral education in social work;
- provide opportunities and structures for networking and information exchange among members regarding curriculum development, and all aspects of educational administration and program implementation;
- stimulate the development of more effective and innovative educational strategies and advance the quality of doctoral research;
- support the success and professional development of doctoral students in all their diversity and promote recognition of their achievements and contributions;
- identify and publicize existing or potential funding sources and infrastructure support for doctoral education,
- provide guidance and support to new or developing doctoral programs including international programs;
- represent and promote the interests and concerns of social work/social welfare doctoral programs within academic departments, schools, universities, and in the larger profession;
- collaborate with other social work organizations to support the continuum of social work education and advance the profession with all constituent groups and funding sources.

Here are some major accomplishments and activities of the past year:

1. Updated the GADE Guidelines on Quality PhD Programs in Social Work. Last year, Chair Kia J. Bentley appointed a special GADE Task Force, co-chaired by Drs. Donna Harrington (Maryland) and Chris Petr (Kansas) with at large members Beverly Black (Texas Arlington) and Renee Cunningham-Williams (Washington St. Louis), to update our ten year old Guidelines for Quality Doctoral Programs. In addition to reviewing the literature and scouring over relevant documents, they collaboratively planned and conducted a national survey of faculty and students that would inform a comprehensive update of this important white paper, our consensus of what "quality" looks like in terms of PhD curriculum, supports, and outcomes. A membership vote affirmed the document at our conference last weekend and it is attached to the cover email to this letter and will be uploaded onto our website (gadephd.org) soon. Programs use this as an aspirational document and as a guide

to assessment and program review. Their research and this initiative in general will be the subject of GADE's "partnership session" at CSWE's APM this Fall in Dallas.

2. Initiated a national "Dialogue on the DSW". GADE's past and present leaders- Kia J. Bentley (VCU), Barbara Rittner (Buffalo) & Jeane Anastas (NYU)- convened a stimulating session at CSWE's APM in Washington, D.C. that continued the conversation about the impact of developing DSW programs and practice doctorates on the discipline. We are collaborating with NASW and the Leadership Forum to follow up that work. The hope is to one day develop "Guidelines for Quality of DSW Programs" to mirror our PhD quality guidelines in close collaboration with our members who direct those doctoral programs and other stakeholders in the profession.
3. Commissioned a national study on doctoral student debt. Student debt in higher education is acknowledged to be of great social concern at this point in American history. Because data is needed to better understand the complexities of our own doctoral students' experiences with debt, GADE is using some of its resources to commission a study that might guide our response. Dr. Audrey Begun (Ohio State University) responded to our RFP and successfully competed for the \$2500 funding. She is now actively conducting research focused on the impact of debt on will report results to GADE by this Fall.
4. Collaborated with social work organizations & coalitions around other projects and events. An excellent relationship was established with new CSWE President Dr. Darla Spence Coffey and GADE plans to continue to work with CSWE to improve annual program data collection, use, and dissemination. CSWE has agreed to appoint members to their Commission on Research with knowledge and skills to support that endeavor. We also helped craft and strongly supported the advocacy initiatives of the ANSWER Coalition and Leadership Forum, attending their face to face meetings, joint events and collaborating on organizational documents, including this year *A Shared Agenda for Social Work Education*. We support the Grand Challenges initiative of the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, and the Research Capacity Initiative of SSWR. In fact, we participated in planning meetings around the "science of social work" and attended invitational meetings around the future of research funding. Finally, outgoing GADE Chair Kia J. Bentley has attended BPD the past two years on behalf of the organization presenting workshops on doctoral education as well as bringing greetings to their attendees at their own annual Business Meeting.
5. Increased support of doctoral student work and brought greater visibility to their leadership, teaching and research. GADE has significantly expanded our awards program for doctoral students by initiating new events that brought greater visibility to their work and began to help create a national doctoral community: At CSWE's APM GADE now hosts an annual Doctoral Student Breakfast, and uses the event to award our student Service and Leadership Award. This past Fall, Dr. Deb Valentine (former CSWE Lifetime Achievement winner) was our speaker and over 20 of our members served as "hosts" at each table. Megan Moore and Colleen Henry (Berkeley) were the much grateful doctoral student awardees. Additionally, our first ever organizational reception was held on opening night at SSWR in San Diego, where we welcomed approximately 60 current and alumni GADE members, Deans, members of Leadership Forum, and SSWR Board. We awarded our 2013 Research Award at this event to Dr. Yoli Anyon (PhD Berkeley), now at University of Denver, for her dissertation titled "*Racial group differences in school-based health and social services: An exploration of the role of referral routines.*" We also provided some sponsorship money for SSWR's annual Luncheon/Panel for Doctoral Students and the GADE Chair was given the honor of welcoming that gathering. At our annual meeting last week, the membership voted to develop a third GADE student

award, this one for excellence in teaching.

6. Strengthened organizational infrastructure and visibility with revisions to the Constitution that updated our mission statement, revised the processes for election of Chair now to be by the entire membership, and instituted clearer consequences for non-dues payment. Last year, this “Annual Letter to the Deans & Directors” was instituted in response to feedback to improve communication with those stakeholders. We updated the look of the website and for visibility, published our first slick multi-color brochure, and purchased lapel pins and bright GADE ribbons for nametags. Work remains to improve functionality of the website such as creating a depository of excellent syllabi, exemplar policies, or links to student CVs and perhaps a discussion board.
7. Continued focus on relevance for annual GADE Conference Planning. We planned and carried out another successful annual member conference in Richmond last week with the theme “*Excellence and Innovation in Social Work Doctoral Education*.” Sponsorships were at an all-time high and attendance was solid with approximately 70 members attending and ten additional guests and speakers. Conference activities included a half day workshop for new doctoral Directors facilitated by Drs. Steve McMurtry (Wisconsin Milwaukee) and Valire Copeland (Pittsburgh) with expanded content on leadership. This year’s keynote address was by Dr. Brené Brown on social work researchers as storytellers. Other plenary sessions included one on doctoral programs as a producers of leaders in clinical social work education with former GADE members Drs. Joan Berzoff and Jim Drisko (Smith), another on advancing transdisciplinary and translational research in social work by Drs. Paula Nurius and Susan Kemp (both U Washington), and finally one with GADE member Dr. Chris Petr (Kansas) facilitating a panel exploring new avenues for dissemination and publication with editors Drs. Mark Fraser (UNC Chapel Hill), Matthew Howard (UNC Chapel Hill) and Lorraine Gutierrez (Michigan). Next year, GADE is off to Austin Texas with the University of Texas playing host, then in 2015 to Lawrence Kansas with the University of Kansas as host.

It is hard to express the gratitude we feel for our academic sponsorships which allow us to bring in the “brightest and best” speakers and panelists to our conference, as well as support the GADE tradition of shared day-time meals which adds to the intimacy of this conference. This year’s major sponsors were University of Houston, University of Southern California, University of Pennsylvania, University of Tennessee, University of California Los Angeles, University of Kansas, and of course, the host institution, Virginia Commonwealth University. In addition, we welcomed additional sponsorships from Arizona State University, Boston College, University at Buffalo, Colorado State University, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh, University of South Carolina, University of Texas Arlington, University of Toronto, University of Utah, and Wilfrid Laurier University. Thanks to all for your support of GADE. Our member Deans and Directors should look for an invitation to our newly established GADE reception on opening night at SSWR again this year.

8. Congratulations to two newly elected Steering Committee members, Drs. Liz Lightfoot (Minnesota) and Dr. Donna Harrington (Maryland), who will join Drs. Theresa Early (incoming Chair, OSU), Laura Abrams (new Vice-Chair, UCLA), Aloen Townsend (Treasurer, Case Western), Allison Zippay (Secretary, Rutgers), Susie Spence (Jackson State), Jim Lubben (Boston College), Chris Petr (Kansas) and Jill Berrick (USC). Goodbye to Drs. Kia J. Bentley (VCU) and Arlene Andrews (South Carolina).