

BOSTON COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Spier Fellows in Aging

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Boston College School of Social Work, through the generous support of the Spier Family Foundation, is pleased to offer the Spier Fellows in Aging program. The goal of this fellowship program is to foster excellence in geriatric social work education and to build a workforce of trained social work professionals who can support the health and well-being of our rapidly aging population.

Five MSW students will be selected as fellows. They will demonstrate exceptional commitment to working with older adults and their families and possess a high level of potential for enacting leadership in gerontology at any level of social work practice.

Application Deadline (2020–21 Academic Year)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2020, 11:59 p.m.

If selected for an interview, they will take place on Thursday, January 9, and Friday, January 10, 2020.

Benefits of the Fellowship

- Yearly stipend of \$3,000.
- Exposure to a range of career paths in aging and opportunities to network with professionals in a variety of service areas in Greater Boston through an enriched field placement in aging and monthly integrative seminars at field agencies that offer additional educational content on older adults.
- Additional advising from faculty, peers, and experienced geriatric social work professionals.
- Opportunities for leadership through a student-directed, aging-related community service/leadership project OR research project preferably focused on a vulnerable or marginalized group of older adults.
- The opportunity to share your passions by visiting a local middle school or high school to encourage students to consider careers in aging.
- A mark of distinction on your résumé.

Eligibility

- Macro or clinical students who are about to enter their final-year placement and have selected the Older Adults and Families concentration.
- Students must be in good standing in the MSW program (i.e., no incompletes, no unresolved academic difficulties with Academic Standards Review, etc.).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Application for the 2020–21 Spier Fellows in Aging program is now open for MSW students in the Older Adults and Families concentration starting their final-year field placement in the fall of 2020. To apply, [complete the google form](#) and upload the required application materials by the deadline listed above.

Application Materials

- Fellowship application form (<https://forms.gle/V6eyR8YarsgDZGWdg>)
- Résumé /CV
- Short essay (two double-spaced pages max) addressing the following questions:
 - What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself five years from now?
 - Do you have any experience working with older adults? (Note: you do not need previous experience in working with older adults to participate in this program.)
 - Why are you interested in working with older adults?
 - Discuss the attitudes, experiences, and skills that you bring to this fellowship program.

Method of Submission

- Resume/CV and essay must be combined into a single PDF and uploaded via the application form (<https://forms.gle/V6eyR8YarsgDZGWdg>)
- Application PDF files should be named according to the following convention:
LastName.FirstName.SpierFellowship

SPIER FELLOWS IN AGING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Spier Fellows in Aging program?

The fellowship is a competitive program open to MSW students in the Older Adults and Families concentration entering their final-year field placement. The Spier Fellowship offers a stipend (\$3,000 for the following academic year) as well as an enriched field placement and a variety of other opportunities that emphasize students' leadership development for our aging society.

How does the program promote students' leadership development?

All Fellows are required to engage in a variety of enrichment activities that support leadership development:

- **Engage in monthly integrative seminars:** Fellows take turns hosting/leading a seminar at their field agency to introduce their peers to a different setting and to co-present with others on the aging-related work that their agency does. Program staff will fill in programming with additional agencies to supplement the represented agencies so that students get exposed to a range of settings in which geriatric social workers practice.
- **Complete a self-directed aging-related community service/leadership project OR research project:** Fellows will have the choice of either taking on a service/leadership project in the community or working with a faculty member in the School of Social Work on an applied aging-related research project—preferably focused on a vulnerable or marginalized group of older adults. Fellows will present their work at the last integrative seminar of the year.
 - The requirements for the community-service/leadership or research project are purposely flexible so that the project can be responsive to the needs and professional goals/interests of the fellow.
 - The fellow will work with program staff to develop this project and ensure that it is manageable given the fellow's workload and other demands.
- **Be matched with a retired geriatric social worker for regular bi-directional learning conversations/mentorship:** Through a collaboration with local aging services agencies, we are developing a database of recently retired geriatric social workers who have time and experience to offer.

Fellows will be involved in selecting their mentor and will work out a plan to have regular (once a month or once every other month), in-person meetings or phone calls to learn from each other about working in the field of aging. Mentors are invited to attend selected integrative seminar meetings.

- **Visit a local middle school or high school to talk to students about careers in aging.** We will work to find a date and time that works for the selected school and the fellows.

What is the time commitment for being a fellow?

Some of the program is structured so that fellows can complete the requirements of the fellowship within their regularly allotted field hours, and others require some time outside of their course and field requirements.

- The integrative seminars are to be completed within students' regular field hours (including planning and traveling).
- The self-directed aging-related community service/leadership project OR research project should be time limited in nature (perhaps 20 hours total over the course of the year). When and where the work will occur will depend on the nature of the project the fellow proposes, but it is possible to choose a project that is very flexible (to be done during January break or over a couple of weekends).
- The mentorship conversations can be by phone, video conference, or in person and can be every month or every other month, as worked out between the student and the mentor.
- For our visit to a local school to discuss careers in aging, we will find a time that works for both the fellows and the school we are visiting. This may or may not be during field placement time.

How are agencies selected to be part of the fellowship program?

Fellowship placements are at field agencies in aging that have been selected based on a number of characteristics, including:

- Willingness to offer students a wide range of field opportunities to broaden their exposure to the matrix of services available to older adults.
- Willingness to host one of the monthly integrative seminars and to build the time needed to plan and attend these seminars into field placement time commitments.
- Location in the Greater Boston area, qualified field instructors, and some prior experience with the Field Education Program at the Boston College School of Social Work.

Whom can I contact with additional questions about the fellowship and application process?

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to:

Prof. Christina Matz
Chair of Older Adults & Families
McGuinn Hall 203
matzch@bc.edu



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