

FINAL ABSTRACT

This interactive workshop will describe the rewards and challenges of collaborating with undergraduate BSW students and community partners to conduct research related to HIV risk among justice-involved women during COVID times. Our project, SHAWN, is funded by the NIH/NIDA R15 mechanism, which is specifically designed to engage undergraduates in research (www.theshawnproject.com). Obstacles to student engagement with community-based research will be delineated, along with suggestions about how to overcome these issues. Training strategies and team-building exercises will be shared. Presenters will include the project's team members, including student research assistants.

Presenters

Amy Smoyer, Associate Professor, Southern Connecticut University

Eve Jones, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Shoshana Mahon, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Mellody Massaquoi, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Sedona Worth, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Sabrina Yaser, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Emily Ziemba, BSW Student Research Assistant, Southern Connecticut University

Building the Next Generation of Social Work Researchers: The NIH R15 & Beyond

BPD Annual Conference, Birmingham, AL, Thurs, March 30: 10:45 am – 12:15 pm

Amy B. Smoyer, Associate Professor, Southern Connecticut University

Student Research Assistants, Southern Connecticut University

- ❖ **Eve Jones**, SCSU '23, Sociology
- ❖ **Shoshana Mahon**, SCSU '24, Social Work
- ❖ **Melody Massaquoi**, SCSU '24, Social Work
- ❖ **Sedona Worth**, SCSU '25, Sociology
- ❖ **Sabrina Yaser**, SCSU '26, Social Work
- ❖ **Emily Ziemba**, SCSU '23



BPD

The Association of Baccalaureate
Social Work Program Directors



Today's Agenda

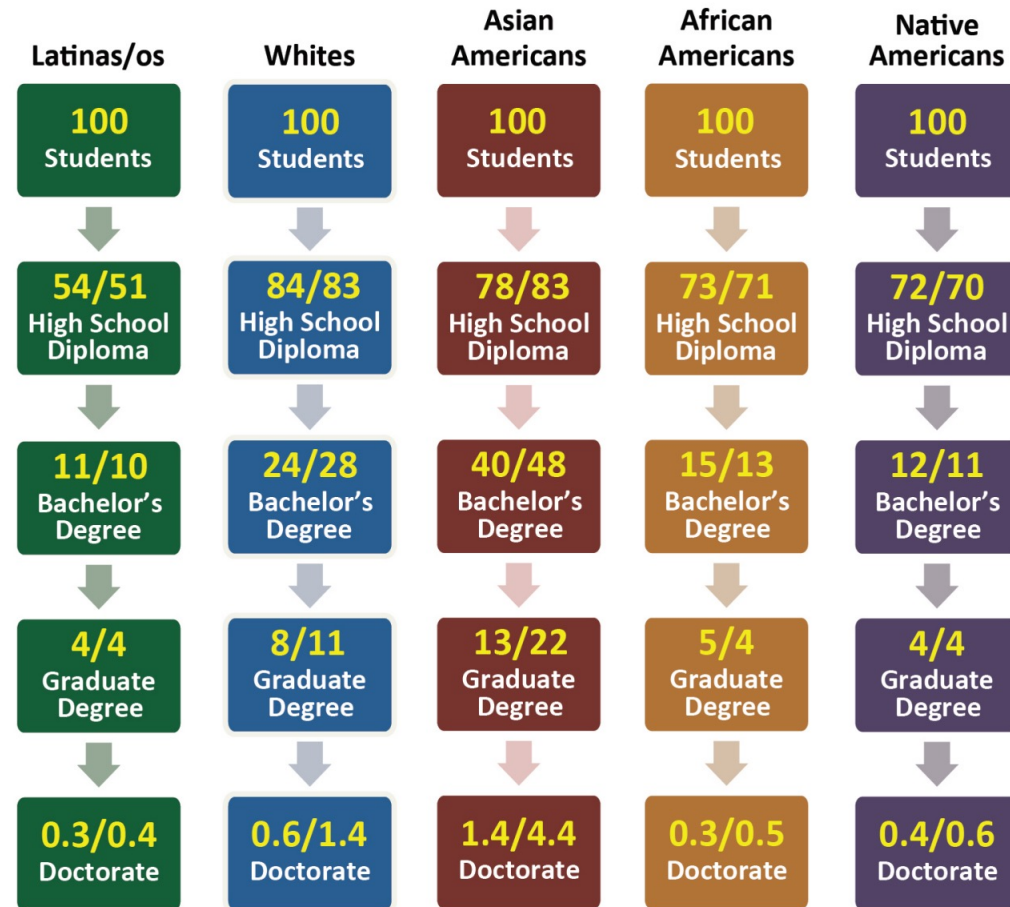
- 10:45 - 11:00: Small group introductions (6 groups)
- 11:00 – 11:10: PhD Pipeline: Challenges & Urgency
- 11:10 – 11:20: Engaging Undergrads in Research
- 11:20 – 11:30: The R15 – SHAWN
- 11:30 – 11:40: Project Teamwork
- 11:40 – 12:00: Prep Projects
- 12:00 – 12:15: Questions & Ideas



The Doctoral Degree Pipeline: Challenges

Lack of racial diversity among people with PhDs (Men/Women)

Figure 3. The US Education Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2000



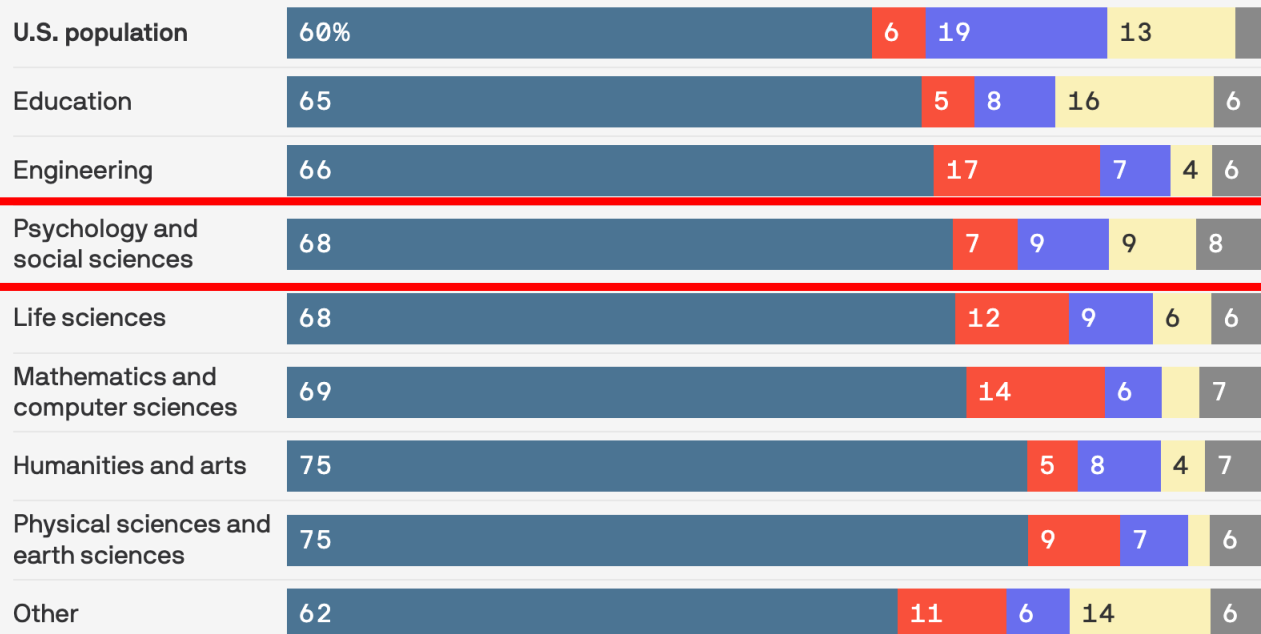
Source: Drawn from American FactFinder data for 2000, compiled by the US Bureau of the Census.

The Doctoral Degree Pipeline: Challenges

Lack of racial diversity among people with doctoral degrees.

Doctoral degrees earned by race/ethnicity, 2019

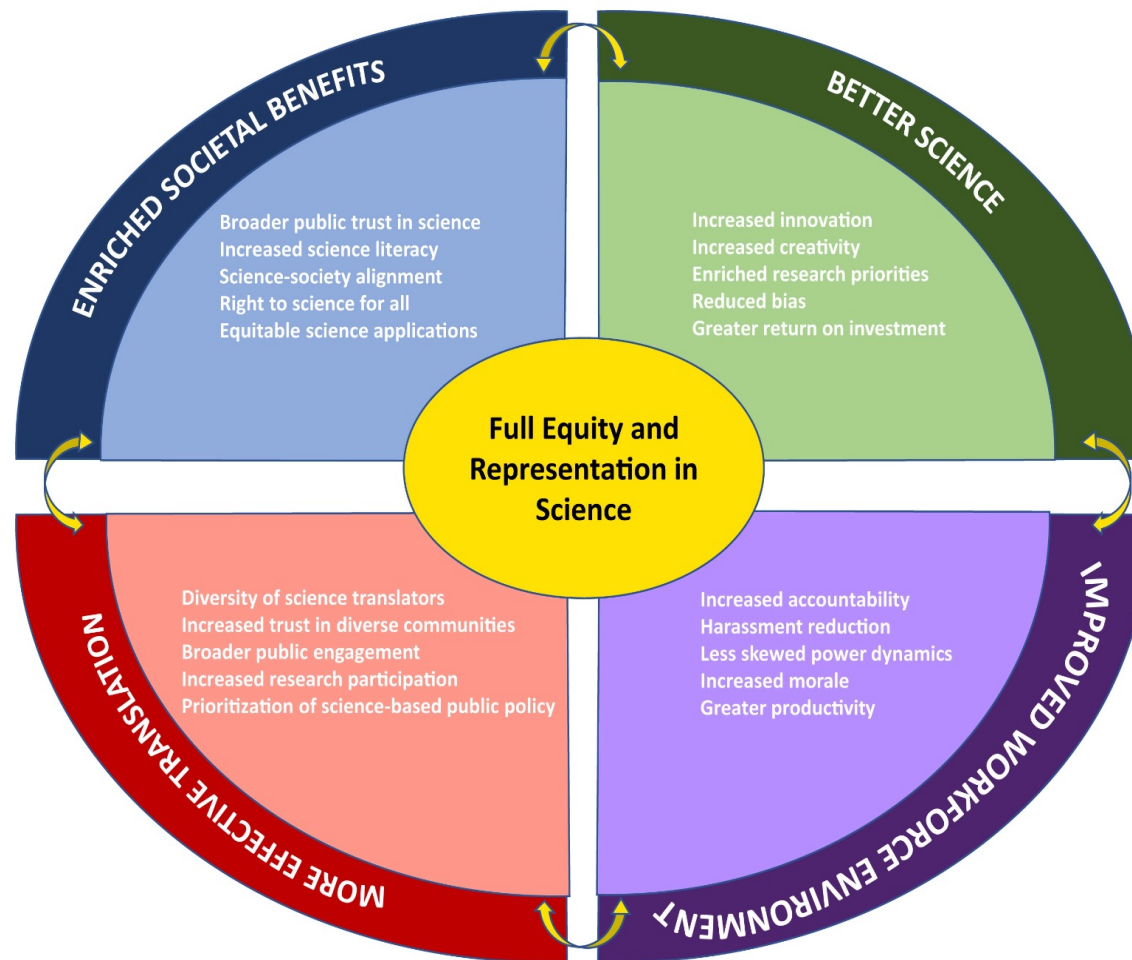
■ White ■ Asian ■ Hispanic or Latino ■ Black ■ Mixed or other



Data: [NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates](#), [U.S. Census Bureau](#); Chart: Connor Rothschild/Axios

The Doctoral Degree Pipeline: Benefits of Equity & Representation

Fig. 1.

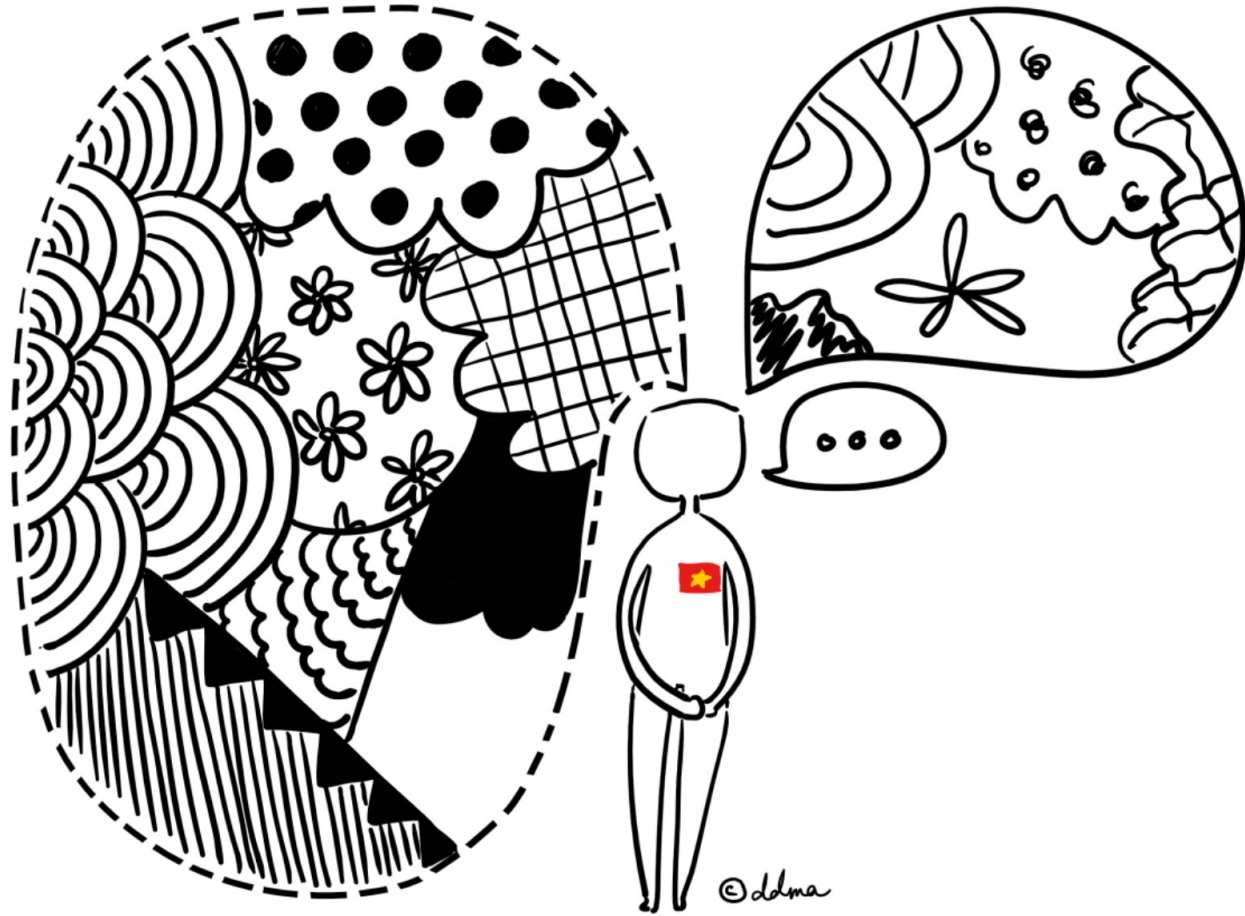


Increased representativeness within the overall science system is central to improving science and societal benefits.

Graves Jr, J. L., Kearney, M., Barabino, G., & Malcom, S. (2022). Inequality in science and the case for a new agenda. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(10), e2117831119.

Engaging Undergraduates in Research:

Challenges & Opportunities



BCM212 RESEARCH PROJECT:
HOW LANGUAGE BARRIERS INFLUENCE THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE
OF VIETNAMESE INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

[Minh-Anh Mia Do](#)

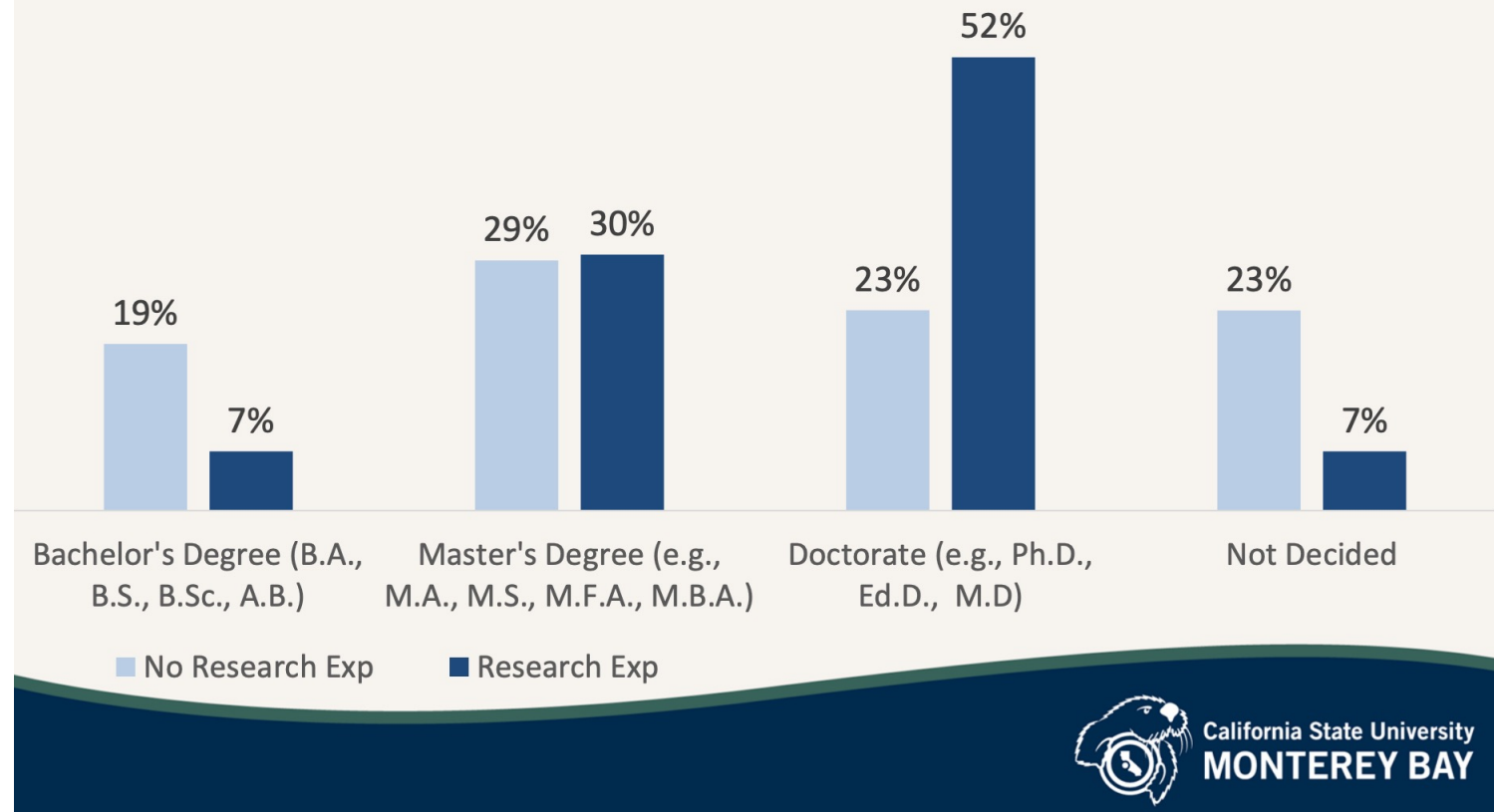
book-smart and sugar-addicted || the written word & all things
linguistics || email: dmad920@uowmail.edu.au

Engaging Undergraduates in Research:

Students who participate in undergrad research are more likely to earn doctorate.

Educational Aspirations

- Students who have research experience are significantly more likely to aspire to go to graduate school, especially at the doctoral level



Engaging Undergraduates in Research:

Undergraduate research is a High Impact educational Practice (HIP)

Boosts retention & educational outcomes, esp. First Gen and Black and Latinx students

- **Undergraduate Research**
- **Collaborative Assignments and Projects**
- **Diversity/Global Learning**
- **Service Learning, Community Based Learning**
- Capstone Courses and Projects
- Internships
- First Year Seminars & Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing Intensive Courses

The very best HIPs offer all of the following experiences and benefits:



Considerable time and effort requirements for students



Opportunities to apply concepts in real-world settings



Meaningful interactions between faculty and students



Collaboration with people of diverse backgrounds



Constant, Consistent Feedback



Reflection and integrative learning opportunities



Engaging
Undergraduates
in Research

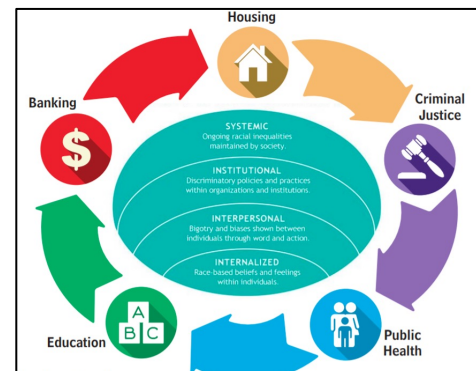
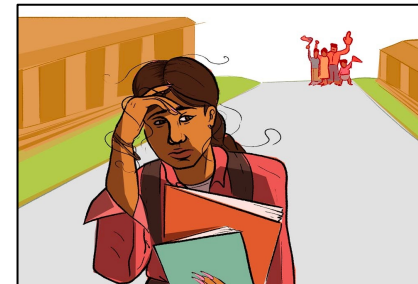
Opportunities &
Barriers for
Faculty



Engaging Undergraduates in Research:

Barriers to research participation for students

- Lower rates of participation in UR
 - First-generation
 - Low-income
 - Transfer
 - Adult learners
 - Students of color are all less likely to participate in UR (even at MSIs)
 - Pell eligible students



Haeger, H., Armstrong-Land, M., & Smith, C. (2019). Identifying and breaking down barriers to participation in undergraduate research. <https://researchinsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IDBarriersUndergrad-HaegerArmstrong-LandSmith2019.pdf>

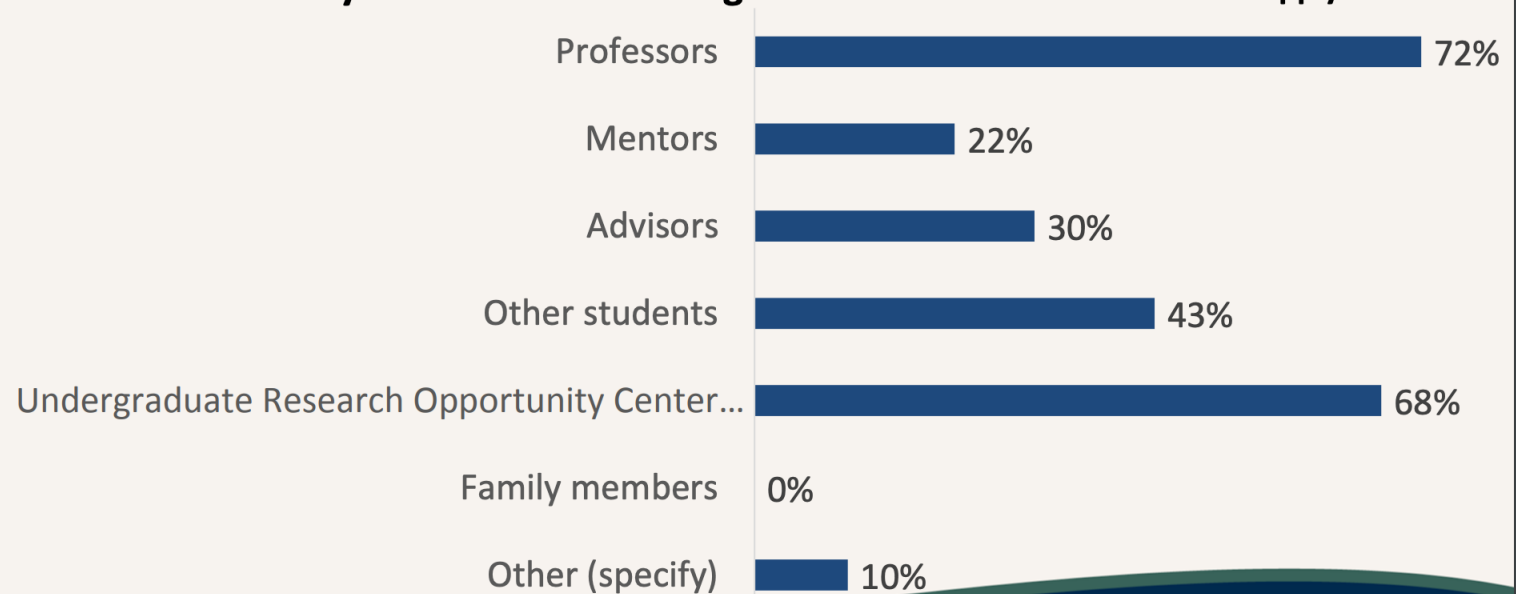
Engaging Undergraduates in Research:

Faculty outreach boost student participation in research.

Learning about UR

- 76% have heard about UR

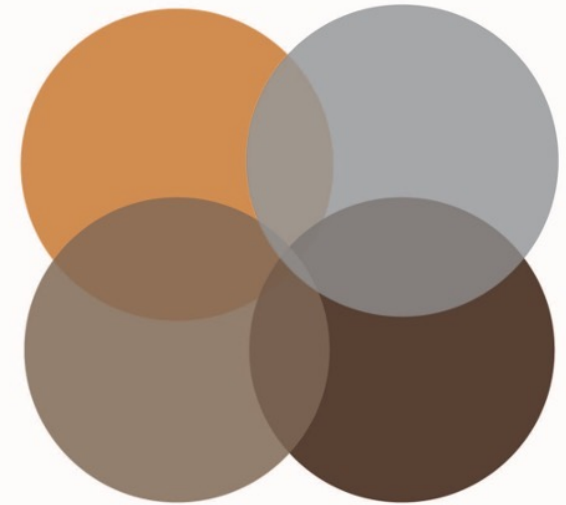
Where did you hear about undergraduate research? Mark all that apply.



S.H.A.W.N.

Stop HIV /AIDS Women's Network

NIDA/NIH 1R15DA056285-01, (PI Smoyer, Amy B.) Project Title: **Impact of COVID-19 Criminal-Legal Practices on HIV Risk among Women Who Use Drugs: A Multi-Methods Qualitative Exploration**, 05/01/2022 – 04/30/2025



SHAWN

The NIH R15 Mechanism

National Institute of Health R15

The R15 "Supports small-scale research projects at educational institutions that provide baccalaureate or advanced degrees for a significant number of the Nation's research scientists but that have not been major recipients of NIH support (less than \$6M/year). The goals of the R15 are to:

- support meritorious research,*
- expose students to research, and*
- strengthen the research environment of the institution.*



Shawn Lang

This project is inspired and informed by the peer-based activism of HIV/AIDS community organizer Shawn Lang (1956-2021).

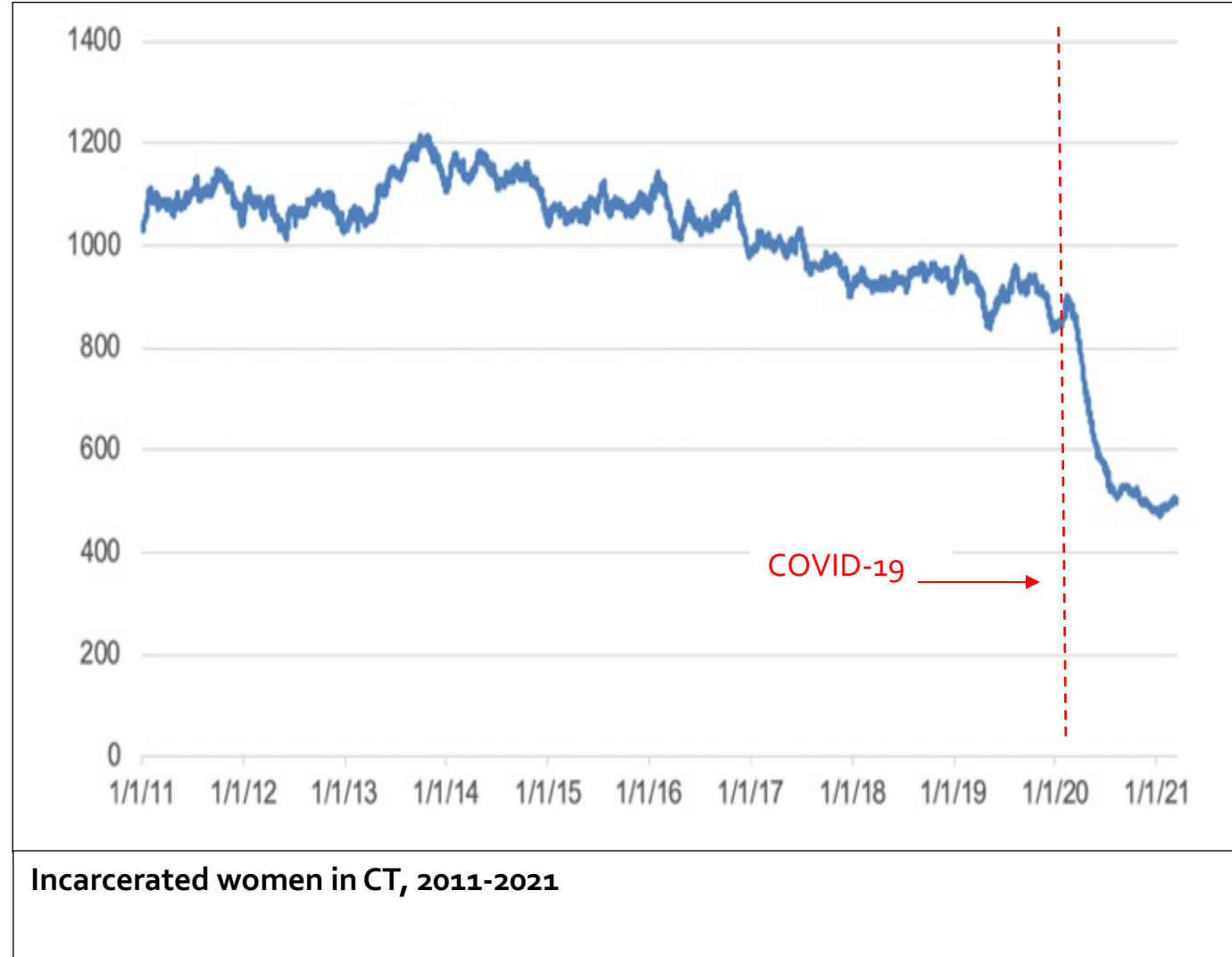
Shawn's mentorship and leadership shaped the career development of the PI on this study, Dr. Amy Smoyer, and the lives of all those who had the privilege to work with her.

Her vision is reflected in the project's framework which centers the expertise and knowledge of people with lived experience. The focus on women and people who inject drugs aligns with Shawn's persistent and unflinching focus on **marginalized communities, gender equality, anti-racism practices, and harm reduction programs**, especially housing and syringe exchange.

**Pray for the dead.
Fight like hell for
the living.**

—Mother Jones

The number of women incarcerated in CT dropped by 43% during COVID.



Specific Aims

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What was the impact of COVID-19 shifts in criminal-legal practices on the HIV risk behaviors of justice-involved women who use drugs?

- **Specific Aim #1:** PROVIDE undergraduate students the opportunity to gain significant experience with community engaged research.
- **Specific Aim #2:** IDENTIFY the pre-COVID-19 HIV risk behaviors and protective factors of justice-involved women who use drugs.
- **Specific Aim #3:** DOCUMENT and ASSESS HIV risk during COVID-19 among justice-involved women who use drugs.

www.theshawnproject.com

- ✓ Build study team: PI, RAs, consultants.
- ✓ Develop team communication.
- ✓ Create website.
- Review relevant literature.
- ✓ Engage with community.
- Develop study instruments.
- Plan Digital Storytelling program.
- **Deliverables:**
 - ✓ Active study team
 - ✓ Launched website
 - Approved IRB protocol
 - Pub #1: Systematic Lit Review

Aim #1: Engage Students

Year One of Project

2022 – 2023

What we have accomplished so far

Aim #2: Identify HIV Risk & Protective Factors

- Recruit study participants.
- Conduct team-based life history interview.
- Provide ongoing RA support and feedback.
- Transcribe, manage, analyze, disseminate data.
- **Deliverables:**
 - Life history data
 - Community presentations
 - Updated Website
 - Pub #2: Team Logistics & Process
 - Pub #3: HIV Risk and Protective Factors among Women who Use Drugs.

Year Two

2023 – 2024

Year Three

2024 – 2025

Aim #3: Document & Assess COVID Experiences

- Retain study participants.
- Conduct COVID calendar interviews.
- Facilitate Digital Storytelling process.
- Manage, analyze, disseminate data.
- **Deliverables:**
 - COVID calendar data
 - 10 digital stories
 - Community presentations, updated website
 - Pub #4: Digital Storytelling Process Evaluation
 - Pub #5: HIV Risk during COVID among Women who use Drugs: Impact of Criminal-legal and Social Service Changes

Visualization



Team Building

Recruit & Hire



Orientation

- CITI Certification
- Teams: Read, Listen, Watch
- Website Photo & Bio
- Office Hours Schedule

Communication

- Friday Meetings
 - Group Text
 - Teams Work
 - Email
- 

Community Engagement

Meetings

- Ryan White
- Reentry Roundtables
- Yale CIRA QRWG
- CT Social Work Action Alliance (SWAA)

Volunteer

- SWAN
- City Wide Youth
- Stop Solitary CT
- DESK



Data Collection

Create Instruments

- Demographic Survey
- Life History Interview
- COVID Calendar Interview

Develop Recruitment Plan

- Logo & Website
- Flyers & Outreach
- IRB Approval



Conduct Interviews



Analysis & Dissemination

Data Management & Analysis

- Transcribe
- RQI: Summarize & Share
- Code & Thematic Analysis

Digital Story Telling



Dissemination

- Peer Reviewed Journals
- Conferences
- Community Meetings
- Website/Social Media

SHAWN is supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Grant No: 1R15DA056285. Smoyer, PI.
Project Title: Impact of COVID-19 Criminal-Legal Practices on HIV Risk among Women Who Use Drugs: A Multi-Methods Qualitative Exploration

Project Team: SCSU Faculty & Students



- PI: Amy B. Smoyer, PhD, Associate Professor, SCSU Department of Social Work
- Dynamic Team: SHAWN solicits applications from BSW students at the start of every semester.
- Five (5) SCSU undergraduate students, 10 hours/week
- Collaborator: Karen D'Angelo, PhD, Assistant Professor, SCSU Department of Social Work

Join Dr. Smoyer's research team!

S.H.A.W.N.

Stop HIV/AIDS Women's Network

?

S.H.A.W.N. is a community-based project which will build knowledge about the lives of justice-involved women who use drugs during COVID.

Hand icon

Five (5) Undergraduate SCSU Social Work majors will be hired to join the team as Research Assistants.

- Year-round work starts June 2022.
- Pay is \$15/hr

hello

Required Qualifications:

- Undergrad SWK Major
- Able to work in-person on-campus for 5-10 hrs/wk, regular business hours (M-F, 9-5).
- Interest in research, HIV, prison, and/or women's health issues.

Checkmark icon

To apply, submit a 250-300 word essay to Dr. Smoyer, SmoyerA1@SouthernCT.edu, that describes your interest in the job and schedule availability.

Deadline: 05/23/22

Project Team:

Community Consultants (SCSU Alum!)



- www.theshawnproject.com/team
- Core Team Consultants
 - Maribel Oyola, MSW – ongoing core member (SCSU MSW alumn)
 - Nadine Ruff, MSW – ongoing core member (SCSU BSW & MSW alumn)
 - Jamie Myers, MD, Yale School of Medicine, Clinical Expert
- Community Consultants
 - Ashley Hampton, LCSW – Clinical Supervision (SCSU MSW alumn)
 - Monya Saunders – Recruitment (Yale RA)
 - Maeve Pierce – Graphic Designer (SCSU '23, Studio Art)
- Pamela Allen, CEO & President, Evergreen Family Oriented Services – Data Collection



On Boarding:

Human
Resources &
CITI Human
Subjects

A close-up of a white form titled "Request for Criminal Background Check". The form has several sections for personal information, including fields for First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth, Address, City, State, Zip Code, E-Mail Address, and Work Phone. A pair of glasses is resting on the right side of the form.

Harm Reduction Framework

Principles of Harm Reduction

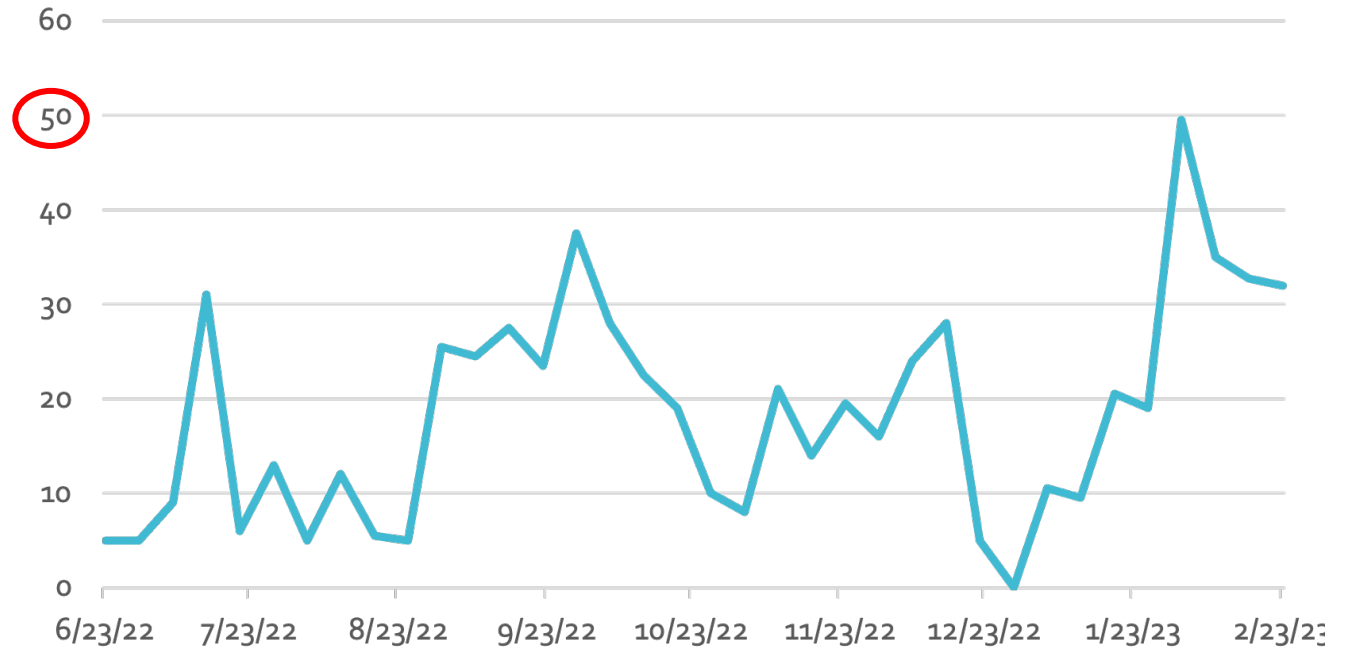
<https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>

- Meet people where they are.
- Non-judgmental, non-coercive.
- Any level of engagement is better than no engagement.
- Understands engagement in research is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors and acknowledges that people will engage in different ways.
- Ensures that undergrads have a real voice in the creation of research opportunities designed to engage them.
- Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination, and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for engaging in research.
- Whatever the question, the answer is yes.

Harm Reduction
Framework:

Meeting People
Where They Are

Team Hours Per Week



Harm Reduction Framework:

Team Engagement Strategies

- Belonging
 - Snacks
 - Office Space
 - Field Trips
 - Swag
 - Website
- Flexibility & Structure
 - Friday Meetings
 - Office Hours (remote?)
 - Teams
 - Worksheets
 - Accountability
- Variety & Overwhelm
 - Blog
 - Practice Projects
 - Community Events
 - Writing
 - Reading
 - Podcasts



Prep Project #1:

The Legacy Project with AIM (Montgomery, AL)

What is women's lived experience of incarceration in Alabama and how do modern corrections reflect the legacy of slavery?

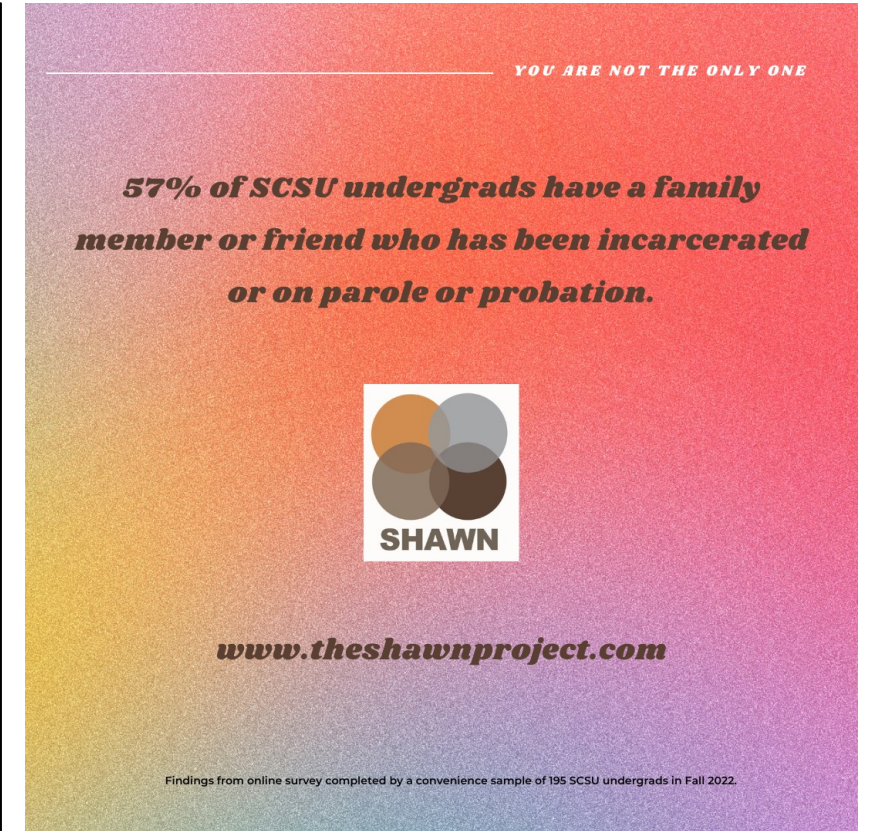
- Focus on activities of daily life: eating, using the bathroom, sleeping, relationship with staff, peers, and self.
- Interviews (n=15) conducted by Dr. Smoyer in March 22
- Framed with Bryan Stevenson's Legacy theory
- **PRACTICE: Transcription, Coding (Dedoose), and Analysis in conjunction with AIM staff and clients**



Prep Project #2: Campus Survey

To what extent have undergraduates at SCSU been impacted by criminal legal systems?

- Online anonymous survey
- Questions if asked if participant or any member of their family or any friend had ever been incarcerated or on parole or probation.
- n= 195
- **PRACTICE:** Survey development (Qualtrics), IRB Application, Recruitment, Data Collection, Analysis, Dissemination



Our article is under review! Smoyer, A.B., D'Angelo, K., Jones, E., Mahon, S., Massaquoi, M., Worth, S., & Ziemba, E. (*under review*). Criminal-legal systems, undergraduate college students & community organizing. *Journal of Community Practice*.

Thank you!



www.theshawnproject.com

Southern Connecticut University Team

- ❖ **Amy B. Smoyer**, Associate Professor, Social Work
- ❖ **Eve Jones**, SCSU '23, Sociology
- ❖ **Shoshana Mahon**, SCSU '24, Social Work
- ❖ **Mellody Massaquoi**, SCSU '24, Social Work
- ❖ **Sedona Worth**, SCSU '25, Sociology
- ❖ **Sabrine Yaser**, SCSU '26, Social Work
- ❖ **Emily Ziemba**, SCSU '23

Email: SmoyerA1@southernct.edu