

Giant Steps

2024-25 FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Land acknowledgement

On these lands and in these places, we strive to learn together, walk together and grow together “in a good way.”

Our students, faculty and staff are located across Indigenous lands. In Alberta, we are on the traditional territories of the peoples of 45 First Nations in five treaty areas: 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10.

On our Calgary campus, we acknowledge and pay tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut’ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations). The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).

At our Edmonton campus, we acknowledge the Treaty 6 region, the traditional territory of the Cree and the homelands of the Métis people (Districts 9 and 10) and the surrounding Métis settlements.

At our Lethbridge campus, located at the University of Lethbridge, we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the other peoples of the Treaty 7 and 4 regions and the home of the Foothills Métis District 1 of the Métis Nation of Alberta.



Giant steps forward

There comes a point in every journey when the destination becomes a little clearer, and the pace begins to quicken.

This past year, our faculty has taken remarkable strides toward the bold mission outlined in our 2022–27 Strategic Plan: A Place to Gather. That mission, to become “a local and global partner in transformative social work knowledge, education, research, and practice”, is becoming a reality through the many big and small steps we’ve taken together.

Among the most transformative moments was a historic \$26.8 million gift from the Alberta Law Foundation to our Faculty and the Faculty of Law. This extraordinary investment aims to reimagine family justice in Alberta – with the goal of improving outcomes by reducing legal and adversarial processes and increasing opportunities to support families.

To do this work, Alberta Law’s Gift allowed us to create a new Centre for Transformation. Anchored by two endowed research chairs in Social Work and Law, the Centre will serve as a hub for community-led action, providing vital backbone support to those driving social change.

While its first focus is on transforming family justice, the Centre is already laying the groundwork to expand into other areas — including healthcare, education, and more.

In this report you’ll find many other examples of the ways in which we’re co-creating spaces for research, dialogue, and action. As we reach the halfway mark in our five-year strategic journey, one thing is clear: we’re gaining momentum. And as you’ll see in the pages that follow, we’re moving forward together with purpose and impact.

Dr. Ellen Perrault, PhD, RSW
Dean, Faculty of Social Work
University of Calgary

Our faculty has taken remarkable strides to become a local and global partner in transformative social work knowledge, education, research, and practice”

Dr. Ellen Perrault
Dean, Faculty of Social Work



Faculty highlights



Launched re-imagined BSW program

in Fall 2024

Recruitment begins for our first

4-year, high school-entry,

Bachelor of Social Work program

BSW accreditation self-study

submitted to CASWE

1,789

Professional development program registrations



\$26.8 -million

gift from Alberta Law Foundation to transform family justice

19

Academic Staff Awards



1074

Total enrolment



557

Graduates

Undergraduate

248

Graduate

309



SOWK graduates

working in their discipline

BSW 99%

MSW 100%

PhD 100%

3 major conferences

- Mobilizing for Change
- International Indigenous Voices in Social Work
- International Spirituality Conference

\$5,696,900

Research Funding (2023 - 24)

Hello



Angela Cruz

March 10, 2025

(Manager, Marketing)

Diana Lowe

February 13, 2025

(Senior Director Centre for Transformation)

Addy Rayala

January 20, 2025

(Associate Director of Development FSW, maternity leave coverage)

Farewell

(Retiring faculty members)

Ralph Bodor

Retired January 1, 2024

Peter Gabor

Retired July 1, 2025

Mishka Lysack

Retired July 1, 2024

Honouring a lifelong healer and teacher

During Fall 2024 Convocation, Elder Kerrie Moore, BSW’03, MSW’04, received the University of Calgary’s highest academic honour: an Honorary Doctor of Laws. A respected Métis/Cree Elder, psychotherapist, and UCalgary adjunct professor with our faculty, Moore was recognized for her lifetime of contributions to Indigenous wellness, education, and community healing.

For over 50 years, she has supported individuals and families through culturally grounded approaches to trauma and grief, while offering spiritual guidance across campus, including at Kiipitakyoyis in our faculty and Writing Symbols Lodge. A Distinguished Alumna and Teaching Excellence Award recipient, Elder Moore continues to inspire change through ceremony, storytelling, and advocacy.

Elder Moore continues to inspire change through ceremony, storytelling, and advocacy.



Honouring immigrant excellence

Three outstanding members of the Faculty of Social Work were among six University of Calgary recipients of the 2024 Alberta Immigrant Impact Awards, recognizing transformative contributions to Alberta’s cultural and social fabric.

Career and Academics Award

Dr. Aamir Jamal

Dr. Aamir Jamal, associate professor and director of global engagement, received the Career and Academics Award for his contributions to international social development. His research advances gender justice, girls’ education, and violence prevention in the Global South. His acclaimed book *The Gatekeepers* explores engaging Pashtun men in support of girls’ education in Pakistan, and his work continues to shape grassroots movements and human rights efforts in conflict-affected regions.

youtube.com/watch?v=b5_EikhTStY



Women’s Newcomer Impact Award

Elena Esina

Elena Esina, Director of Operations and Special Projects with Shift, received the Women’s Newcomer Impact Award for her leadership in supporting immigrant women. She launched the Immigrant Women Work-Integrated Learning Hub, creating professional pathways for internationally trained women. As an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Social Work, Esina continues to bridge research, operations, and community impact.

youtube.com/watch?v=d-NHJn5NkRs

Inclusive Workplace Award

Dr. Régine Uwibereyeho King

Dr. Régine Uwibereyeho King, associate professor and community leader, was honoured with the Inclusive Workplace Award for her commitment to equity and inclusion. A co-founder of the Faculty’s Anti-Black Racism Taskforce and member of the UCalgary Presidential Taskforce on EDI, Dr. King continues to advance antiracism, peace, and community well-being through both academic and grassroots advocacy. “This award is motivation and encouragement to do more,” she says.

youtube.com/watch?v=dGjLxwQKSag



EDIA Award Winners

UCalgary 2025 EDIA Award Winners

Dr. Ajwang' Warria

Jane Slessor

Two members of our faculty were recognized by the University of Calgary for their work in creating a more accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive university. Dr. Ajwang’ Warria who was recognized with the EDIA leadership award and Jane Slessor who won the EDIA award for sessional instructors.

This award is motivation and encouragement to do more.”

Dr. Régine Uwibereyeho King

Our parallel path

Faculty of Social Work Indigenous students*

12.8%

Bachelor of Social Work

12.5%

Graduate students

*% of Total Weighted Enrolment

Next steps towards Social Work's Indigenous Strategy

Over the past year, the Faculty of Social Work has made meaningful strides in advancing its commitment to Indigenous engagement and reconciliation. Under the leadership of Dr. Terry Poucette, PhD, the Indigenous Task Force has shifted from developing a separate strategy to aligning its efforts with ii' taa'poh'to'p, the University of Calgary's institutional Indigenous strategy.

Rather than duplicating efforts, the task force is working to develop a comprehensive action framework that maps relevant ii' taa'poh'to'p recommendations to the faculty's strategic goals. A subcommittee will soon be appointed to populate this framework with actionable steps, resource needs, and timelines—an important move toward implementation.

Dr. Poucette expressed genuine excitement about the faculty's transition from "talking about" reconciliation to actively doing the work. She highlighted the launch of a new graduate certificate in



3.9%

UCalgary total percentage of Indigenous students

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Leadership as a tangible outcome of this shift. From enhanced programming at Kiipitakyoyis (Grandmother's Lodge) focused on Indigenous knowledge and cultural events, the faculty is embracing a practical, inclusive, and community-rooted approach. As Dr. Poucette noted, "It's been refreshing to see that the faculty isn't just engaging in performative reconciliation—it's taking real, concrete steps toward decolonization."

Research

The Task Force contributed to several research projects over the past year, including Making Relatives: Paralleling Indigenous Teachings and Practices of Mental Health, where a task force member served as a co-investigator.

Lodge keeper Deandra Neufeld and Kiipitakyoyis also co-led the project Understanding What Matters: Exploring Indigenous Social Work Students' Decisions to Pursue, Remain, and Complete a Social Work Degree. Elder Kerrie Moore served as a co-investigator with Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos. A Pipe Ceremony with Elder Clarence Wolfleg was held in Kiipitakyoyis on February 3, 2025, to mark the project's completion.

Kiipitakyoyis: a year of ceremony, culture, and connection

Cultural events and ceremonies

As part of its mandate, Kiipitakyoyis (Grandmother's Lodge), the Indigenous Lodge located within the Faculty of Social Work, provides meaningful learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and students about Indigenous histories, cultures, languages, teachings, and current realities.

In 2024-25, Kiipitakyoyis hosted a number of impactful events including:

- **Sage Harvesting Ceremony** with Elder Kerrie Moore (September 18, 2024)
- **Grandmother's Tea Ceremonies** in the Lodge: (2024: Oct. 24, Nov. 27 | 2025: Feb. 26, March 19, April 16)
- **Teachings from Blackfoot Elder Saa'kokoto** on the significance of the changing seasons and the Spring Equinox as a time for growth and renewal (March 21, 2025)
- **Niigaan Sinclair: How Indigenous Social Work Will Save the World** (March 27, 2025)

Field education

Through the Kiipitakyoyis Director, the Task Force supported the Faculty's Field Education Team in developing a funding application for a project focused on decolonizing the practicum experience for Indigenous social work students. Drawing on its experience supporting Indigenous students at the Lodge, Kiipitakyoyis has been invited to participate in the delivery of this important initiative.

Faculty support

Kiipitakyoyis collaborated with the Faculty's Queer and Trans Action Committee to support efforts in decolonizing the committee's work and advancing safety and belonging for Two-Spirit students, faculty, and staff.

» Spotlight

Niigaan Sinclair: how Indigenous social work will save the world

A standout event in Kiipitakyoyis' 2024-25 calendar was an engaging, deeply personal and inspiring presentation from Niigaan Sinclair. Sinclair, who is the son of the Hon. Murray Sinclair-iban, Mazina Giizhik-iban, is a national bestselling author and the 2024 Governor General Award winner for Wīnipēk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre. More than 300 people attended his remarkable presentation, delivered as part of Kiipitakyoyis' Indigenous Ways of Knowing Lunch and Learn series.



Find out more about Kiipitakyoyis, including upcoming events socialwork.ucalgary.ca/about/Kiipitakyoyis





Leading change

Our faculty’s commitment to collaboratively leading social change is powerfully expressed through our growing network of multidisciplinary research hubs and centres.

These dynamic spaces are addressing some of society’s most pressing challenges — co-creating innovative, community-based solutions and best practices designed not just for today, but for the future.

Kindex: advancing research and practice to support children and youth

Over the last year the research and knowledge hub our faculty co-founded through a partnership with Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) has evolved to become Kindex.

Kindex is the new national Research and Knowledge Centre of Canadian Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs). It fosters collaborative, evidence-based approaches to addressing child abuse and neglect by integrating academic research with frontline practice.

In the past year, Kindex supported 13 research projects, secured over \$280,000 in funding, and hosted community seminars, youth-led initiatives, and research-to-practice events across Canada. Highlights include work on trauma-informed justice, multidisciplinary teams, and forensic interviewing. Youth Rights Advisors continue to play a key role, ensuring lived experience informs the centre’s priorities.

Through co-designed, community-engaged research, Kindex continues to help CYAC leaders and policymakers improve outcomes for Canadian children, youth, and families impacted by abuse and neglect.

Learn More
kindexcentre.ca

Centre for Transformation: a historic investment in community-led systems change

In one of the year’s most transformative moments, the Alberta Law Foundation invested \$26.8 million to launch the Centre for Transformation — a collaboration between the Faculties of Social Work and Law and the Re-imagining the Family Justice System initiative. Anchored by two, new, endowed research chairs, the Centre will support community-led solutions to reimagine systemic change including family justice, healthcare and education to better serve families, children, Indigenous peoples, and equity-deserving communities.

The first focus is Alberta’s family justice system, working with provincial convenors and collaborators to move beyond adversarial processes toward holistic, trauma-informed approaches that support the families involved. “This gift presents a generational opportunity to create real change,” says Dean Ellen Perrault.

Learn More
familyjustice.ucalgary.ca

Diana Lowe named inaugural Senior Director of Centre for Transformation

In February 2025, Diana Lowe, KC was named as the first Senior Director of the newly launched Centre for Transformation.

Lowe brings more than four decades of experience in legal practice, policy reform, and family justice innovation. Her deep expertise and long-standing commitment to collaborative action make her ideally suited to lead the Centre as it begins its work reimagining how systems — starting with family justice — can better support families and communities.

Diana’s long-standing commitment to collaborative action make her ideally suited to lead the Centre for Transformation.



Distress Centre Calgary Knowledge Hub: enhancing inclusive crisis response

In its first year, the Distress Centre Calgary (DCC) Knowledge Hub — a partnership with our faculty — is already working to reshape crisis response to become more person-centred, culturally affirming, and cost-effective.

Key milestones include the development of an Operational Plan and Affirming Manual to better support ethnocultural and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, along with expanded capacity for collaborative crisis support by phone and text. Community-informed research, including the February 2025 World Café, is guiding a more inclusive crisis care model.

The Hub has shared insights at major conferences, with a focus on trauma-informed and culturally attuned responses. With three academic publications underway and ongoing development of graphic models and data systems, the Hub is advancing a more connected, equitable system of care.

Learn more

A square QR code with a red border, located below the 'Learn more' text.

Building a community of care

At a Distress Centre Calgary Hub gathering held at Tuxedo Park Community Association, more than 40 stakeholders from community organizations, researchers, staff, and students came together to reflect on progress and hear directly from those with lived experience.

Interviews emphasized the need for relational, culturally responsive care and stronger coordination in crisis services.

“This partnership is helping us move beyond traditional models to better serve an increasingly diverse population,” said DCC CEO Robyn Romano. The event reaffirmed a shared commitment to building a crisis care system rooted in connection, equity, and trust.

Learn More
k-hub.ca



Newcomer Knowledge Hub: advancing research and collaboration for newcomer integration

Over the past year, the Newcomer Knowledge Hub (K-Hub) — a partnership between Immigrant Services Calgary and our faculty — advanced its mission to improve Canada’s settlement system through data-driven research, knowledge mobilization, and collaborative engagement. Key achievements included launching interactive tools like the Newcomers Census and Gateway Dashboards along with a comprehensive website featuring housing reports, blogs, and data tools. The K-Hub, which has received more than \$1.2 million in funding to date, also published four insight reports, and expanded knowledge-sharing through a lunch & learn series, and international and national conference presentations.

Supported by funding from SSHRC, One Child Every Child, and MITACS, K-Hub also built research capacity through student training, institutional ethnography, and youth-focused evaluations. Its impact was recognized with media coverage and the 2025 UCalgary EDI Leadership Award for Dr. Ajwang’ Warria, affirming K-Hub’s role as a national leader in community-engaged, evidence-based support for newcomers.

Learn more
k-hub.ca

This partnership is helping us move beyond traditional models to better serve an increasingly diverse population.”

Robyn Romano,
DCC CEO

» Student Spotlight

Building safety “brick by brick”

Bachelor of Social Work student Thomas Tri drew on his lived experience as the child of Vietnamese refugees to explore what “safety” means for LGBTQ+ newcomers in Calgary. Supported by a PURE Award and supervised by Dr. Ajwang’ Warria, he co-led a qualitative study revealing that safety is not guaranteed — but built through community, resilience, and navigating complex systems.

The project led to a publication in the Diversity and Inclusion Research Journal, national conference presentations, and a new research role with The Immigrant Education Society. This fall, Thomas begins his MSW and Graduate Diploma in Refugee and Migration Studies at York University.

“Safety isn’t just a place, it’s something you create,” he says.

Safety isn’t
just a place,
it’s something
you create.

Thomas Tri, Student,
Bachelor of Social Work



A bold step toward ending gender-based violence

Lana Wells, associate professor and Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence in our faculty, played a pivotal role in shaping Building on our Strengths — Alberta’s newly launched, ten-year strategy to end gender-based violence. Wells, who leads Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, spoke at the May 2025 launch alongside provincial ministers, marking a watershed moment for gender-based violence prevention in Canada.

The strategy embraces a cross-ministerial, primary prevention approach long championed by Wells and her team, drawing directly from Shift’s research and the Alberta Primary Prevention Playbook. This work moves beyond crisis response to tackle the root causes of violence — creating a foundation for lasting change, safer communities, and a more just society.



SHIFT: The project to end domestic violence

Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, housed within the Faculty of Social Work, continues to lead research and policy innovation to prevent domestic and gender-based violence. This year, Shift released the second report in a first-of-its-kind Canadian study on perpetrator typologies, developed with the Calgary Police Service.

In rural Alberta, Shift deepened its partnerships through the Made in Alberta Rural Primary Prevention Collaborative, co-developing local strategies with women’s shelters and hosting data walk events in Banff and Cochrane to identify the social conditions that enable violence. The year also marked the release of the second film in the Strong Women’s Circle series, developed with Indigenous partners to support decolonization of the child welfare system. These initiatives reflect Shift’s commitment to systems-level change, community engagement, and Indigenous-led approaches to violence prevention.



Learn more
preventdomesticviolence.ca



Focus on racial equality and transforming masculinities

Dr. Régine King

Last year Dr. Régine King continued her research program with projects focused on promoting racial equity and preventing domestic violence. Her ongoing projects include a \$200,000 SSHRC grant for Co-constructing knowledge to address gender-based violence for Black girls and women in Alberta. She also received UCagary and City of Calgary grants for projects looking to promote racial equity at the University of Calgary and beyond.

Dr. Aamir Jamal and Dr. Liza Lorenzetti

In 2024 Dr. Liza Lorenzetti and Dr. Aamir Jamal continued their international work on domestic violence prevention with the Transforming Masculinities movement. In February 2025 they co-organized a conference on gender justice and transforming masculinities at Kantipur City College in Nepal.

Student experience learning and success



Teaching awards

Killam awards

Established in 1965 in memory of Canadian philanthropists Izaak and Dorothy Killam, Killam awards are a distinction only given by five post-secondary institutions, including UCalgary.

2024 McCaig-Killam Teaching Award Winner
Dr. David Nicholas

The McCaig-Killam Teaching Award is given to an individual for outstanding contributions to teaching and learning at the University. This award was created in recognition of Ann McCaig, past Chancellor of the University of Calgary who also served for 22 years as a Killam Trustee, with the heart, wisdom and lifelong commitment for transforming education.

2024 Killam Graduate Supervision and Mentorship Award
Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos

This award is presented to an individual who has a record of excellence in the supervision and mentorship of Masters and/or PhD students at the University

University of Calgary teaching and learning grants

» Designing Interactive, Unfolding Case Study Simulation Learning Objects to Prepare BSW Students for Professional Practice and to Empower Instructors with Engaging Tools to Facilitate Experiential Learning

Principal - Carolyn (Cari) Gulbrandsen

University of Calgary

Award for Educational Leadership

Dr. Cari Gulbrandsen,
PhD | Faculty of Social Work

Award for Non-Academic Staff

Dr. Angela Judge-Stasiak,
EdD | Faculty of Social Work

Faculty of Social Work

Graduate Teaching Award
Dr. Jackie Sieppert

Educational Leadership Teaching Award
Dr. Patrina Duhaney

Sessional Instructor Teaching Award

Maimuna Khan
Dr. Tara Collins

University of Calgary Students' Union Teaching Excellence Awards
2024 - 2025

David Irvine

Student Supervision, Mentorship, and Support Teaching Award

Dr. Regine King
Dr. Aamir jamal

Award for Non-Academic Staff

Tanola Colquhoun
Nathan Pronyshyn
Theresa Eng

» What are student and faculty experiences and learnings about ethical usage of generative AI and IBL in higher education?

Principal - Beth Archer-Kuhn

» Spotlight

Unfolding case study simulation

“How do you teach students to navigate the complexity and emotion of real-world social work?” That question inspired Unfolding Case Study Simulation — an innovative, story-based teaching tool led by Dr. Cari Gulbrandsen, Dr. Angelique Jenney and Nathan Pronyshyn and developed by a team from the Faculty of Social Work.

Featuring short video vignettes with talented actors, the cases unfold gradually, mirroring how information emerges in practice. Rather than offering tidy resolutions, they challenge students to wrestle with ambiguity, reflect on their values, and make decisions with limited information.

As Krista Osborne notes, “Students are engaging with the material in a way that encourages self-reflection, professional identity development, and deeper integration of theory and practice.”

The result is a dynamic, student-centered approach to learning that helps future social workers develop the confidence, empathy, and judgment needed for today’s complex practice environments.

Students are engaging with the material in a way that encourages self-reflection, professional identity development, and deeper integration of theory and practice.”

Krista Osborne,
Professor



Undergraduate highlights

Year of transformation for our Bachelor of Social Work program

The 2024-25 academic year marked two milestones for our Bachelor of Social Work Program. In September 2024 we welcomed the first cohort of students into our reimagined two-year BSW, and in summer 2025 we began recruiting for a new four-year BSW — the first in our faculty’s history.

The two-year BSW is grounded in equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and real-world skills. Students engage in community-based practica from the outset and receive training in assessment, helping skills, and working with diverse populations.

Undergraduate Program Director Dr. Cari Gulbrandsen credits the program’s success to a broad team effort: “You can see the depth of care and expertise in every course — from Green Social Work to Afrocentric approaches to Indigenous-led curriculum.” She adds that student feedback will remain vital as the program evolves.

Following the launch of the re-imagined BSW, the faculty began preparations for our first four-year BSW degree. Offered initially at the Calgary campus starting fall 2026, the program will allow high school students to apply directly. The extended program retains the strengths of our two-year program while providing more time to build foundational knowledge, explore electives, and develop a strong social work identity. “It’s a more gradual unfolding,” Gulbrandsen explains.



Honouring excellence in teaching: David Irvine

Sessional instructor David Irvine was recognized with a 2025 University of Calgary Students’ Union Teaching Award, an honour that reflects both his deep experience and the powerful impact of our sessional instructors. David, who is a former social worker, is a best-selling author, and global speaker, who is known for his work in authentic leadership and for creating a strong sense of community in the classroom.

Our sessionals often bring real-world, front-line experience, which gives students an up-close view of social work in action. They are essential to the heart of our program.”

David Irvine, CEO, Irvine & Associates Inc.

“I’m privileged, humbled, and honoured,” he said, “especially by my students in the Faculty of Social Work who nominated me. We truly earned it together.”

As Undergraduate Program Director Dr. Cari Gulbrandsen notes, instructors like Irvine are a cornerstone of the program. “Our sessionals often bring real-world, front-line experience, which gives students an up-close view of social work in action. They are essential to the heart of our program.”

Student excellence

President’s award for excellence in student leadership

Thomas Tri, Bachelor of Social Work (with minors in Global Development Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies)

Amplifying climate advocacy through student voices

Climate Action and Advocacy on the Airwaves (CA3) is a student-led podcast and radio series co-created by MSW student Rachel Pettigrew and a cross-disciplinary team. Supported by the Mobilizing Alberta Climate Action Grant and produced with CJSW 90.9 FM, the Faculty of Social Work, and the Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) Project, CA3 explores the intersection of social work and sustainability.

By centering marginalized communities most impacted by environmental degradation, the podcast brings climate justice to the forefront through accessible, empowering storytelling. CA3 was also featured in the TFEL Event Series, highlighting social work’s role in advancing a more sustainable future.

Learning starts in the community

At the heart of UCalgary’s reimagined BSW program is the community engaged practicum – an innovative approach that introduces students to real-world social work practice.

“Right from the beginning, students are connecting with the community,” explains Cari Gulbrandsen. “It’s a gradual process that scaffolds their learning, helping them understand where they fit and what kind of social workers they want to become.”

Unlike traditional models where practicum placements are reserved for later years, this early and immersive experience fosters deep engagement with local organizations and populations. Students gain insight into the systems they’ll one day navigate, while discovering unexpected paths and opportunities.

“The feedback we’re getting is incredibly positive,” says Gulbrandsen. “For many students, the practicum has opened doors they didn’t even know existed.”

Application numbers greatly exceed social work program capacity

In 2024-25, demand for our hybrid and fully online social work programs remained exceptionally strong. For example, our Bachelor of Social Work program received 1,090 applications — more than four times the number of available seats. Interest in our graduate programs was similarly high, with 703 applications for the Master of Social Work program and 199 for our Graduate Certificates, reflecting continued confidence in the quality and accessibility of our programs.



Listen on the CJSW website



Learn more



Graduate education highlights

First cohort: Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Leadership

A major milestone for our faculty this year has been the development and launch of a new graduate certificate program: Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Leadership.

This four-course specialization reflects the faculty's commitment to embedding Indigenous knowledge, leadership, and decolonizing practices into advanced social work education.

The program was developed through a collaborative process involving Elders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff, and external partners, including the Office of Indigenous Engagement and the Taylor Institute.

The first cohort of students, who begin fall 2025, will learn through online and land-based learning components. For example, the first course, Social Work 618: Centering Indigenous Knowledge, will begin with four days of immersive land-based learning at the Sandy Cross Conservation Area, featuring teachings from Blackfoot, Stoney, Tsuut'ina, and Métis elders.

This certificate will be offered again in Fall 2027.

Learn more: bit.ly/3ACxwYB



Graduate certificates

2026-27



Advanced Social Work Practice

Clinical Social Work Practice certificates

Fall 2026

- Clinical Practice with Adult Mental Health & Addictions (two Calgary residencies)

Fall 2026 and fall 2027

- Trauma-Informed Practice (fall 2026: two Edmonton residencies)

Leadership in the Human Services

Fall 2026

- The Practical and Transformational Leader

Fall 2027

- Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Leadership

» MSW Student Spotlight

Equity in crisis support: Melissa Mostert

Master's student Melissa Mostert is contributing vital research on how crisis lines can more effectively support marginalized populations. As a research assistant with Dr. Monica Sesma-Vazquez, Melissa is involved in two studies: one focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and another on immigrant, refugee, and racialized ethno-cultural minorities accessing crisis support.

Her research reveals that while many organizations offer general Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training, such approaches often fail to address the distinct needs and barriers these communities face. Melissa advocates for targeted, identity-specific training, enabling crisis responders to provide more inclusive, responsive, and affirming support to all callers.

Her work offers timely insights that are shaping more equitable practices in mental health and crisis intervention services.



Field education

New book celebrates field education innovation

As part of the Making Change Together TFEL Event Series, the Student Handbook on Field Education was officially launched on March 21, marking a major milestone for the Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) partnership. The open-access publication, now available through University of Calgary Press, represents a significant contribution to the field and a celebration of the TFEL initiative's impact on social work education.

Led by Dr. Julie Drolet, the TFEL project is a national and international collaboration addressing the pressing need for innovative, research-informed approaches to field education in social work.



Access the handbook and learn more
tfelproject.com



Download it from the University of Calgary Press
[/press.ucalgary.ca/books/9781773854397/](https://press.ucalgary.ca/books/9781773854397/)



PhD spotlight

Memory, healing, and the sounds of safety

Serge Nyirinkwya

PhD student Serge Nyirinkwya is amplifying the often-unheard voices of young people who grew up in homes impacted by domestic violence in post-genocide Rwanda. Drawing on narrative therapy and multisensory storytelling, his participatory research explores how youth respond to and remember these experiences — capturing sensory memories like comforting smells or sounds that brought moments of safety. Nyirinkwya work not only preserves these powerful narratives through digital archiving but also contributes to healing and community resilience. He is currently collaborating with faculty members and local African communities on projects focused on violence prevention and youth advocacy.

Creating community for newcomer retention

Prince Chiagozie Ekoh

PhD candidate Prince Chiagozie Ekoh is exploring how to help smaller Alberta cities attract and retain newcomers. His research, presented at the faculty's annual symposium, highlights the importance of social connection, belonging, and community support — factors that go beyond jobs and affordability. Ekoh's work offers practical strategies to foster inclusive environments where newcomers feel valued and are more likely to stay in their communities.

Supporting the supporters: frontline social work and organizational realities in Edmonton

Jane Slessor

Jane Slessor's PhD research explores how organizational structures support or constrain women social workers serving unhoused populations. Grounded in anti-colonial, community-engaged research, she formed a diverse advisory group to guide her work. She also created a custom comic to make her findings accessible and inclusive; thus bringing research to life in new and engaging ways.



Professional development

1,789

Professional development registrations

Non-profit leadership development

Our faculty's professional development program prioritizes equity and inclusion in designing and delivering learning sessions. Funded by the City of Calgary, more than 40 racialized individuals representing various grassroots organizations participated in the non-profit leadership program. The program offered dedicated learning sessions on inclusive organizational culture, collaboration, and systems change with an equity and inclusion lens.

26

Professional development course offerings

Human services leadership development and trauma informed care

The program offered non-profit leadership development sessions and engaged over 170 leaders in more than seven cohorts through applied and reflective online and in-person learnings. Students in the experiential course were taught by experienced public service and non-profit leaders and academics . Sponsored by the City of Calgary and Children and Family Services.

Alberta Health Services: Grand Rounds and Clinical Supervision: Between January 2024 and March 2025, more than 10 short-term online sessions (1.5-and 3-hour webinar) were offered to AHS and other allied professionals. A total of 1,507 participated in the program.

1,507

Participants

170+

Leaders

10+

short-term online sessions were offered

Welcoming the world

In 2024- 25 our faculty hosted — or prepared to host three national and international conferences:

Mobilizing for change: a national call to confront anti-black racism

In February 2025, our faculty concluded Black History Month by co-hosting a powerful and well-attended national conference, Mobilizing for Change: Addressing Anti-Black Racism. Led by Dr. Patrina Duhaney, Chair of the faculty’s Anti-Black Racism Task Force, the conference united academics, students, activists, and community members in an urgent call to dismantle anti-Black racism in Canada.

The innovative two-day event embraced movement, dialogue, and creative expression — including workshops, performances, and intergenerational panels — to centre Black people’s perspectives and lived experiences. The conference was a collaborative effort, supported by multiple faculties and university partners, and underscored the critical role of collective action in advancing racial justice and equity.

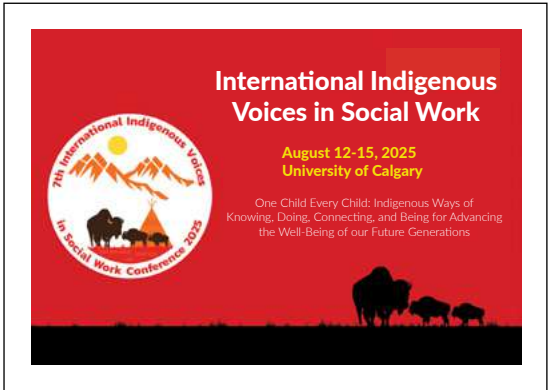
Exploring spirit in times of disruption

In June 2025, the Faculty of Social Work hosted the 12th International Conference on Spirituality and Social Work: Evolving and Flourishing in an Age of Disruption. Co-organized with the Canadian Society for Spirituality and Social Work and the University of Northern British Columbia, the four-day event welcomed a diverse mix of educators, artists, health professionals, and community leaders.

Through keynotes, workshops, and embodied experiences, participants explored spirituality’s role in responding to societal disruption, climate anxiety, and personal transformation. The program highlighted Indigenous wisdom, Afrocentric healing, contemplative pedagogy, and poetic expression — offering space for connection, meaning, and resilience across worldviews.

Walking together to uplift future generations

As this report was being written, the Faculty of Social Work was preparing to welcome delegates from around the world to the 7th International Indigenous Voices in Social Work (IIVSW) Conference, taking place August 12-15, 2025. Subtitled One Child Every Child: Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Doing, Connecting, and Being for Advancing the Well-Being of Our Future Generations, the gathering promises to be a powerful space for cultural exchange, shared learning, and collective action.



Global engagement

Global engagement report, 2024-25

The Faculty of Social Work continues to advance international collaboration and social justice, grounded in equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization. Over the past year, we’ve strengthened global partnerships, elevated community voices, and expanded our impact through cross-border education, research, and knowledge exchange — marking a year of meaningful, transformative engagement.

Global learning & thought leadership events

- **ACGC Gender Justice Workshop (May 2025):** A youth-focused event hosted in collaboration with the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation, centering on gender justice and transformative masculinities.
- **International Partnerships Talk Series (Dec 2024):** A collaborative series with UCalgary International designed to expand faculty engagement in global research and education networks.
- **International Webinar (Jan 2025):** Co-hosted with CASWE, this event featured speakers from more than 25 countries and engaged 212 participants in advancing critical international social work conversations.

New QES program focuses on climate justice and youth resilience

The faculty co-developed a new Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships (QES) initiative — Our Changing Climate: Community Resilience and Education — with the Werklund School of Education and the University of Auckland.

Supported by \$466,147 in funding, the four-year exchange will engage 26 students in climate justice, Indigenous knowledge, and youth-led resilience through funded research and practicums in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key highlights and milestones

Indicators of success

Global project funding secured
over \$500,000

Engagement in flagship webinars

212 participants | **25** countries

Strengthened international student recruitment for the MSW-ICD program

Expanded partnerships across South Asia, East Africa, Oceania, and key regions in Europe and North and South America

Expanding global partnerships

The Faculty of Social Work continues to strengthen its global reach through new and ongoing international collaborations:

- **Aga Khan University (AKU) Partnership:** A high-level delegation from the Aga Khan Development Network visited UCalgary, launching initiatives in collaborative research, global mobility, and co-supervision with AKU’s Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in Pakistan and East Africa.
- **Mexico Symposium:** Several faculty members took part in the Transforming Masculinities and Empowering Women Experiencing Multiple Forms of Violence, a global symposium that addressed systemic, gender-based violence in Latin America.

Celebrating equity and community through a special Ramadan Iftar

In partnership with local and provincial community organizations, the faculty co-hosted the University of Calgary’s 2025 Ramadan Iftar Dinner. This powerful evening of reflection and connection brought together faculty, staff, students, and community leaders to reaffirm a shared commitment to intercultural inclusion, respectful engagement, and global solidarity.



Building global perspectives:
2025 India study trip

In spring 2025, students from the Faculty of Social Work participated in a transformative study trip to India, exploring social work practice through a global and cultural lens. The experience included visits to grassroots organizations, academic institutions, and social justice initiatives, offering students a deeper understanding of social systems in a collectivist society.

“I learned firsthand the history of India, their child welfare system, and how a collectivist society prioritizes keeping families together — even those facing poverty,” reflected student Dawn LaCroix. “It’s reshaped how I think about family and reinforced my commitment to advocating for low-income families in my practice.”

Beyond the classroom, students experienced India’s rich culture, hospitality, and landscapes — making the trip an unforgettable blend of education and discovery.

» Spotlight

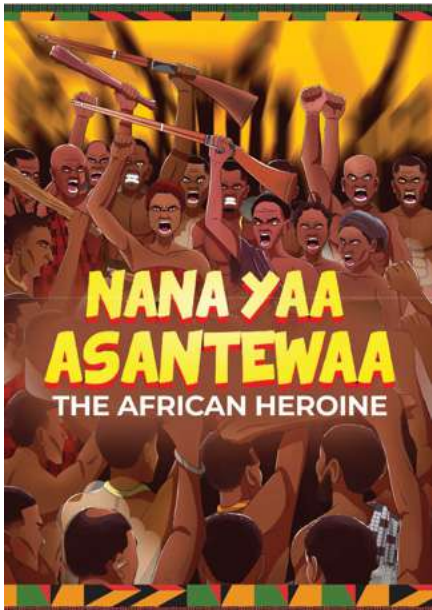
Nana Yaa Asantewaa
reclaiming herstory
through art and
scholarship

Last year, Professor Emerita Dr. Linda Kreitzer was part of a team who brought to life the story of Ghanaian freedom fighter Nana Yaa Asantewaa through a groundbreaking graphic novel and documentary. Supported by SSHRC and UCalgary grants, this transdisciplinary collaboration with scholars from the University of Calgary and University of Ghana reframes Yaa Asantewaa’s legacy through a feminist lens—challenging colonial narratives and celebrating African women’s leadership. Launched in Ghana to wide acclaim, the project also supports the restoration of Yaa Asantewaa’s shrine and aims to inspire future generations across the globe.

Supporting
international research
and funding access

The faculty continues to support faculty members in identifying and accessing global research funding, in close coordination with UCalgary International and international networks, ensuring our research remains globally connected and locally grounded.

The faculty’s research
remains globally
connected and locally
grounded.



Available through
UCalgary

Research

Research funding

Tri-council grants
Non Tri-council grants

\$1,899,500 \$3,797,400

Total

\$5,696,900

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
287,900	937,800	1,525,400	959,800	1,340,500	1,899,500
1,875,400	2,160,600	1,617,000	2,393,600	2,992,500	3,797,400
Total					
2,163,300	3,098,400	3,142,400	3,353,400	4,333,000	5,696,900



Research awards

Dr. Julie Drolet, PhD: 2025 Parex Resources
Innovation Fellow

Awarded through an endowment created by alum Wayne Foo and Parex Resources Inc., this prestigious fellowship recognizes innovative research that contributes to the University of Calgary’s culture of entrepreneurship and community impact. Dr. Drolet’s project focuses on helping communities better prepare for and recover from disasters by creating digital tools that allow individuals and families to safeguard vital records before emergencies strike.

“We know that there’s a need to improve disaster preparedness,” says Dr. Drolet. “One of the critical challenges that people face after they’ve been evacuated ... is accessing those essential documents they need to start the recovery process.”

Learn more
news.ucalgary.ca/news/five-ucalgary-researchers-awarded-annual-parex-fellowships

Faculty of Social Work symposiums spark dialogue, collaboration, and change

In March 2025, the Faculty of Social Work hosted two major events, attracting more than 500 participants to virtual and in-person sessions in Calgary and Edmonton.

The 16th Annual Research Symposium, Making CHANGE Together, showcased transdisciplinary, community-led research on well-being and equity through keynotes, panels, student posters, and a new community outreach event. Running alongside, the Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) event series highlighted innovations in field education, mentorship, international social work, and practice — preparing the next generation of social workers.

Community voices help shape research priorities

Some of the most powerful moments came from community-based events in both cities. In Edmonton, community members, faculty, and students exchanged ideas and joined a dynamic panel discussion. In Calgary, a participatory roundtable — co-hosted with ActionDignity and the City of Calgary focused on listening to the community.

The March 19 dinner event invited community members to share their priorities and to identify their biggest issues which included employment barriers, housing instability, mental health, systemic racism, and youth engagement. Their voices will help to guide the faculty’s future research and professional development work.

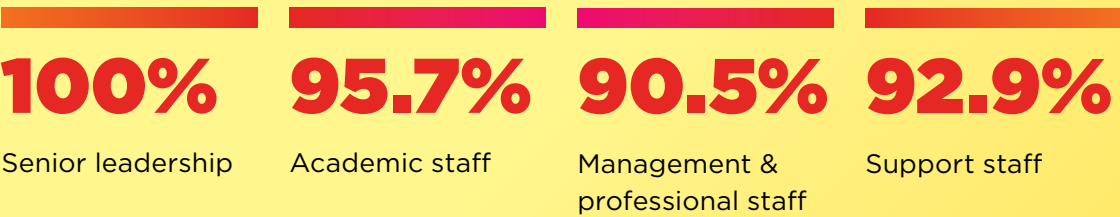


Learn More
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Healthy and inspiring workplace

Employee retention rate (2024)



Telling our story



Recruitment and program promotion



Telling our story on social media





**Start
something.**



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