

Welcome from the Directors

It's hard to describe how wonderful it was to visit with so many of you at MCSP's 20th Anniversary Celebration and also to separately hear and receive warm wishes from so many of you who were unable to be there in person. The celebration was a memorable evening of heartfelt memories and love. We also appreciate that so many of you turned out for our networking event with current MCSP students and have shared your contact information with these students.

Good news! Highlights of photos, speeches, and singing from the celebration, and the slide show of MCSP memories from the past 20 years, are now available on the MCSP website. Please go to these links:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/mcsp>

<https://lsa.umich.edu/mcsp/news-events/all-news/search-news/mcsp-celebrates-20-years-of-service-and-community.html>

As many of you have heard, I (David) plan to retire from MCSP at the end of this academic year, in May, 2020. I am so honored to have had the opportunity to work, learn, and be part of this amazing community for the past 20 years. You, as individuals and as the MCSP community, have deeply enriched my life. Thank you for all your warm and very moving well-wishes. I thought for the purposes of this newsletter, I would share some excerpts from my remarks about MCSP at the 20th Anniversary event.

“The challenge facing MCSP, today and in 1999, is that, in the face of despair and violence and hate in society, How do we embrace and put all the positive and good in the world together in an educational setting, and in community that is lived 24/7, that actually lives and breathes and learns these values of dialogue, diversity, equity, compassion, peace, and love? This has been the great challenge and opportunity that MCSP has embraced for the past 20 years.

We know what works in education. It is about learning in a supportive, diverse community; it is about expanding our comfort zone among people of diverse social identities; it is being intentional and activist in pursuing peace and social

justice; it is being dialogic in our interactions and in our intergroup relationships; it is about finding hope in the midst of despair; it is about teachers learning together with their students, and listening to them and supporting and empowering them; it is about educators and administrators caring about and loving their students and respecting and honoring each individual's humanity and goodness; it is about all of us being purposeful about own lives and also thinking beyond our own individual needs to partner with communities beyond our own.

The challenges in creating MCSP were the following: How could we focus on both community and learning together in institutional settings that kept these worlds apart? How could we build an engaged, diverse community where there was a 24/7 dialogic way of life, where there was a culture built on respect and love, where we supported everyone's success, where we valued the humanity of each individual, and where we engaged with community partners with respect and partnership?

It takes hard work and intentionality and, every year, as our nation and the world becomes more divisive and hateful, our work has become ever more critically important. However, we know this is what most students are looking for, and that we all thrive in an environment like this.

In just the year or two that students live and learn in our program, they experience a different reality from the broader world. They find a community of deep learning and inquiry, of hope, and love, and of celebrating and embracing our differences and our commonalities.

And, we believe, and we hear from so many of you, our alumni, that you are carrying these values into your post-college lives by making an important difference in the world as professionals, adults, parents, and active members of your communities and the larger society. And, I know all of you here today are making a difference in the world in such important ways –

In closing, to use our MCSPuns: MCSPeace to our MCSPhamily. I thank you and I love you all."

David Schoem

Director

Wendy Woods

Associate Director



Thank you for your generous support of MCSP during our 20th Anniversary Celebration – and always!

We are pleased to announce that, due to your support, we have this year helped fund three MCSP Student Innovation Grants –

1. HackBlue – Our MCSP students bring the fun and joy of coding and computers that they enjoyed in middle school to after school programs in which students in underserved schools and community centers who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to do so.
2. A Campus-Wide Monthly Periodical on LGBTQ+ Issues – one of our first-year students realized that there is no publication on campus addressing LGBTQ+ issues on campus and is planning to fill that void. We are partnering with the Spectrum Center to support this proposal.
3. Flint Justice Partnership – MCSP students are partnering with Flint organizations to support local efforts and to educate students on campus about safe drinking water concerns in Flint and throughout Michigan and beyond.

Please think MCSP when making your charitable donations – including Giving Blue Day!

[Give Here!](#)



Intergroup Relations Updates

The Intergroup Relations Council has been off to a busy but exciting start this year! So far we've covered topics on culture shock & imposter syndrome, mental health, gender pay inequalities, and more! We also bought tickets to take students to the Halloween Concert and are hosting an MCSPfirst-Gen Pizza Party! Stay tuned for more fun, and engaging opportunities, both within MCSP and the greater campus and community!



Programming Board Updates

PBnU has been off to a busy start! We have been working hard to host welcoming, fun, and engaging programs that foster a strong community. We have planned Phamily nights, study nights, Wellness Wednesdays with tea and face masks, a tie dye event, a town hall, a trip to Dexter Cider Mills, a Halloween party, and more to help build a strong community within MCSP. We

are planning more programs including mindfulness activities, collaborative events, off-campus outings, and Phamily nights!



Community Service Updates: MCSP Grows Relationships with Community Partners

Throughout the fall semester, PACS has grown MCSP's relationship with a number of community partners forming deeper connections and effective engagements.

We reconnected with the community at Freedom House Detroit. Through simple conversations, the telling of stories and playing games, we have learned about the incredible barriers refugees and asylum seekers face, the necessity of hope and the resiliency and courage of this community. One participant recognized the importance of solidarity and mutuality when she realized that the residents were powerful people hungering for relationships.

We are engaging again with families experiencing homelessness at Alpha House. The dedicated group of MCSP students has participated in four nights of orientation where they developed their community, explored the ethics of community engagement and the importance of solidarity, and delved deeper into the causes and experience of homelessness. Staff from the Ginsburg Center and Alpha House have helped facilitate our orientation. The group regularly visits Alpha House to engage with children during Activity Time and to help the community with special projects. We are helping families find stability and care and we discover the joy inherent in the simple act of play.

We once again partnered with the Sustainable Living Experience at Michigan to serve with Keep Growing Detroit, an urban farm and justice organization in the city of Detroit. We spent the morning working on the farm and then headed to Eastern Market for lunch and exploring. A highlight of our experience was

connecting with Sam Morykwas, market manager and MCSP alum, who gave us an inside look at the Market.



Peer Mentor Updates

The MCSPeer Mentors have been so excited to get to know our first-year students! From late night conversations in the lounge to weekly flag football games, the hard work from our student staff is evident by the amount of community and support that our freshmen students have raved about.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Sedika Franklin

Years in MCSP: 1999-2003- Student, Peer Mentor, Peer Advisor, Resident Advisor

What have you been up to since graduation?

Since graduating, I've been serving my country as a career civil servant. I'm a military child originally from the DMV area (that's DC, MD, VA for short). The area is known for its robust government/military community. I felt called to serve so I returned to my hometown of Lorton, VA. I worked as a corrections counselor specializing in adolescent supervision in a minimum security facility; an education specialist for the United States Marine Corps, implementing policies and procedures that supported service members and their family members in at their pursuit of higher education; and as an operations officer, for the U.S. Army's premier leadership institute for civilians, (Army Management Staff College) where I provided guidance on operations in support of the administrative and logistical requirements necessary to train Army civilian leaders.

What are you currently doing now?

I'm currently in year 8 with the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative). The Initiative was first established by President Carter in 1980 as a federal program that would assist in the ability to overcome the effects of discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to provide quality education. My primary role is to build sustainable partnerships that connect HBCUs to federal and private opportunities that enhance shared prosperity.

How do you integrate social justice into your life post college?

Each day, I engage with any number of students, federal partners, foundations and organizations. I take personal pride in cultivating an understanding of the history of educational inequality, importance of HBCUs and prospective opportunities that spark innovation and spur competitiveness. Every day, I strive to create safe spaces for conversation on lifting the marginalized and acting on plans that provide resources for communities that are often forgotten.

What is your favorite memory about MCSP?

I spent four years with MCSP, so I don't have one college memory that doesn't include MCSP. Given my shyness, I was worried that I wouldn't connect with many people. Boy was I wrong. Within the first few hours as a freshman MCSP student, I met people who have become my extended Michigan family.

The intergroup dialogue sessions that allowed for open group discussion on real topics that mattered to students. Conversations that helped me to navigate Michigan as an African American, first generation college student. When I graduated, the staff and faculty at MCSP presented me with a bracelet at our awards banquet. I wear that bracelet everyday as a reminder of the impact that one person can have on any given day. A reminder that MCSP helped me grow as an individual. A reminder that there are people out there cheering for your success. I'm a MCSP Lifer!



Gilbert David Nuñez

Years in MCSP: 2002-2004

What have you been up to since graduation?

My career lies at the intersection of education, politics, and grassroots movements for social change. After several years as a social studies teacher at University Prep High School in Detroit, I moved to the DC area to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Maryland. While writing my dissertation about presidents' executive orders, I taught classes on public policy and Congress. I also began a career in electoral data within the progressive movement, first supporting strong public schools with the National Education Association and now at an organization focused on building the power of low-income people of color. At the same time, I've built upon my academic interests with continued research, conference presentations, and undergraduate teaching.

I've also had the privilege of spending the last 11 years with my wife, Amanda Hooper, also an MCSP alum who I met in Couzens Hall in 2003. We love to travel, spend time with our friends (many of whom are MCSP alumni), and relax in our hammocks in the park across the street from our apartment in DC.

What are you currently doing now?

I am the Electoral Data Manager at Community Change Action, a non-profit organization dedicated to building the power of low-income people of color to change their communities and public policies for the better. My work helps build successful electoral programs through voter registration, education, and mobilization around key issues like immigration reform, affordable childcare, and economic justice.

For the past few years, I've also taught a seminar on the American presidency as a visiting professor at the University of California's DC program. I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue teaching and mentoring undergraduate students, as well as to further my academic research pursuits and contribute to the university community.

How do you integrate social justice into your life post college?

Social justice is a core value in my personal and professional life. In my current job, our mission is to ensure that people in marginalized communities can achieve change and thrive. We register voters and expand civic participation centered on issues like immigration reform, water equity, affordable childcare and housing, and more. Every day, I get to work with colleagues and partners

who fight for the communities most impacted by injustice.

What is your favorite memory about MCSP?

MCSP was my home away from home, which was especially important for me when entering Michigan as a first-generation college student. One of my favorite memories is from my second year in MCSP, when a friend organized a video scavenger hunt of campus. We were supposed to take an hour of quick footage at notable spots around campus to compile into a 1-2 minute video. Instead, we lost ourselves in an entire afternoon acting like dinosaurs in front of the Natural History Museum, “swimming” around the Fishbowl, and chasing squirrels on the Diag before turning our adventures into an 8 minute masterpiece. Being back on campus for MCSP anniversary events, I could still remember different shots from that video 15 years later.



Aesha Mustafa

Years in MCSP: 2007-2012- Student, Peer Advisor for Community Service,
Resident Advisor

After graduation, Aesha enrolled in the University of Michigan's Master of Social Work program. After graduating with her MSW degree, she sought employment that would unite her passions of social justice, empowering communities, and mental health.

Aesha currently is a 3rd year Ph.D. student studying Higher Education at Michigan State University. Her research explores faculty experiences in residential learning communities. She also works as a mental health therapist at Integrative Empowerment, a private practice in Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti specializing in promoting the mental, emotional, and personal growth of people of color and the LGBTQIA community.

The single most crucial thing Aesha has taken from her experience in MCSP is that social justice can be more than an extracurricular activity. Whether she is creating a safe and affirming space for her clients or engaging in her doctoral coursework, she continually considers how multiple oppressions in the current societal and historical context may contribute to our experiences.

Aesha's favorite memory about MCSP occurred not long ago at the MCSP 20th anniversary. The celebration of MCSP's 20 years served as a beautiful reminder of the role MCSP played in current and past students, faculty's, and staff's lives. Aesha's closest friends continue to be the students she met in MCSP. She is forever thankful to MCSP for helping her to cultivate a community in her undergraduate education that has lasted a lifetime.



Mark Haider

Years in MCSP- 2013-2015- Student, Programming Peer Advisor

What have you been up to since graduation?

After graduating, I worked a few different jobs before starting law school. I first worked for a nonprofit consulting firm in New York, where I learned rather quickly that consulting wasn't for me. Eight months in, I decided to return home

to Michigan to help with Abdul El-Sayed's gubernatorial campaign as part of his policy team. After Abdul placed second in the primary, I moved to Cleveland to work for a voting rights organization up through the general election. Then, in the remaining months prior to law school, I worked as a policy fellow for a public interest law firm in Washington, D.C.

What are you currently doing now?

I am currently a first year law student at Harvard Law School. While the academic workload can be a lot, I am enjoying the experience overall and am lucky to have received some excellent professors. (I even have Elizabeth Warren's husband, Bruce Mann, for property!) Outside of class, I have been very engaged with extracurriculars. I was elected as my section's representative within HLS Student Government, serve on the board of the American Constitution Society, and am a part of the Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Review.

Amidst all this, I am also starting up a student organization on campus: The Equal Democracy Project. As the name hopefully implies, Equal Democracy aims to dismantle the political barriers that contribute to our current, unequal democracy in the United States. This includes fighting against gerrymandering and voter suppression, challenging the outsized influence of money in politics, and reforming the electoral process to more accurately represent the people.

Unbelievably, prior to Equal Democracy, no student organizations existed at HLS that focused on democracy reform and voting rights. Although starting a student org was far from what I had envisioned for my first semester of law school, I simply found it unacceptable that no forum existed for students to engage on this issue—especially in today's climate. I have put substantial time into developing a vision for the organization, identifying short-term and long-term goals, and recruiting a leadership team. We recently had our first "Builders Forum" meeting, and I was heartened by how 20 other busy 1L's chose to spend their Friday afternoons rolling up their sleeves helping to build out this organization with me.

How do you integrate social justice into your life post college?

Apart from the eight-month stint in which I worked for a nonprofit consulting firm, all of my experiences post-college have focused directly on civil rights and democracy work. Furthermore, in law school, I have been very intentional to participate in extracurricular activities that I am passionate about, as they help ground me in why I decided to come to law school in the first place.

What is your favorite memory about MCSP?

Without a doubt, taking Professor Schoem's first year seminar. It was the single most impactful and formative class of my academic career. Although I was familiar with such issues from personal experience, delving more deeply into concepts such as privilege, social identity, and institutional racism made clear to me that I wanted to focus my energies—both academically and professionally—to promoting social justice.





Sam Morykwas

Years in MCSP: 2009-2011- student, peer mentor

What have you been up to since graduation?

I served one year of AmeriCorps with the Mentoring to Access Corps in Lansing before moving to Detroit to work in marketing with the Michigan Science Center & Eastern Market Partnership. I recently finished a website that is a great portfolio of my past few years of work so check out morykwas.com for more!

What are you currently doing now?

I'm currently the Marketing Manager at Eastern Market Partnership, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that manages Detroit's historic Eastern Market. I've been in this role for just over three years now and I'm proud to represent such a significant neighborhood, gathering spot, and cultural center. In my spare time, I produce music and DJ all around Detroit. I'm happy with the balance that I have found between maintaining a career path while allowing myself time to pursue my passions.

How do you integrate social justice into your life post college?

I have been fortunate to make my career thus far at places that value social justice but on top of that, it is important to focus on inclusivity. One of my mentors expressed to me that diversity pertains to who is at the table and inclusion is how we treat those people once they're there. I try to make sure that everyone around me feels welcomed, respected, heard, promoted, and uplifted, even in the small details of my work.

What is your favorite memory about MCSP?

There are so many but the top one has to be creating the ["MCSP" song and music video](#)! David joked with a few of us who were musicians in MCSP about how we should make a theme song for the program and we took his recommendation to heart. We wrote the song in my dorm room, recorded it in the soundproof booths in the East Quad basement (before the remodel), and filmed the video in the hallways. Maybe someone should make a new song for the program as we head into the next decade...



Shreya Wadhvani

Years in MCSP: 2015-2018- Student, Peer advisor for Community Service, Resident Advisor

What have you been up to since graduation?

I started working as a consultant for a large business/technology firm advising clients on how they can use digital transformation to meet their business goals (i.e. increase market awareness, promote customer engagement, revenue goals etc)

What are you currently doing now?

I am still working with the same firm. Also currently studying for the GMAT and trying to prioritize/evaluate my professional goals!

How do you integrate social justice into your life post college?

Through my company, I have worked on several initiatives to introduce STEM to some under-resourced highschools. We have held panels and workshops explaining what opportunities are available and how students can take advantage of resources in the community to better understand what they might want to further study/where their academic interests align. I have also been able to organize several lunch and learns + coffee sessions in the office where we discuss current events and their impact on inclusion and diversity around the globe and how it impacts our day to day work. The goal of these sessions is

to build confidence in how we, employees, can discuss what diversity means to us in a casual, conversational setting! I have also joined a group where I am able to partake in volunteering efforts on the weekends (i.e. food drives, Ronald McDonald House, Big Brother Big Sister). As you can see I still very much live by MCSP's key pillars :)

What is your favorite memory about MCSP?

This one is tough - I have so many fond memories. In fact not a day goes by where I don't think of how significant the program was on my college journey. I particularly enjoyed the year I was an RA for the program and was able to give back through facilitating ALA sessions and fostering a supportive, loving and caring residential community that I was fortunate enough to experience my freshman year.



Michigan Community Scholars Program
541 N Thompson Street
West Quad, Office 1041
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
Email: mcsprogram@umich.edu
Phone: 734.647.4860
Fax: 734.936.1203

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Michigan Community Scholars Program · 541 Thompson St Ofc 1041 · West Quad · Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1360 · USA