

Introducing Maine SSN Policy Fellows 2023-24

NOVEMBER 21, 2023

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the [Maine Chapter of SSN](#) is thrilled to continue its "Policy Fellows" initiative, now in its second year. The goal is to provide tailored one-on-one support for scholars and researchers to amplify their public voice and maximize their policy impact (particularly those early in their career or those looking to embark upon new, public-facing work). The Maine Chapter is excited to welcome ten new policy fellows across a range of academic disciplines and institutions within Maine.

2023-2024 Maine SSN Policy Fellows:

- Jen Blossom (University of Maine)
- Elena G. Maker Castro (Bates College)
- Colleen Coffey (Maine Community College System and the Maine Department of Corrections)
- Sarah Fucillo (Husson University)
- Abhilasha Kumar (Bowdoin College)
- Colleen Marzilli (University of Maine)
- Irina Popescu (Bowdoin College)
- Jessica Salley Riccardi (University of Maine)
- Anamika Sen (Bates College)
- Patty Williams (University of Maine, Farmington)

JEN BLOSSOM

University of Maine



Jen Blossom (she/her/hers), PhD is a Clinical Child Psychologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Maine. Dr. Blossom received her PhD in Clinical Child Psychology from the University of Kansas (Rock Ch) and completed her internship and postdoctoral fellowship training at the University of Washington/Seattle Children's Hospital. At UMaine, Dr. Blossom maintains an active program of research, mentors doctoral and undergraduate students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Dr. Blossom has research and clinical expertise in youth internalizing disorders, depression, and suicide prevention and maintains an active clinical role through consultation and training of community providers and supervision of graduate trainees. Dr. Blossom's program of research employs a community-based approach to improve community capacity to identify and intervene for youth with mental health problems, including increasing access, and engagement. In particular, Dr. Blossom's research evaluates the effectiveness and implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs) within pediatric primary care and community settings with the ultimate goal of realizing a public health approach to mental health concerns.

ELENA G. MAKER CASTRO

Bates College



Elena G. Maker Castro is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Bates College. Her research focuses on pursue social change and civic engagement in relation to their developmental trajectories, contexts, and (and gender identities). She uses civic engagement and sociopolitical development frameworks and I often relation to their wellbeing. She situates her work within the contemporary sociopolitical climate and seeks relationships with local and national community and research partners. She also strives to contribute to understanding and amplifying youth leaders.

COLLEEN COFFEY

Maine Community College System and the Maine Department of Corrections



Colleen Coffey is an Education Equity and Advancement Coordinator in a joint position between the Maine Community College System and the Maine Department of Corrections. In this role she is tasked with connecting vocational, technical, and trade organizations to expand enrollment and credential completion for MDOC residents. In her previous role, she worked at the University of Maine at Augusta for 8 years supporting at-risk students and assisting the prison education partnership. She has a master's degree in higher education from the University of Maine and is currently completing her PhD in higher education at the University of Maine. The focus of her research is studying how individuals reenter their communities after prison and remain in school to successfully complete their education. Colleen has a small white dog and a large black cat in Bangor, Maine. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking and traveling whenever possible.

SARAH FUCILLO

Husson University



Sarah Fucillo, Ph.D., NCC, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Science and Humanities in the Graduate School of Husson University. She went to Thomas College for undergrad double majoring in Psychology and Criminal Justice. Her experiences in the justice and mental health worlds led her to earn a MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Maine. She completed her Counselor Education and Supervision from Auburn University. She has experience as a counselor in a variety of settings including a detention facility, a crisis residential unit, a family and children community mental health agency, and a university counseling center. Her research interests include trauma-related topics, such as: vicarious trauma, race-based trauma, trauma-informed supervision, and counselor wellness. She is a co-founder of an intercollegiate research team. They aim to advance the counseling field while also supporting the development of research skills of doctoral and masters students. She hopes to contribute to Maine by educating future mental health and school counselors who will go on to serve in the field. A special place to be is her family's camp in Blue Hill, ME. She enjoys the water, cookouts, kayaking, and s'mores with friends.

ABHILASHA KUMAR

Bowdoin College



Abhilasha Kumar is a computational cognitive scientist and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Bowdoin College. She earned her Ph.D. at Washington University in St. Louis. Her research focuses on understanding different aspects of how individuals search through memory for concepts, how language is acquired and used, and how core cognitive processes influence social behaviors such as helping and cooperation. Her work uses a combination of gamified and behavioral experiments, computational modeling, and statistical inference. She teaches classes on conducting empirical research in cognitive science and the sociocultural implications of artificial and human intelligence research.

COLLEEN MARZILLI

University of Maine



Colleen Marzilli, PhD, DNP, MBA, APRN, FNP-BC, CNE, NEA-BC, PHNA-BC, CCM, MedSurg-BC, FNAP is a pediatric nurse practitioner and a public health researcher. She is an alumna of The University of Texas at Tyler and The University of Tennessee Health Science Center. She teaches and serves undergraduate and graduate nursing students while conducting research in cultural systems issues, nursing issues, and leadership. She empowers students and promotes student success by modeling professionalism and excellence, including cultural competence and implicit bias. She has numerous published articles, poster presentations, grants, and has given lectures internationally. She serves the profession as a peer reviewer, grants, and conferences. She has led in many capacities including on the board of UT Health East Texas; American Association of Colleges of Nursing; Texas Nurses Association; and the Global Education Development Institute.

IRINA POPESCU

Bowdoin College



Irina Popescu is an Assistant Professor of Latin America, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies at Bowdoin College. Her research interests include intersections between human rights and cultural production in the Americas, with an emphasis on women's rights discourses. Her current book project investigates the use of narrative empathy within the human rights discourse from 1979 to the present. She is interested in policy issues surrounding educational policies in K-12 classrooms, the teaching of critical race and gender issues and texts within these classrooms, women rights issues, Latin American studies, as well as more local issues impacting culture, inclusivity, and immigration within Maine and New England.

JESSICA SALLEY RICCARDI

University of Maine



Jessica Salley Riccardi, PhD CCC-SLP, is an Assistant Professor and the director of the Brain injury, Education, and Communication Program at the University of Maine. Her research interests include long-term outcomes for children with brain injury, communication and for high risk groups. As a speech-language pathologist, her research aims to inform practice for individuals who experienced a brain injury during childhood. During her doctoral training, Dr. Riccardi was a Hearing Foundation New Century Doctoral Scholar. She is passionate about mentoring students to be effective communicators.

ANAMIKA SEN

Bates College



Anamika Sen is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Bates College. Her research interests are centered on the economics of gender. In her current research, she studies the role of macroeconomic policies in improving women's economic status. She earned her PhD in Economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in May 2023. Originally from India, she has a BA in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University and her BA (with honors) in Economics from Jadavpur University. She enjoys exploring restaurants and trying new cuisines, spending time on beaches, and hiking.

PATTY WILLIAMS

University of Maine, Farmington



Dr. Patty Williams is a Professor of Early Childhood Education and Division Chair for Teacher Education, at the University of Maine, Farmington. She has been awarded two University of Maine System Grants designed to improve the lives of rural communities, especially in rural communities in Maine. The first is a Rural Health and Well-Being Challenge Grant for a project focused on improving health and well-being in rural, low income communities. The second is a Maine Jobs and Recovery Program Small Campus Initiative grant for a project focused on improving the teacher workforce. One is a resilience promotion program for pre-service teachers (Making Maine Teachers Strong) and the other is a comprehensive support program to bolster the mentoring support program (The New Teacher Academy) in order to improve the retention of early career teachers. She holds a B.A. in Education from the University of Maine and a Ph.D. in Applied Child Development from Tufts University.