Quinnipiac partners with Yale Divinity School to launch social work joint-degree program

By AVA HIGHLAND
News Editor

Quinnipiac University Social Work Department is working with Yale Divinity School, to launch a social work joint-degree program beginning this fall.

The program follows either of two pathways. Students enrolled may choose the Master of Social Work (MSW) at Quinnipiac combined with either the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) from YDS.

According to Yale Divinity School's official website, the M.A.R, "offers pathways to ministry, service, or doctoral work." The M.Div., "develops the skills necessary for professional ministry."

"It also really opens up that pathway to be able to help people get to use this degree to go out and make a positive difference in the world in a way that's really much more holistic, and that's an important piece," said Chair of the Social Work Department Carol Awasu.

Obtaining both degrees and going through the program gives students the opportunity to become well-rounded in all aspects of social work, some that they may have otherwise not been exposed to.

Social work looks at several different areas, which are known as the biopsychosocial-spiritual. Enrolling in the program gives students knowledge and skills in all areas of social work. Partnering with YDS adds in the spiritual focus to Quinnipiac Social Work.

"I think this offers benefits for those who wished to include faith into their social work practice," graduate MSW student Ariana Gove wrote in an email to The Chronicle. "As it offers not only (to) learn but earn a degree for their faith in conjunction with the MSW but allows for a more seamless connection between the two disciplines and how they can cohabitate together within one's own future practice and framework for social work."

Awasu is also the Director of the MSW Program and Professor of Social Work. She was approached by Yale in hopes of creating the program. Yale has the same long-standing joint-degree program with Connecticut State University. Yale looked to now partner with a private institution, choosing Quinnipiac for this opportunity.

"This really started with Yale approaching us at QU social work, they sent me an email and said that they would be interested in having this conversation about the joint degree," Awasu said. "That was unexpected and we're very glad about it."

They then spent several years designing the program before officially launching.

"It was a very collegial process," Awasu said. "It did take some time, just because we had to iron out some of the details, but very rewarding experience to be able to work with YDS, good group of folks."

Students in the program either start their schooling at Quinnipiac or YDS for one year and then to the other, then back.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

Chair of Social Work Department Carol Awasu worked closely with Yale Divinity School to create the social work joint-degree program to provide students with education in all aspects of social work.

> **"It strengthens our social work profession, and it strengthens the ability of people to go out and work with communities that may not come to social work."**
>
> **– Carol Awasu**
> **CHAIR OF SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**

A key factor in the program's creation is that whether a student begins in Quinnipiac social work or YDS, they may not have known about the other.

"It opens up access to social work for people who may not have considered it before," Awasu said.

And vice versa, students beginning in social work may then learn the benefit of the spirituality side.

Students do not have to apply to the program before being enrolled in either university. They may start at one and decide in their first year that they would like both degrees. Those students are then welcome to apply to the program and be accepted by both schools.

They follow the same MSW degree curriculum regarding required courses, with leniency for elective courses. Students will complete the same theory, practice, research, clinical assessment and diagnosis courses as well as field internships.

Each school accepts a certain number of electives from the other.

"We worked very hard to select the elective courses that we would accept from Yale and that they would accept from QU social work for their students," Awasu said.

In addition to becoming more well-rounded in the field, students also benefit in time and money.

The program cuts out the amount of time it would take to get the MSW and then get their M.Div. or M.A.R. They also save money, making it more financially appealing.

The program has already welcomed its first student, who is currently in their first year at YDS.

When students exit the program with the MSW they are able to then apply for licensure, which includes Licensed Master Social Worker and Licensed Clinical Social Worker if they choose a clinical path.

"So you'd get the clinical side, the therapy side, the mental health side and then you'll also get the divinity, the spirituality, the religion side, all of which then comes together in this very complete package," Awasu said.

With students from both Quinnipiac social work and YDS having the same goals in mind, they can now come together to be even stronger in their careers.

"It allows us to more holistically offer social work and for M.Div. and M.A.R. students, who are often in those professions in the same way that social workers are to help people and to be a benefit to people," Awasu said.

Shortage of parking spaces on Mount Carmel Campus leaves many to be redirected

By AVA HIGHLAND
News Editor

On Monday, Aug. 25, Quinnipiac University's fall semester officially began, and a shortage of parking spaces in the North Lot and Harwood Gate parking lots left many to be redirected.

When commuter students and residents from the York Hill campus arrived in the North Lot, many circled the area several times before finding a space. Depending on arrival time, if both the North Lot and Harwood Lot were filled, students, faculty and visitors were directed by Public Safety to the grass near Harwood Lot.

With construction projects taking place and limited options for students, parking locations are affected and decreased.

As part of the Mt. Carmel campus remodel, construction for the new bookstore, which will sit between The DOME and the North Lot, causes traffic back ups in the parking lot.

Once students are sophomores, they can apply for a parking permit. Based on their number of credits they are permitted to park in select locations. Several lots are reserved for faculty only.

By 11:00 a.m., there were nearly four rows of cars on the grass of the Harwood Gate entrance, which has previously been used as an overflow parking location.

"We use the grassy area near the Hardwood gate as overflow parking from time to time, usually for special events," Chief of Public Safety Tony Reyes wrote in an email to The Chronicle.

Some were also directed to park in Hogan Lot, a further distance from academic buildings than the North lot.

While often using the Hogan, Westwood and Whitney lot for event purposes, the Harwood space is also used in an effort to limit any disturbance.

"However, there are times we elect to use the grassy area for strategic reasons," Reyes wrote. "Our goal is to minimize disruption to our internal community and to make access convenient for our guests/visitors whenever possible."



TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

Cars parked on the grass near the Harwood Lot created almost four rows on Monday, Aug. 25.