

Jennifer C. Greenfield

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August 28, 2012

James Herbert Williams
Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair
University of Denver
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Dear Dean Williams:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Social Work, as advertised recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. I am a fifth-year doctoral candidate at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, and expect to graduate in May 2013. My research focuses on issues related to long-term care and aging policy, and I have taught courses in both the gerontology and health concentrations at the Brown School. After talking with Dr. Leslie Hasche about the social work program at the University of Denver, I believe that my research interests, teaching experience, and leadership skills make me an excellent fit for your school and faculty.

My broad research goal is to impact state and national long-term care policy by contributing to knowledge about how long-term care service utilization and caregiving responsibilities impact financial security, especially among vulnerable groups. My dissertation, chaired by Dr. Nancy Morrow-Howell, uses data from nine waves of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) to examine how patterns of asset accumulation and income differ between caregivers and non-caregivers and among subpopulations of caregivers, and how differences in the duration and intensity of the caregiving experience affect these patterns. This is part of a larger research agenda that seeks to address several broad, but related, topics. Over the next several years, I plan to continue work on this agenda by exploring the following questions:

1. *What factors influence individual long-term care insurance purchase decisions?* Specifically, how do economic circumstances affect insurance purchase decisions, and to what extent do differences in employer and public long-term care policies affect individual choices regarding the purchase of insurance and subsequent LTC services?
2. *How does the shift in public policy toward home- and community based services (HCBS) affect the families of care recipients, and particularly, does it negatively impact informal caregivers?* This is a particularly relevant question in states like Colorado, which is now implementing a pilot program to move current nursing home residents back into the community. Although patients and their families have indicated a strong desire to avoid nursing home stays whenever possible, the

indirect impacts of prioritizing HCBS may be felt keenly by informal caregivers, who will pick up the slack when formal care services are not available 24/7.

3. *Do caregivers allocate financial resources differently than non-caregivers?* A recent study analyzed spending patterns of poor, middle class, and wealthy households and found that on average, though these households spent roughly the same percentage of income on housing and food, differences emerged in spending on health care, transportation, education, and retirement savings. I plan to investigate whether these spending patterns are further altered when caregivers from each economic stratum are compared to non-caregivers.
4. *How are informal caregivers selected within family systems?* Economists have postulated that the lowest wage earner in a family is most likely to be tapped as the primary caregiver when a parent or sibling requires care. However, in an increasing number of families, proximity and the characteristics of the bonds between individuals within the family system seem to loom large in decision-making about care provision. I am interested in understanding how both individual and policy contexts influence these decisions.

Many of these projects will require the support of outside funding. I have a history of securing competitive grants, including dissertation funding from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and the National Association of Social Workers. Within my first two years as junior faculty, I plan to apply for an NIH/NIA Career Development Award (such as a K07 award) to support my work, and I will continue to explore new funding opportunities as they arise.

While research is important to my career goals, I seek a tenure-track faculty position in social work because I am strongly committed to educating new generations of social workers. I am proud to be a social worker, and I am passionate about training students to be effective advocates for their clients and for vulnerable populations. I have been teaching independently at the Masters level since 2010, and I have also had the opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant for several senior faculty members who were tremendous mentors in terms of developing course content and shaping my teaching style. I strive to create a collaborative environment in the classroom, so that students from diverse backgrounds can share their expertise while also asking questions. I believe strongly in experiential learning as well; to this end, I encourage classroom discussion of how course content is relevant to field experiences, and I assign projects that require hands-on learning through meeting with legislators, developing op-eds for submission to local newspapers, and engaging in similar, real-world activities. As my course evaluations show, students respond well to my teaching style and consistently give me scores at the top of the evaluation scale.

The U. S. faces dire workforce shortages in health and gerontological social work, and I was delighted to learn that the University of Denver recently added concentrations in health and aging. I am eager to contribute to the instruction in these areas. In particular, I have experience teaching courses in both Health Policy and Administration and Social Policy and

Aging, and I am also able to teach other courses in gerontology and health, as well as Foundation-level policy courses.

In addition to my background in teaching, I also have a strong history of leadership. I have been involved in student governance at each school I have attended, which has afforded me opportunities to participate in faculty committees and candidate searches. This year, for instance, I was appointed as the only student on a faculty/administrative committee that is working to redesign health coverage for students at Washington University. I also have served for the last two years as the Student Representative to the Board of Directors for the Association for Gerontological Education in Social Work (AGESW), and I am a peer-reviewer for the *Journal of Qualitative Social Work* and the Gerontological Society of America's Annual Meeting. I hope to continue to participate in governance and leadership, both as a faculty member at the University of Denver and in professional organizations.

As a social worker, I also have a strong commitment to engaging with community partners to help improve service delivery and contribute to community development. One ongoing project, for instance, is a collaboration with the OASIS Institute, a national nonprofit organization that provides educational and volunteer opportunities to adults aged 50 and above. I helped develop their national program evaluation survey in 2008-2009, and have been involved ever since in analysis of data collected through this biannual evaluation project. I also have used my policy analysis and advocacy skills to assist local organizations in Missouri to influence health policy development at the state level, and, as a faculty member at the University of Denver, I would work eagerly to develop similar relationships with organizations and policy makers in Colorado.

In response to your call for applications, I am submitting my Curriculum Vita as well as two writing samples and a copy of my teaching evaluations. I have requested three letters of recommendation to be sent under separate cover to your office, and a list of these references is included with my CV. I plan to attend the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting in Washington, DC, this November, as well as the Society for Social Work and Research's Annual Meeting in San Diego in January. I hope to have an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about GSSW and how my skills and interests may be a fit for your program. Please feel free to contact me for further information or to schedule an interview.

Best wishes,

Jennifer C. Greenfield, MSW