

New International Partnership

The college's new agreement with Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Hochschule Luzern), located in Central Switzerland, will allow for student and faculty exchanges, joint research and other valuable collaborations.

Jane Addams College of Social Work has signed a cooperative agreement with Lucerne School of Social Work at Hochschule Luzern (HSLU). This partnership will provide new opportunities for collaboration such as faculty exchanges, student exchanges, joint research activities, joint educational programs or the exchange of academic materials.

One result of this partnership was the arrival in September of 2018 of Visiting Scholar Dr. Andreas Pfister from HSLU, who spent nearly six weeks at the college presenting to classes and meeting with faculty.

Dr. Pfister says he was eager to visit JACSW because, "the college and the faculty seemed very concerned with issues similar to my own concerns of diversity and social inequality in health promotion and prevention. This visit was a first step to see what projects and topics people are working on," he says. "If we can identify shared themes, then we can look at the possibility of collaborating on a shared publication or a research project."

Pfister's own work has included the use of qualitative social research and participatory approaches to HIV prevention and addiction prevention among socioeconomically disadvantaged families and youth. "In social work we deal with the reasons for social problems and how to resolve them, and what processes or structural interventions we can make to prevent these problems, so that resources can be structured so that all people have enough resources to live in a way that is good for them," he says.

"It is always interesting to see how this works in other parts of the world, to have international collaboration and share experiences so that we can learn from each other."

He understands Chicago's history of segregation, inequality and marginalization of communities of color, and has often read about the city's struggles with these issues. "Segregation is an important theme in certain parts of Switzerland, though it's not as prevalent as in parts of the U.S. However, I also work with people who live under poor socioeconomic circumstances, and I think it would be interesting to see the work that is being done in Chicago, and what differences there are between our countries," says Dr. Pfister.

About the college's namesake and her work in Chicago, Pfister had learned of Jane Addams during his studies in Zurich and Berlin. "I knew that she was one of the big figures in social work in America and that she created a new movement. And I knew that she and other important women participated in a large peace conference in Zurich," he says. "That is an interesting connection for me! So I was very eager to visit Hull-House to learn more about her life and her work."

Another outcome from the partnership with HSLU was an international conference on participatory and community-based approaches to public planning. Entitled *Participate!*, the conference took place here at UIC in September of 2018, co-sponsored by JACSW, HSLU and the UIC College of Urban Planning and



Dr. Andreas Pfister, Visiting Scholar from Hochschule Luzern in Switzerland

Public Affairs. The conference brought together a variety of perspectives on creating inclusive public spaces and increasing equitable participation for the promotion of social justice. Conference participants hailed from U.S. locations as diverse as Atlanta, Chicago, Miami and Nashville, and international locations including Brazil, Canada, England, Ethiopia, Germany, Ireland, Serbia and Switzerland. Dr. Pfister presented at the conference, as did JACSW Professors Alice Butterfield and James Swartz, and Assistant Professors Karen D'Angelo and Jack Lu.

Dean Hairston is excited about the prospects for scholarly exchanges with HSLU. "Our partnerships with universities around the world enrich our understanding of social work theory and practice in a variety of contexts," she says. "This partnership with Hochschule Luzern is certainly no exception, and will open new avenues of research and learning for our faculty and students." 