

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 00:05

Rutgers School of Social Work

Hi and welcome to the fifth episode of the fourth season of toward a more just future, a podcast from Rutgers School of Social Work. My name is Samantha Michael, and I'm the Director of Business Services here at the school this season, I'm speaking with directors and members of institutes and centers at the School of Social Work about their work, their connections to the field of social work, engagement with communities throughout all of New Jersey and beyond, and how their areas of focus prove critical to the future. Today, we'll be speaking with Allison to pay professor at Rutgers School of Social Work and Director of the Center for Leadership Management, Dr Zippay. Her research areas encompass community planning and community practice and the ways in which place and social connections affect life prospects, including economic opportunity and social service utilization for various subgroups of the poor. Highlights of her work include funding received from the National Institute of Mental Health to examine the ways in which communities and social service agencies plan and locate psychiatric housing. This research identified geographies of opportunity that promote social and community inclusion and factors associated with community opposition to special needs, housing, other areas of Dr Zippay research examines resource mobilization and employment among low income groups. Dr Zippay has served as associate dean for curriculum and was a participant in the management development program at the Harvard University Institute for Higher Education. She teaches graduate courses in the areas of policy and management. She is a recipient of the Rutgers University Sussman Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Center for Leadership and Management, or CLM, seeks to bridge the discipline of social work with the fields of leadership and management from both an academic and practice perspective. CLM works to assist local, state and national nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies and individuals in building their management and leadership skills through consultation, scholarship and service. As Director Dr Zippay oversees the development of the education, training and research initiatives of the Center. Dr Zippay, thank you so much for joining us today. We're excited to have you here for our fifth episode of the fourth season.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 02:53

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Thanks for having me, its great to be here

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 02:57

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To kick us off, could you give us an overview of the Center for Leadership Management or CLM, and talk a little bit about the work that you do.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 03:05

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Sure, the Center for Leadership and Management builds the capacity of nonprofit leaders and nonprofit organizations. We offer leadership training, education, technical assistance, planning, evaluation, research and these all strengthen nonprofit leaders and organizations. We know that nonprofit organizations are a core component of our social work community. They're a vibrant mechanism for growth and change, for the delivery of services, and at CLM, we aim to build and strengthen that workforce in those organizations.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 03:42

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So tell us a little bit about you and the path that brought you to this work and the Center for Leadership Management.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 03:48

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Well, from day one, I was always committed to the aspect of social work that focused on Management and Policy and Leadership. It was what I loved. It's what I wanted to do, to develop programs effective, broader systems change. I wanted to get on the ground and make things happen, and I worked as a program director, planner and nonprofit organizations, as a faculty member at Rutgers, I have always taught in the management and policy or the map specialization, and we know that across the country, most courses, most students within social work are focused in the clinical area, but we also need a spotlight on the vital component of the workforce that is in the macro arena to support and develop that talent and that skill base, and that includes current managers and leaders, those New to the profession and to those positions and those who aspire to them. It also includes those who start their careers in clinical work and then find themselves in positions involving supervision, management and leadership. So the chance to direct and develop a center with that as its purpose. Is something that I embrace is so essential to the mission and strength of the profession and to our goals of social change and community well being.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 05:08

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Thank you for sharing that. I think regardless of kind of what role you're in or what track or path you're on, we all have the opportunity to be leaders right to your point, and so, so critical to everyone, every social worker, and even just every human, to be able to embed some of this in their practice.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 05:28

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Absolutely.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 05:29

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Thank you. Can you, Can you talk a little bit about some of the projects that you're working on? Within the center?

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 05:36

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We have a range of projects, and I'll talk about just a few. One is that we provide leadership and management training for nonprofit organizations, and typically we contract with a group who has approached us about training for their workforce, and then design sessions focused on whatever the organization identifies. Topics could be, strategic management, employee engagement, leadership development, human resources management, and sometimes these trainings are for

newly promoted or emerging leaders, other times for executive management. And we also host a series of standalone workshops in advanced management topics that are open to everyone. For example, this fall, we're offering building and engaging a high performing board in the education arena, we are developing a postgraduate certificate in nonprofit management and leadership and a Community Leadership Academy focused on emerging leaders. In terms of research, we completed a survey of almost 2000 current social workers regarding their professional development interests in leadership and management, and those results have helped shape the development of our leadership programs. Few more also, we do program planning, evaluation and research, and as an example, we're completing an assessment of a program focused on community partnerships as a mechanism for delivering opioid recovering recovery programs. So we've got a range of programs, and part of our mission is to support the pipeline of map students in our social work program. And we have two programs focused on our current map students, and these are called Map connect and map chat. Map chat is a speaker series that features map alums who hold leadership positions in management and policy. And this helps give our students a sense of the range and types of job opportunities available in the map arena, because that can be a bit mystifying. And for example, our speakers have included a deputy director at AmeriCorps, policy analyst, CEO with United Way, a housing specialist at Habitat for Humanity and the map Connect program links current map students with map alums, who hold leadership positions and they connect for about six months of Career Guidance and mentoring. We have a super group of alums who volunteer their time for this program and have such a strong impact on the students. So that's a snapshot of some of what we're engaged in.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 08:11

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Thank you. It's lovely to hear about the student impact and the interconnections that your work has with our students at the school. And I also liked, kind of hearing the example that you shared around, the results that you have from one study that are directly impacting the trainings that you are developing and, in turn, kind of bringing to other stakeholders. Can you talk a little bit about kind of that process, and then the impact of a project like that for people who are coming to the trainings or maybe any other impacts?

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 08:47

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Yeah, so in terms of impact, again, we're aiming with these programs and with the evidence on which they're based to build the skill base of nonprofit managers and leaders. We do research and evaluation that provides an evidence base for practice. We expand the networks of our map students and alums and connect them to map careers and opportunities, and then all of this, writ large, strengthens the work of our nonprofits and their workforce.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 09:16

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So that does a great job, leading me into my next question, which is about the collaborators of CLM and I, it sounds like your nonprofit partners are some of your collaborators. Can you tell us about the network of collaborators that you have? What does it look like? And then any highlights that you'd like to share? Sure, and

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 09:37
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It's quite the range of collaborators we work with nonprofit human service organizations, with New Jersey state agencies, consultants and trainers in the area of leadership development, our alumni from the School of Social Work, MAP program, current map students, researchers in the field, professional organizations. Focused on nonprofit leadership and current and emerging nonprofit managers and leaders. So it's quite a range and a very robust in terms of our networks and collaborators.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 10:12
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Can you share a highlight related to your collaborations?

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 10:16
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Sure, we have an extraordinary network of map alums across the state and nationally who hold an amazing array of leadership positions, from policy analysts to executive directors and program managers, community organizers, activists, connecting and working with them and tapping their expertise to inform our programs is a wonderful opportunity, a wonderful resource, and it's always a delight.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 10:43
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I'm going to pivot a little bit and talk about funding and maybe some of the operational aspects of the center. So when it comes to funding, what goes into making sure a center like this works? How do you as the director, manage wanting to produce effective outcomes and maintaining the critical support to future social work leaders, but also balancing keeping the organization running.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 11:10
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We look for funding opportunities that align with our purpose, management, leadership, education, training and research and so that can tap a range of resources public which would be federal and state funding, foundations, training, contracts, internal grants, fees for service. It's goal focused regarding what could potentially support our efforts, and then in terms of producing effective outcomes, everything we do has an evaluation component so that we're always monitoring impacts and applications and how that gets fed back into building organizational and leadership capacity.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 11:50
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As director, you're responsible for all of the work that goes into the center's operations. Can you share a little bit about some of the major areas of responsibility you have

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 12:02
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Sure so the director's role involves oversight of the programs and initiatives, program design and development, staff, supervision, research and dissemination, grant writing, connecting with constituents, communities and professional networks, and then, importantly, Getting the word out on our work and our impact.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 12:24
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So in conversations about social work, we have a strong commitment to connecting research and practice. How do you see CLM contributing to that mission?

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 12:35
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It's essential that we have an evidence base to guide practice, and we need to know what works, what doesn't, why, and that holds both for program implementation and for leaders. There is an evidence base regarding what makes a good leader and a nonprofit manager, the skills, practices, techniques we draw on that evidence when we design our trainings and programs, and then we add to that evidence base through our research and evaluation on program and leadership effectiveness.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 13:10
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Supporting the Future of Social Work leadership is a constant need. Why would you say it's a critical area of focus?

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 13:19
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Well, Leaders Inspire, they motivate, guide. They're immersed in communities. They develop and deliver our hundreds of 1000s of human service programs. We spend so much time as a society designing and advocating for social policies across so many sectors, poverty, child welfare, health and mental health, food security, and it's a huge lift to then translate that information and those policies into practice, and that mechanism needs to be strong, otherwise it can all fall apart at the program level. So we need to support and sustain the leaders and the organizations that make those policies and social change a reality through their implementation work on the ground and with our communities. Tell us your

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 14:10
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aspirational goals for New Jersey in this area, and if you have them, any similar goals for Rutgers as an institution. Well, in

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 14:19
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terms of aspiration, that would be the recognition that the Rutgers School of Social Work is the place to be for nonprofit leadership and management education, training and research, and the

recognition that these efforts advance strong, vibrant nonprofit leaders and organizations that in turn make positive and enduring social change.

Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 14:44

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Thank you, Dr Zippay, we appreciate you sharing your time and your journey and all of the work that the center is doing with us.

Allison Zippay, Professor & Director, Center for Leadership and Management 14:51

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Thanks so much. It's been great to be here and to talk with you.