UofM Students and Faculty Participate in Social Work Day on the Hill

April 5, 2017 - The University of Memphis Department of Social Work recently participated in the annual Social Work Day on the Hill. More than 50 students and six faculty members in the bachelor's and master's programs traveled to Nashville to gain practical experience in speaking to legislators, building interdisciplinary professional relationships, and advocating for policies primarily related to mental health and child welfare.

Students found Social Work Day on the Hill to be an important element in understanding the legislative process. MSW student Abram Lyons, winner of the NASW Student of the Year Award, said, "As social workers, if we want to be involved in policy change or influence policy, we have to understand the inner workings of government. Social Work Day on the Hill puts us directly in contact with that process. We can sit in on subcommittee hearings and votes, and just experience the legislative process."

Other students noted that social workers need to be able to act in the best interest of their clients not just on the individual level but on a larger scale as well.

Among the legislators students and faculty spoke to were Senate Minority Leader Lee Harris; Sarah Kyle, Johnnie Turner, John DeBerry, Dwayne Thompson and G.A. Hardaway.

MSW student Lauren Robinson had one of the most memorable experiences. "I was asked to testify as an expert witness in the Civil Justice Subcommittee in favor of Representative Hardaway's bill, which would require a child safety training curriculum to be offered by specific agencies that employ licensed professionals who work with children," she said. "He asked me to return to testify in front of the full Civil Justice Committee. The bill was voted through that committee, and is now in Finance, Ways & Means. I never would have imagined that SWDOOTH would have afforded me this experience, and it has been amazing."

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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