



Penn
Social Policy & Practice
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE

SP2 FINANCIAL AID CASE FOR SUPPORT

Now more than ever, we seek to confront and break down enduring racial injustice.

Vital work advancing equity is front and center at the Penn School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2). Through research, teaching, and service, SP2 furthers its steadfast commitment to addressing pervasive and systemic inequities that exist locally and globally.

Students come to SP2 filled with a passion to make a lasting impact in the realm of social welfare. They contribute at the highest levels, collaborating across five degree programs and 11 other schools at Penn and participating in important civic engagement work near and far—ready to take their place as leaders in the field. Graduates go on to accomplish amazing gains: they are social workers helping seniors live independently, creators of nonprofit start-ups, advocates for low income housing and for legislation promoting health equity, and more.

WHY SP2?

National leader in research and programming on income inequality, homelessness, health equity, mass incarceration, data analytics, and social policy

World-class research centers on Child Welfare, Philanthropy, Mental Health, Social Impact Strategy

Certificate programs in Law, Global Human Rights, Data Analytics, Aging, Child Well-Being, LGBTQ

ON-THE-GROUND EXPERTISE

The faculty who train SP2 students lead by example, developing interventions that innovate and make the world a better place. Research expertise extends from child welfare and income security to homelessness, mass incarceration, and mental health. Complemented by a robust Penn network of cross disciplinary faculty and resources, SP2 presents an incomparable opportunity for students, and by extension, those touched by students and graduates across the globe.

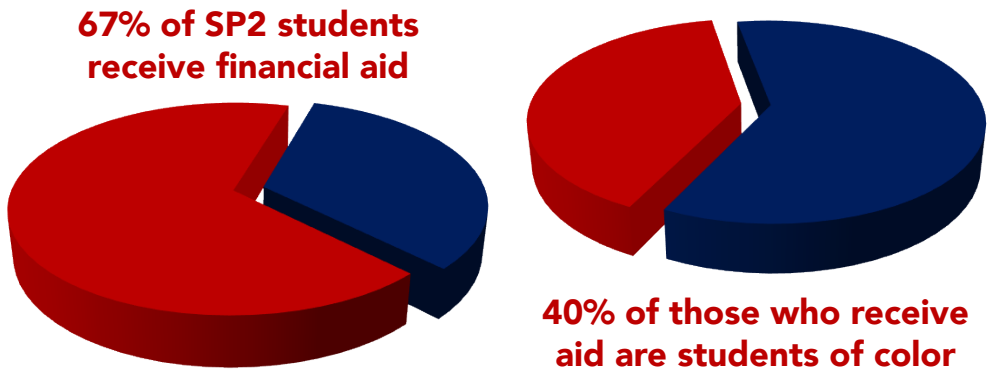
DIVERSITY FIRST

A diverse student body is absolutely essential for SP2 to continue to realize its full potential. Bringing together a broad range of perspectives and experiences is a critical component to finding solutions to systemic and seemingly intractable social problems. At SP2, racial equity across the student body is a top priority—alongside other forms of diversity including gender, orientation, physical ability, income, and geographic background.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR A MORE EQUITABLE ENROLLMENT

At nearly \$67,000, the average debt load of SP2 students can deter some who might otherwise apply to Penn and go on to impact the world through the fields of social work, public policy, and more. Overcoming student debt of this size can be incredibly challenging for many SP2 graduates—some with average starting salaries as low as \$45,000.

In order to recruit a talented and more racially diverse class of students each year, SP2 must be able to offer robust financial aid packages. Loan-free scholarships and grants that meet individual financial need open gateways to a Penn education not only by covering the cost of tuition, but also by offsetting associated costs of living, educational materials, and supports.



The average financial aid award (\$11,000) covers less than 20% of tuition.

Currently:

- Each degree program offers only one full tuition scholarship (Master of Social Work, Master of Science in Social Policy, and Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership)
- 325 students (approximately two-thirds) receive some form of financial aid
- Approximately 40% of those receiving aid identify as students of color

Last year, 115 accepted students who completed the Why Not Penn? survey cited the lack of available financial aid as the #1 reason they declined the offer of admission

PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITY: 12 SOCIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARS

Extraordinary philanthropy is needed to create the new Social Justice Scholars program at SP2. The program will create vital scholarships in social justice in perpetuity, to be awarded to 12 students of color who demonstrate financial need in order to enroll in one of SP2's three masters programs. The Program provides uniquely-focused, rigorous academic pathways for masters students of color from historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's) and reflects the School's commitment to diversity and mission of the passionate pursuit of social innovation, impact, and justice.

Constructing a deep, distinctive, and impactful learning environment for cohorts of students of color, while removing the financial burden of a graduate education at Penn, the Social Justice Scholars Program simultaneously empowers and enhances the entire student experience at SP2.

Graduates of the program profoundly enrich the diverse SP2 alumni community, as well as the national and international communities that SP2 constituents serve.

The creation of this new scholarship endowment will:

- Advance an ongoing commitment to impact, innovation, equity, and inclusion
- Make an SP2 graduate program more accessible for lower-income students of color
- Create the School's first endowed full-tuition scholarships
- More than double the School's annual financial aid budget

PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITY: 12 SOCIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARS

Opportunity (1 donor): Extraordinary philanthropy in the amount of \$12M will name and endow the entire SP2 Social Justice Scholarship program. Support at this level will transform SP2's competitive advantage in attracting and preparing students to become tomorrow's leaders and agents of change by providing 12 full tuition, need-based scholarships for students of color annually.

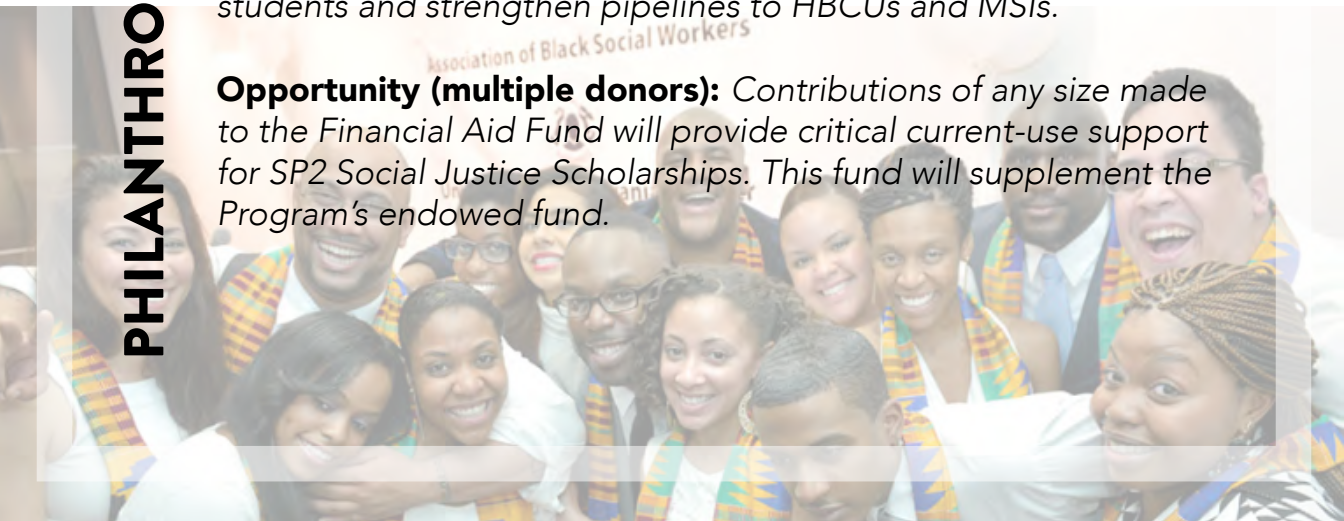
Opportunity (12 donors): Contributions in the amount of \$1M will name and endow a single SP2 Social Justice Scholarship covering full tuition annually for one SP2 student of color. A gift at this level would have a lasting impact by funding one scholar's education in social change.

Opportunity (1 donor): A gift of \$500,000 will name and endow the SP2 Social Justice Scholars Opportunity Fund. This fund will support opportunities for scholars to engage in experiential learning and to attend a national conference focused on social work, social policy, or nonprofit leadership (it is expected that in-person attendance at conferences will resume in Fall 2021).

Opportunity (1 donor): A gift of \$250,000 will name and endow the SP2 Social Justice Scholars Pro-Seminar Series. Offered to the Scholars and the SP2 community at-large, topics will focus on social justice issues including systemic racism, economic mobility, and child welfare.

Opportunity (1 donor): A gift of \$250,000 will name and endow the SP2 Social Justice Scholars Recruitment Fund. This fund will expand the financial resources of the Admissions Office creating new opportunities to enhance marketing efforts to prospective students and strengthen pipelines to HBCUs and MSIs.

Opportunity (multiple donors): Contributions of any size made to the Financial Aid Fund will provide critical current-use support for SP2 Social Justice Scholarships. This fund will supplement the Program's endowed fund.



Finding Community at SP2

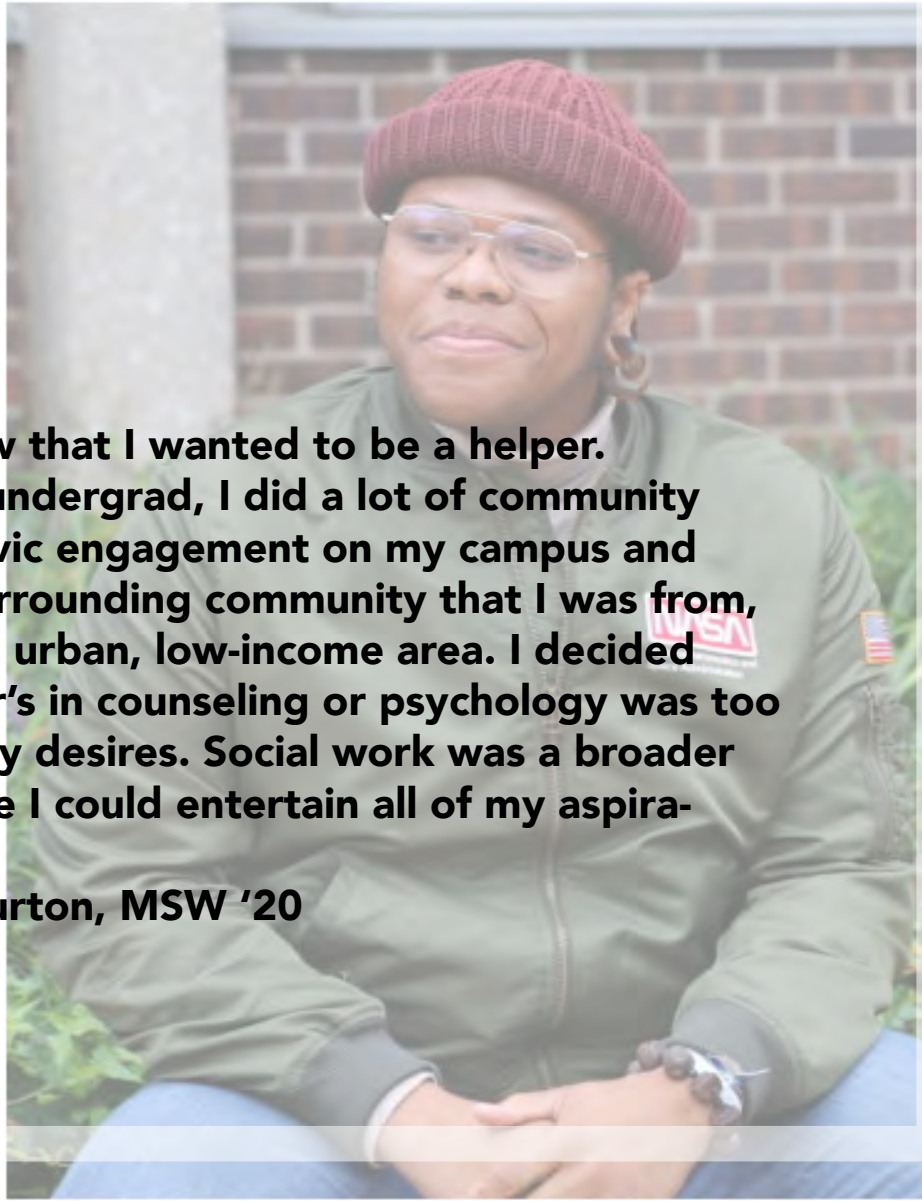
Raekwon Burton began considering a social work degree while earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at The College of New Jersey. By this time, he had recognized that he wanted to focus on facilitating community engagement and mental health.

SP2 was Raekwon's top choice, and he is clear that his financial aid award was a key deciding factor. A published writer, Raekwon received the 2020 SP2 Rosa Wessel Award presented to a graduating MSW student based on academic performance, student leadership, field work, and community service. Taking full advantage of his time on campus, Raekwon served as a Graduate Associate, held office in SP2 student government, and spent six weeks studying in India as part of a social welfare course.



I always knew that I wanted to be a helper. Throughout undergrad, I did a lot of community action and civic engagement on my campus and within the surrounding community that I was from, which was an urban, low-income area. I decided that a Master's in counseling or psychology was too narrow for my desires. Social work was a broader degree where I could entertain all of my aspirations."

- Raekwon Burton, MSW '20



The Convergence of Data, Policy, and Social Justice

Shweta Chopra is originally from India, where her education in Economics and the Liberal Arts helped her make sense of a diverse and unequal world. She comes from a consulting and data analytics background, having engaged in education and smart city related policy work with the Indian government in the past. With financial aid firmly in place, Shweta was able to bridge her commitment to social justice with her analytics skills in SP2's MS in Social Policy and Data Analytics (MSSP+DA) program.

During her time in the MSSP+DA program, Shweta worked alongside staff and faculty to improve the program as a student representative on the governance committee. She served as a teaching assistant for courses at both SP2 and the School of Engineering. As the Vice President of Education for the Penn Data Science Group (PDSG), Shweta organized speaker sessions and taught mini-workshops to deliver data science education to students on campus. For her summer internship, Shweta was selected as part of a selective cohort of 16 students to participate in the Data Science for Social Good program at the University of Washington. Bringing her experience back to Penn, Shweta founded the Data Science for Good community on campus, under the larger umbrella of the PDSG. The group serves governments and non-profits with data science support through student volunteer groups, and brings greater ethical consciousness to the practice of data science at Penn. The community has served clients in the criminal justice and education space, and organized the first Social Good Datathon on campus.

Post-graduation, Shweta is now working as a Data Scientist at the progressive analytics company BlueLabs Analytics in Washington DC.

A portrait of Shweta Chopra, a young woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

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The MSSP+DA program helped me develop proficiency in programming and advanced analytics as well as a more comprehensive understanding of the role data and technology can play in delivering social justice. The opportunity to bring a social justice perspective and leadership to data science at Penn has been a transformational one and is sure to impact the path my career will take going forward."
- Shweta Chopra, MSSP '19

SP2 AGENTS OF CHANGE

Fighting Racial Injustice

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" is a question many can recall hearing throughout childhood. For some, the answer has likely changed several times over the years. Others, like MSSP alumnus Walter Jean-Jacques, have carried their singular dream from an early age into adulthood, determined to seek out educational and professional opportunities that would turn it into a reality.

Now a third-year law student at Notre Dame Law School, Jean-Jacques is turning his long-held ambitions into noteworthy achievements. He was named a 2020 Bank of America Foundation Fellow, a highly competitive public interest fellowship that covers the cost of salary and benefits for selected graduates to work for two years at the city agency or nonprofit organization of their choice—essentially enabling Fellows to seek out and pursue their dream jobs. As a requirement of the fellowship, their work must also advance community sustainability and provide legal services to low-income or other underrepresented populations.



During his fellowship tenure, Jean-Jacques will be working at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in Washington, D.C, founded by none other than Thurgood Marshall and widely recognized as one of the nation's most preeminent civil rights organizations and law firms. Previously, during his first year of law school, Jean-Jacques was awarded a prestigious National Lawyers Guild Haywood Burns Fellowship for Social and Economic Justice, which led to working at the NAACP LDF's headquarters in New York City. Jean-Jacques' financial aid package from SP2 made an MSSP degree attainable, and the program provided him with an important foundation in social justice and a unique competitive position.

When I was six years old, I did a Black History Month report on Thurgood Marshall, and that's when I first came across information about the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Being able to utilize litigation to fight racial injustices through the realms of education, voting rights, criminal justice reform, and economic justice is something that I have always wanted to do. SP2 was so foundational for me, especially in terms of what I wanted to do. I can say this: without my SP2 education, I would not have been in the running to work at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund." – Walter Jean-Jacques, MSSP '17

We invite you to join to join SP2 in the creation of the Social Justice Scholars Program. This dynamic new initiative will clearly demonstrate SP2's commitment to students of color and enrich the entire SP2 community.