

Resha T. Swanson-Varner

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
Social Work and Social Policy
2026 (*expected*)

Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice
Domains: Social Inequality; Social Policy & Politics
The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL

Master of Science in Social Work
2021

Columbia School of Social Work
Concentration: Policy Practice
Columbia University | New York, NY

Bachelor of Social Work
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish
2018, *summa cum laude*

UA School of Social Work, *Honors Program*
UA College of Arts & Sciences, *Honors Program*,
The University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa, AL

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Labor Policy; Job Quality; U.S. South; Preemption; Grassroots Community Organizing; Low-Wage Jobs; Black, Latinx, and Immigrant Workers; and Racial Capitalism

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Swanson, R. T., & Carreon, E. D. (2024). Uncovering the Transformative Labor in Black Women's Community Work. *Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work*, 08861099231223935.

Swanson, R. T. (2021). Still fighting: The relationship between contemporary preemption in the South and the continued struggle for Black worker rights. *Columbia Social Work Review*, 19(1), 62–79.
<https://doi.org/10.52214/cswr.v19i1.7288>

Swanson, R. T. (*Revise and Resubmit*). Sick & Tired: A Quantitative Analysis of Paid Sick Leave And Workers' Mental Health by Race and Gender

Swanson, R. T., Cho, H. (*Submitted*). "He Worked One Day, and Didn't Come Back.": Challenges and Possibilities for Frontline Jobs in the Great Resignation

Carreon, E., Lambert, S., Swanson-Varner, R. T. (*In-Progress*). Minding the Gap: Racial Disparities in Retail Work Scheduling

RESEARCH & POLICY REPORTS

Lambert, S., Haley, A., Cho, H., & Swanson, R. T. (2022). Seattle's Secure Scheduling Ordinance 2022 employer implementation report. In *City of Seattle*. Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.
<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/departments/cityauditor/auditreports/secureschedulingreport2022.pdf>

Swanson, R., Guazo, I., & Vosburgh, J. (2021). Working on the edge: A survey of low-wage workers in the Birmingham area amid a global pandemic. In *Adelante Alabama Worker Center*. Adelante Alabama Worker Center.
http://adelantealabama.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Adelante_Working-on-the-Edge-2021-eng-FINAL.pdf

Carnes, J., & Swanson, R. (2021). The state of working Alabama 2021: Section 2 – unequal by design: COVID-19 and Alabama’s policy legacy. In *Alabama Arise*. Alabama Arise.
<https://www.alarise.org/resources/state-of-working-alabama-2021-section-2/>

MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

Swanson, R. (2020, May 15). *Walmart incident: Who’s the greater threat to public safety? COVID-19 or black people?* AL.com; Alabama Media Group. <https://www.al.com/opinion/2020/05/walmart-incident-whos-the-greater-threat-to-public-safety-covid-19-or-black-people.html>

GRANTS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

2024-25 UChicago Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture: Research Travel Grant
 2024-25 Robert Wood Johnson HPRS Open Access Funding
 2024-25 Robert Wood Johnson HPRS Dissertation Award
 2023-24 UChicago Mansueto Urban Doctoral Fellows
 2023 UChicago Graduate Travel Stipend
 2022-26 Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Research Scholar (HPRS) Fellowship

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Feb. 2023 – Present Project Manager | *Employee Fair Workweek Survey* | *The University of Chicago*
Project Description: Utilizes an original survey instrument to investigate whether employees covered under the Chicago Fair Workweek Law can access the stable scheduling practices afforded to them by the law.
Principal Investigator(s): Drs. Susan Lambert & Julia Henly, The University of Chicago

June 2021 – August 2023 Project Manager | *Scheduling Legislation Project* | *The University of Chicago*
Project Description: : Investigates frontline retail and food service managers’ implementation of new work scheduling laws in New York, Chicago, Seattle, and Philadelphia and their experiences balancing the changing needs of their businesses, employees, and customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Principal Investigator(s): Dr. Susan Lambert, University of Chicago & Dr. Anna Haley, Rutgers University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Primary Instructor | The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL

- **Autumn 2023; 2024:** Social Meaning of Race (Graduate, Social Work)
- **Summer 2023:** Research Development in Humanities and Social Sciences (Undergraduate)

Graduate Teaching Assistant | The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL

- **Winter 2023:** American Political Economy and Race (Undergraduate)

- **Winter 2023:** Human Rights Research & Writing II (Undergraduate)
- **Summer 2022:** Introduction to Writing in Research - Thrive Summer Academy (High School/Undergrad)

HIGHLIGHTED ACADEMIC CONFERENCES PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

- Nov. 2023 Association of Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Fall Research Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
 Role: Presenter
 Paper Title: Sick & Tired: A Quantitative Analysis of Paid Sick Leave And Workers' Mental Health
- June 2023 Labor & Employment Relations Association (LERA) 75th Annual Meeting
Detroit, Michigan
 Role: Presenter
 Symposium: LERA Best Papers: Labor-Management Relations
 Abstract Title: "He Worked One Day, and Didn't Come Back.": Challenges and Possibilities for Frontline Jobs in the Great Resignation
- June 2023 Global Carework Summit
San José, Costa Rica
 Role: Presenter
 Symposium: Public Dialogue #28: Caring Cities
 Abstract Title: The Wages of Caring: Minimum Wage Adjustments and the Economic Wellbeing of Home-Based Healthcare Workers
- Jan. 2023 Society for Social Work Research (SSWR) 2023 Annual Conference
Phoenix, Arizona
 Role: Presenter
 Symposium: Improving Job Quality in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
 Abstract Title: The Racialized Impact of Minimum Wage Preemption in the South

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Aug. 2022 – Dec. 2023 Worker Center Organizer
Arise Chicago | Chicago, IL
- Co-organize workplace justice campaigns and workshops for domestic workers
 - Conduct community “know-your-rights” trainings and presentations
- July 2019 – Aug. 2021 Communications & Policy Coordinator
Adelante Alabama Worker Center | Birmingham, AL
- Managed Spanish and English media communications, including press releases, advisories, statements, internal manuals, website, and social media accounts
 - Supervised and supported youth organizing initiatives and events
 - Analyzed policies, created campaigns or direct actions in support or against these policies, and built relationships with key political players at the local, state, and national level
- May 2019 – July 2021 Founding Board Member

Etowah Freedom Fund (EFF) | Birmingham, AL

- Managed bond release and support process, which included: paying bonds, providing post-release stipends, and organizing post-release transportation
- Coordinated joint-release efforts with other bond organizations and tracked requests for bond payments

March 2019 – July 2019

Shut Down Etowah Campaign Fellow*Adelante Alabama Worker Center | Birmingham, AL*

- Created bond profiles/cases, bond fundraisers, and coordinated logistics for individuals released from Etowah County Detention Center on bond and successfully oversaw the release of 3 men
- Organized direct actions and protests to raise awareness about the abuses at the detention facility

ACADEMIC SERVICE & INVOLVEMENT

June 2024 – Present

Department Union Steward (Social Work)*Graduate Student Union (GSU-UE 1103)**The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL*

January 2024 – Present

Student Coordinator – Crown Work & Family Research Working Group*Crown School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice**The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL*

Oct. 2021 – June 2023

Doctoral Studies Committee - Student Representative*Crown School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice**The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL*

Dec. 2021 – May 2022

Diversity Advisory Board - General Member*The University of Chicago | Chicago, IL*

Oct. 2015 – Dec. 2018

Spanish Club: Alabama Students Without Borders**Positions Held:** President (2017-18); Engagement Coordinator (2017)

Secretary (2016-17); Social Media Chair (2015-16)

The University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa, AL