For Immediate Release

Professor Joshua Miller leads professional and cultural exchange program with Rwanda and Uganda funded by the U.S. State Department

First delegation from Africa arrives to work on conflict resolution, peacebuilding

Northampton, MA — the Professional Fellows Program — Professor Joshua Miller of the Smith College School for Social Work is leading an innovative project that will have significant impact on the work of conflict resolution in Rwanda and Uganda, and on clinical social work training in both the U.S. and abroad. Miller is principal investigator on the Professional Fellows Program: Tolerance and Conflict Resolution in Uganda and Rwanda, which is funded by the U.S. Department of State.

The program is a trilateral exchange that aims to foster mutual understanding, collaboration, global networking, and leadership and professional skills development among Africans and Americans. It is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and administered in conjunction with Amherst’s Institute for Training & Development (ITD).

The School for Social Work is excited about the program’s potential to broaden Smith College’s global impact and to extend the School’s mission to train social workers who will go on to engage in community-based, collaborative, and culturally specific clinical practice.

The School for Social Work is excited about the program’s potential to broaden Smith College’s global impact and to extend the School’s mission to train social workers who will go on to engage in community-based, collaborative, and culturally specific clinical practice.

The program brings two groups of Africans to the U.S. in the spring and the fall of this year. The first group, nine men and women from Rwanda and Uganda, arrived on April 25 and will remain in the U.S. until June 5. The second group of new fellows will repeat the exchange program, traveling to the U.S. from October 10 to November 20.

Miller and ITD worked with two partner NGOs in Africa to choose participants. In Uganda, it was STEP UP (Sustain, Train, Educate and Promote Uganda), a community organization that Miller helped develop. In Rwanda, the organization is MEMOS – Learning from History, which works to promotes a culture of non-violence and reconciliation.

The fellows are all leaders in their communities. They are teachers, religious leaders, community organizers, and clinicians working in violence prevention and peace and reconciliation. All are engaged in helping their communities heal from legacies of armed conflict and overwhelming trauma.

The spring group began with a week of orientation meetings on the Smith campus, along with lectures, site visits, and cultural outings. For the three weeks that follow, the participants are working with organizations in New England that provide conflict resolution and other peacebuilding services. The goal of these internships is an exchange of knowledge and skills between the Africans and the Americans. After their internships, the fellows will travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in a three-day Professional Fellows Congress hosted by the Department of State.
The program will continue with a second phase after the fellows return to Africa. A four-person delegation will travel to Rwanda in the summer of 2015 and another to Uganda in the winter of 2015-2016 in a follow-on program. The participants will come from the organizations with which the Africans worked in the U.S. They will visit the Africans’ home organizations, see their work in action, and continue the cultural and educational exchange. Both the Africans and Americans traveling on these grants will implement professional projects with their organizations, using their newly acquired skills and experience.

Joshua Miller has devoted his teaching and clinical career to anti-racism work and psychosocial capacity building in the wake of disasters. He is the co-author of Psychosocial Capacity Building in Response to Disasters, and has been involved in the response to 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Aurora, CO shootings, the Asian Tsunami, the Haitian earthquake, and the Sichuan province earthquake in China. Most recently, his work has brought him to Northern Uganda, where he works with local leaders as the communities heal from the region’s longstanding armed conflict.

###

*Founded in 1918, the Smith College School for Social Work is internationally recognized for its academic excellence and its specialization in clinical social work, as well as for its commitment to anti-racism. More information about the School can be found on its website at www.smith.edu/ssw.*

**For information about the School for Social Work:**

Tynan Power  
Communications Specialist  
Smith College School for Social Work  
tpower@smith.edu

**For information on the Professional Fellows Program:**

Dr. Joshua Miller  
(413) 585-7966  
jlmiller@smith.edu