

Indiana University School of Social Work

**PRAC Annual Report
2005-2006 Academic Year**

Introduction

The Indiana University School of Social Work was founded in 1911. It currently offers social work education at the Baccalaureate, Master, and Doctoral levels. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program received its accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 1923, and the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program received accreditation in 1975. Since then, both programs have enjoyed accredited status. The last review for reaffirmation of accredited status was in 2005. The School started the Ph.D. in Social Work program in 1994 and a Pre-Doc program in 1997.

Bachelor of Social Work

1. *Child Welfare Service Learning Initiative*

Year: Academic Year 2006-2007 – Ongoing Project

One of the goals of the Child Welfare Service Learning Initiative is to increase service learning opportunities in the area of child welfare in the BSW program

Method Used

Some of the objectives and strategies to achieve the above mentioned goal include:

Modify the BSW curriculum to include more service learning opportunities. The strategy has been to develop new BSW service learning courses.

Encourage faculty to incorporate service learning into their courses.

The strategy has been to provide stipends to faculty to develop service learning components in their courses.

Changes Made

Three more courses added service learning as a component to the course learning activities.

Modest stipends were provided to faculty who developed a service component as part of their courses for the first time.

A Gateway course was offered: *S180 Exploring Child Welfare in Indiana*. This course provides a comprehensive overview of the child welfare system, with special emphasis on current child protection and child welfare services in Indiana.

An assessment process was developed and is gradually implemented.

Impact of Changes

Approximately 1200 hours of service were completed by students enrolled in service learning experiences.

Partnerships were created with Children's Bureau, Family Services, and the Department of Child Services to implement supervised service learning experiences in their agencies.

More faculty are interested in exploring service learning in their courses.

2. *Online Teaching and Learning: Update*

Year: The BSW program has continued with the development of online courses in 2006-2007.

Method Used

Two more BSW courses were developed as online options during academic year 2006-2007.

Changes Made

We are integrating newer technology to address the various ways students learn in online courses. At the same time and based on students' feedback, we are trying to eliminate what students consider "the busy work" of online courses. We are using new technologies but we are also conscious of the fact that many of our students are using dial up.

Impact of Changes

As mentioned last year, we have created more flexibility in the curriculum for all students but particularly for those students who have to work full-time and/or have other personal commitments to fulfill while attending school. In Fall 2006, we offered an online course required of BSW students in our Title IV-E program. BSW students from Bloomington, IUPUI, and IU East joined this online course and gave them the opportunity to share ideas and learning experiences across campuses. An important aspect worth mentioning is that it would have not been cost effective for the individual campuses to offer the course separately because each campus had less than ten students.

3. *Measuring Up Online: The Relationship between Social Presence and Student Learning Satisfaction*

Year: Academic Year 2006-2007

Method Used

Study done by Carol Hostetter and Monique Busch

Changes Made

The BSW program plans to review its online courses in the light of the findings of this study.

Impact of Changes

“The study has implications for educators teaching online courses. Information provided by the study may be used to support pedagogy that increases social presence. Many authors see the benefit provided to students who interact with faculty and each other in a learning community. Each learning community, then, has the opportunity to increase students’ collaborative skills in future social environments. As more courses are offered entirely online, it clearly is important to establish standards for excellence in computer-mediated education.”

Master of Social Work

1. *Evaluation of Master of Social Work (MSW) Curriculum*

Year

The MSW Program had approximately 570 students who attended the IUPUI MSW Program during the 2006-2007 academic year. These students completed 60 credit hours of study to obtain an MSW. The course content is normally divided between 30 credit hours of foundation courses and 30 hours of concentration content. The MSW Program has six concentrations of study. These concentrations focus on; family therapy, mental health and addictions, health, school social work, child welfare and leadership. Students were given an evaluation to obtain their perception on how well the various courses will, after completion of field and course work, prepare them in becoming practicing MSW’s.

Methods Used

MSW students who graduated in May of 2007 were given an exit survey to complete. Also, each concentration implemented either concentration specific exit surveys or focus groups with students who attended their concentration. Furthermore, the IUSSW Dean did monthly focus groups with MSW students, and the MSW Student Association completed an internet based survey of current students. These efforts provided quantitative and qualitative information for review.

Findings

The summary of data from these surveys and focus groups indicated that courses are meeting their objectives. The data also indicated that students thought the courses are preparing them to be practicing MSW’s upon completion of the program. There were specific findings that suggested that students desired more practical application of the course content to assist them in learning how to apply the course material. Within several concentrations students indicated that course content was sometimes too basic and overlapping of other classes. The “too basic content” comment tended to be made by students who had been practicing social workers at the bachelor’s level for an extended period. Students also indicated that they would like more classes taught online whenever appropriate.

Impact of Findings

The MSW program faculty has begun and will continue to collaborate and review course content; focusing on reducing repetition whenever possible. The concentration specific faculty will also meet to identify pedagogical strategies that might be used to address the learning needs of the students with extensive social work practice experience and those with limited practice experience. The MSW Curriculum Committee will continue its efforts to identify courses applicable for online learning and will work on implementation of these courses. Three online MSW courses have been developed and two implemented during 2006-2007. The above evaluation processes will be implemented again during the 2007-2008 academic year.

2. *Evaluation of Master of Social Work (MSW) Field Liaison Processes*

Year

The MSW Program had over 270 students in field placements during the 2006-2007 academic year. Each student is assigned a faculty field liaison who is responsible in ensuring curriculum content is integrated into field placements and that field placements are meeting the learning needs of MSW students and the Indiana School of Social Work. Each faculty member was assigned approximately 20 students for each semester. An evaluation was done to determine if the liaison process was meeting these two educational goals.

Method Used

Surveys were completed by all field students and field instructors at the end of their field placement to gather their opinions on the efficacy of this process. Qualitative and quantitative information was obtained in these surveys. Informal qualitative information was also obtained from faculty on the efficacy of these liaison processes.

Findings

The results from these surveys indicated that the field liaison process was varied in its effectiveness. When there was marginal effectiveness it appeared to be related to faculty being overloaded, both faculty and students not having a clear understanding of the liaison processes, and lack of communications among faculty, students, field instructors, and field placement staff.

Impact of Findings

The Senior Field Coordinator recommended a change in the liaison process. The new process would involve hiring MSW's from the community who are knowledgeable about the MSW curriculum as liaisons for 15-20 students each. The Coordinator also proposed that any faculty member be liaison for no more than 10 students. The Dean supported the recommendations and during 2007-2008 the new process will be implemented. The evaluation process will be implemented again at the end of field placements during 2007-2008 to evaluate the efficacy of the new processes.

3. *Evaluation of Master of Social Work (MSW) Field Seminars*

Year

As noted above, the MSW Program had over 270 students in field placements during the 2006-2007 academic year. A component of that field placement process is student completion of an online field seminar. These online field seminars were initially implemented during the 2006-2007 academic year. There was a foundation seminar for students in their foundation placement and concentration seminar for students in their concentration placement. The seminars were designed to help students cross the bridge between the academic course content and the field placement. An evaluation was done to determine the efficacy of the new online seminars.

Method Used

Surveys were done of all field students and field instructors at the end of their field placement to obtain their opinions on the efficacy of the online seminars. Qualitative and quantitative information was obtained in these surveys.

Findings

The results from these surveys indicated that field seminars had varied effectiveness. With regards to student educational goals, the foundation seminars were surveyed as more effective than the concentration seminars. Students indicated that the concentration seminars were too basic and repetitive of content learned previously in their MSW courses. The students recommended continued use of the online seminars instead of the face to face seminars.

Impact of Findings

The MSW Field Placement Unit will evaluate the content they have presented in the concentration seminars. They will meet with faculty from the various concentrations and obtain input on what would be relevant material for the MSW seminars during the 2007-2008 academic year. The field seminar evaluation process will be implemented again at the end of field placements during 2007-2008 to evaluate the efficacy of the new seminar content.

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

1. *Addition of Teaching & Learning Brown Bag Series:*

Year: Spring 2007

Method Used

A Teaching and Learning Brown Bag Series led by Dr. Valerie Chang was initiated in Spring 2007. An average of six to eight Ph.D students who teach courses in the undergraduate and masters program attended this program. The discussion forum met monthly to share resources and ideas for enhancing teaching. Topics covered in the spring included: preparing to teach, teaching culturally diverse students, the scholarship

of teaching and learning, the importance of establishing class objectives, the elements of great learning experiences, assessment of learning, innovative ways to facilitate student reading, the DEAL (Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning) reflection model for facilitating discussions of multi-cultural content, and the impact of different teaching approaches on Judgment of Learning (JOL). The forum included guest speakers, sharing of printed and online resources, and frank discussions of teaching challenges and successes.

Changes Made

Based on student's feedback and instructor's analysis of the brown bags, revisions will be made this fall to offer the Series again in Spring 2008.

Impact of Changes

With the initiation of the Brown Bag series, Ph.D. students who teach in our School have a continuing opportunity to share resources related to teaching and to enhance their teaching skills. Students who participated in the monthly discussions unanimously gave positive feedback about the series. One of them wrote:

I benefited from the topics that were explored and ideas that could be implemented in class. Another benefit is it becomes a support system for me to listen to what others are struggling with in the classroom. I like how others give ideas or experiences that are effective in dealing with tricky areas of the teaching process. Dr. Chang really highlights research on teaching and learning which keeps us abreast of what is current and backed by the latest research -especially in assessing learning. She also connects us to groups or individuals that can be a resource to further our learning. I am grateful for this service and believe education graduate students would benefit from the experience if invited.

2. *Addition of Teaching Recognition for Ph.D. Students*

Year

In Spring 2007 we instituted a teaching recognition award for doctoral students who teach in our bachelor's and master's degree programs. Dr. Chang was so impressed with the developing teaching skills of our Ph.D. students that she proposed a new award to recognize the students' teaching excellence. At first, we considered a procedure of collecting nominations and selecting an awardee annually. However, after careful consideration of this idea and discussion in the Ph.D. Committee, we decided to institute a process whereby multiple students who met the criteria for teaching excellence could be acknowledged for teaching excellence.

Method Used

The faculty developed criteria for the teaching excellence recognition and a simple procedure for students to follow who were seeking this recognition. The *Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Teaching* will be given at the Spring Symposium to doctoral students who demonstrate excellence in teaching. Students can apply to receive the certificate by turning in their documentation of teaching excellence to the Director of the doctoral program. The materials to be submitted include are:

- A list of at least 2 courses taught or co-taught by the doctoral student.
- A summary of teaching evaluations showing course scores that are at or above the school average scores.
- Indication of completion of the Ph.D. teaching course or PFF.
- At least one of the following:
 - A letter of recommendation from a faculty member.
 - A copy of a peer review of the student's teaching.
 - A description of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project

Changes Made

This is a new award that was initiated in spring 2007. We anticipate that it will be available annually.

Impact of Changes

Three students submitted packets demonstrating evidence of excellence in teaching. Their materials were reviewed and evaluated by Dr. Chang and by Dr. Adamek, the Ph.D. Program Director. All three students were determined to have met the criteria set for the award and were recognized for excellence in teaching at the annual spring Ph.D. symposium held in April 2007. Each student received a framed certificate of recognition. We anticipate that our graduates who have received the *Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Teaching* will have a leg up when they enter the job market to apply for academic positions.

3. Integrative Seminar-Part I

Year

In May 2006 the Ph.D. Committee held an all-day retreat as a follow-up to a series of three curriculum retreats held the previous academic year. One of the outcomes of the May 2006 retreat was a plan to launch our own social work version of an integrative seminar for our Ph.D. students. In previous years, our Ph.D. students enrolled in an integrative seminar (*D700*) taught by Dr. Angela McBride in the Nursing School. When Dr. McBride stopped teaching the course about 4 years ago, our students needed an alternative integrative seminar. For about the past three years, in lieu of the nursing integrative seminar, our students have registered for 3 credits of our independent study course (*S790*) and completed 10 units of the *Preparing Future Faculty* (PFF) program. Students still have the option to complete PFF, but beginning in fall 2006 incoming students could participate in our own social work integrative seminar.

Method Used

Through a series of discussions and ranking exercises, the faculty members of the Ph.D. Committee identified priorities for change or enhancement in the Ph.D. Curriculum. One of those priority areas was developing our own social work integrative seminar. A small group of faculty working on this issue identified two primary objectives: 1) socializing incoming students to the demands and rigor of doctoral education, and 2) preparing advanced students for academic and research careers. The group proposed offering two 1.5 credit seminars—one in the fall for incoming Ph.D. students, and one in the spring for

students in their last semester of coursework. The first half of the seminar will be geared toward the needs of new Ph.D. students—helping them to learn about the resources available to them at IUPUI and in the Indianapolis community, familiarizing them with Graduate School policies and procedures, and introducing them to social work faculty and their ongoing research projects. The second half of the seminar will be geared toward the needs of students completing their coursework and will cover topics such as preparing for academic job interviews, understanding the expectations for the qualifying exam, preparing a dissertation proposal, and applying for research funding.

Changes Made

The first 1.5 credit session of the newly designed Integrative Seminar was offered to the incoming cohort of social work Ph.D. students in fall 2006. The course description and objectives were as follows:

Impact of Changes

Given the small size of the entering cohort in fall 2006, it was difficult to assess the impact of the initial offering of the integrative seminar. The Ph.D. Director envisioned the seminar as an informal and supportive mentoring opportunity for incoming students. In discussions of the new seminar among faculty serving on the Ph.D. Committee, it became apparent that there was some concern that the seminar was not equivalent in substance and rigor to other 1.5 credit course offerings in the Ph.D. curriculum. The Ph.D. Committee recommended that a small group of faculty meet to clarify and enhance the objectives and substance of the course. One faculty member called for course objectives that reflected all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Other ideas included incorporating visits to a variety of campus units, and adding readings and written assignments. Further development of the integrative seminar will take place during the summer of 2007 so that a more formal and structured version of the course will be available to the incoming class in fall 2007. The course will be developed in conjunction with Dr. Bill Barton, who will be the course facilitator for the second half of the integrative seminar which will be offered for the first time in spring 2008.