

Indiana University  
School of Social Work

**PRAC Annual Report  
2003-2004 Academic Year**

**Introduction**

The Indiana University School of Social Work was founded in 1911 as the Department of Social Services. Shortly thereafter, the first courses in the field of social work were offered through the Department of Economics and Sociology. Between 1911 and 1944, various administrative and curricular changes were put into effect, and degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels were offered. In 1944, the Indiana University Division of Social Service was established by action of the Trustees of Indiana University. The organizational status was changed in 1966 when the Graduate School of Social Service was created. In 1973 the name was changed to the School of Social Service and, in 1977, it became the School of Social Work in order to reflect more clearly its identification with the profession. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program received its accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 1973, and the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program received accreditation in 1975. Since then, both programs have enjoyed accredited status. The next review for reaffirmation of accredited status will be in 2005. The School started the Ph.D. in Social Work program in 1994 and a Pre-Doc program in 1997.

The Bachelor of Social Work program prepares students for generalist social work practice. The Master of Social Work program prepares graduate students for advanced social work practice in an area of specialization. The Doctoral program prepares students for leading roles in areas such as social work education, social welfare, policy analysis and development, administration, social work practice, and advocacy.

Note: The information above was partially extracted from: Rogers, H. C. (1980). *Seventy years of social work education at Indiana University*. Indianapolis, IN: IUPUI Press.

In prior years, we have reported on the six dimensions of the Planning for Learning and Assessment grid as provided by the PRAC committee. In our 2002-2003 report we focused on the Changes Based on Assessment Findings at IUPUI and we will also use this format for the 2003-2004 report.

Before we address the specific changes based on assessment findings, we will introduce two other topics, reaffirmation of our reaccredited status and Goal 6, principle 4 of the “Indiana’s Framework for Policy and Planning Development in Higher Education, the Indiana Commission on Higher Education

## **Reaffirmation of Accredited Status**

Based on our over 90 years of experience in social work education and our well established accreditation record, we proposed to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE ) to write an alternative self study focusing on assessment as our special project. The proposal received the Council approval. It is our position that social work education is currently developing viable methodologies for evaluating student learning outcomes and this special project will enhance the state of knowledge regarding outcomes assessment.

As part of our special project we proposed to:

- Create a culture that embraces scholarship of assessment. In doing so, assessment will become a natural component of what we do rather than an after thought. Furthermore, it will gradually contribute to the knowledge building of assessment in higher education.
- Create a road map that will systematically and continually assess all aspects of our School. This means that the assessment will go beyond the assessment of the educational programs (admissions, teaching/learning processes, student services, administration, outcomes) to encompass other components related to civic engagement, scholarship, stewardship, public relations, etc. that complement the definition of who we are.
- Build on current assessment processes and develop new ones.
- Provide attention to the process of assessment to assure all School's constituencies embrace the assessment road map and contribute to its implementation.

The BSW and MSW program directors are the co-chairs for the self study process/special project. They have already engaged the participation of other members of the administration and the faculty. Other school constituencies, i.e. students, associate faculty, field instructors are also involved in the conceptualization and implementation of the proposed assessment plan.

In sum, and as required by the Commission on Accreditation, we will demonstrate that:

- Our BSW and MSW programs meet the accreditation standards.
- We are committed to an assessment process that enhances the quality of our services, ensures accountability, and contributes to the knowledge base on assessment.
- We are capable of developing a comprehensive assessment approach that should prove valuable to other social work programs.
- We have School and University history and expertise on formative and summative assessment.
- We will devote resources toward the successful completion of the project.

## **Indiana's Framework for Policy and Planning Development in Higher Education - Goal Six – Principle Four**

Under this heading we would like to briefly formulate a beginning response to the request made by the Indiana Commission on Higher Education to Indiana University regarding Goal 6 principle 4. The principle reads:

The campus statement of learning goals has set forth how evidence on the attainment of each learning goal will be collected for individual students at the course, major and degree levels and that can be reported for all baccalaureate graduates collectively as a measure of continuing institutional improvement.

The implementation of the BSW program is guided by its vision, mission, goals and 19 learning objectives. The curriculum has been carefully developed to promote the program's goals and objectives, and classroom courses and internships are designed to implement the learning goals of the curriculum. The BSW program, the same as the other educational programs, uses a number of approaches to assess the attainment of the learning goals at the individual, course, and program levels. We will mention the most essential approaches and focus on two key ones. These are:

- The Course Learning Objectives Classification System
- The Course/Instructor and Student Learning Assessment (CISLA) System.
- The Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP). This assessment packet includes: 1) Entrance Survey; 2) Social Work Values (pretest); 3) Exit Survey; 4) Social Work Values –Posttest; 5) Alumni/ae Survey; 6) Employer Surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Focus groups with different constituencies
- Assessment by Program Committees
- Retreats focused on assessment
- Individual student assessment in the classroom.
  - Student produced media such as videotaped real or simulated interviews.
  - Written products such as essays, reports, papers, dissertations, research projects.
  - Student portfolios (in the works)
- Peer reviews: Of students and faculty
- Input from School Advisory Committee (A committee composed of alumni and social welfare agencies that advise the Dean and directors on career trends, research, curriculum, and other related issues).

We would like to briefly discuss the two first assessment approaches mentioned above, the Course Learning Objectives Classification System and the Course/Instructor and Student Learning Assessment System

The Course Learning Objectives Classification System. This approach facilitates curriculum analysis on the basis of multiple dimensions and based on the ‘assessment question(s)’ posed by the faculty. Currently, our dimensions are the School goals, academic program goals, content areas mandated by the Educational Policy Statement, CSWE, the program learning objectives, Bloom’s Taxonomy, and IUPUI Principles of Undergraduate Learning.

Course/Instructor and Course Learning Objective Assessment System. This approach captures students’ perceptions of their learning experience in individual courses. In order to implement this system the School created an instrument divided into two distinctive components:

Twenty-two Standard or Common items for all social work courses in all Programs (BSW, MSW, Ph.D.) and on all campuses.

The Discrete Course Learning Objectives (CLO) of each course.

The data from the ‘discrete course learning objectives’ provides information of the attainment of each learning goal in the 17 required social work courses. Responses to this second component of the instrument can be used for analysis and comparison as we do for the twenty-two common items. Let’s say that we want to know how students in all sections of S100 offered in Fall semester 2003 perceived their learning related to objective #1 “Understand the concepts of race, ethnicity, cultural diversity,...”. After running the statistics, we will receive at a minimum the number of responses, Mean, and Standard Deviation for each objective in each course section and then the aggregate for all sections.

We understand that in using this approach to secure information from students, we are gathering information based on their own perceptions of their learning rather than using a direct measurement about the competencies gained in that particular course. However, this is one more piece of information to add to other building blocks of information gathering through practicum evaluations, testing, student portfolios, scores on licensing exams, etc. We believe that by using these assessment approaches, we will start addressing Goal 6, Principle 4.

### **Improvements Made Based on Assessment Findings**

Under this heading we will respond to the question What Improvements Have Been Made Based on Assessment Findings? by academic programs following the PRAC outline that includes the year, methods used, changes made, and impact of changes.

## **Baccalaureate Social Work Program**

### *Online Teaching and Learning: Update*

**Year:** The BSW program has begun to develop and implement online courses since 2001.

**Method Used:** The BSW program has designed a ‘road map’ that calls for the development of all the BSW courses online except for our internships. The Dean’s office has provided incentives for faculty (full-time and part-time) to develop online courses.

**Changes Made:** Four more online courses were developed and implemented during academic year 2003-2004. The total number of online courses as of the Spring semester was nine courses.

**Impact of Changes:** As mentioned in the last year report, we have become part of the IUPUI Online and in doing so, we are assisting the campus to reach its goals in the technology arena. 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. During 2003-2004 we reached a large number of non-social work students with our online courses, particularly in S141 Introduction to Social Work, S200 Introduction to Case Management, and S300 Crisis Intervention. The number of students taking these three online courses totaled 253 students.

### **Year: 2003**

**Method Used:** Changes were made based on Student Midterm & Final Course Evaluations of S400 Practicum Seminar online.

### **Changes Made:**

- Reduced class section sizes,
- re-worked group assignments to streamline communication between/among students and instructor,
- reduced assignment load,
- created icebreaker assignments to identify student’s barriers to navigating online platform
- utilized “concept map” technique in assignment to increase integration of class readings, case concepts, and application to practica experiences

**Impact of Changes:**

- improved course evaluations from the year before
- increased student satisfaction with classroom size and resulting workload related to this
- increased awareness of technological limitations of students early in the semester so that this could be addressed by additional assistance from the instructor
- increased participation and sense of “community” online
- increased integration and application of course readings

*Revisions to BSW Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives*

**Year:** 2002 – 2004.

**Method Used:** The BSW committee had a retreat to brainstorm on the currency of the concepts and meaning of the vision, mission, and goals developed in late 1990s. The program director met with associate faculty several times to discuss the revisions and make the appropriate changes to the document based on their input. Meetings with other constituencies included the Latino Social Worker/Human Services Providers Network and BSW students.

**Changes Made:** We began the process of revising the BSW vision, mission, goals, and objectives in 2002 and completed the process in Spring 2004 with the final approval of the Faculty Senate.

**Impact of Change:** Our BSW vision, mission, goals, and objectives are in line with the newly implemented Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2001).

*Admission Requirements: Update*

**Year and Changes Made:** As reported last year, in 2002-03 we changed the admissions eligibility criterion of 26 credit hours in order to apply to the program to 12 credit hours.

**Method Used:** This change was informed by the literature review on recruitment, retention, and student socialization.

**Impact of Change:** We have seen a slightly increase in the number of students who applied this year with less than 26 credits.

## *Implementing the Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP): Update*

**Year:** We continue the implementation of BEAP

**Method Used:** This assessment packet includes: 1) Entrance Survey; 2) Social Work Values (pretest); 3) Exit Survey; 4) Social Work Values –Posttest; 5) Alumni/ae Survey; 6) Employer Surveys

**Changes Made:** We do not have the results back from the national organization processing the data.

**Impact of Changes:** N/A at this time.

## **Master in Social Work Program**

### *MSW Curriculum Revision*

**Year:** 2001-2003. The MSW committee with the support of the total faculty made significant revisions to the MSW curriculum.

**Method Used:** Focus groups with students and community members, faculty analysis of needs, student surveys.

**Changes Made:** The entire sixty credits of the MSW curriculum was change with its implementation beginning on Summer II, 2003. The curriculum moved from two to at least five concentrations, with opportunities for students to design individualized concentrations. The foundation content was condensed and an intermediate bridge developed between foundation and concentration content. Classes were designed to reduced redundancy.

**Impact of Changes:** Feedback has been quite positive from community members and students. We are currently using our Curriculum Analyzer to evaluate course objectives in relationship to various School and professional indices. Evaluation will be ongoing.

### *Change in Advanced Standing*

Students holding undergraduate social work degrees and meeting specific requirements may be eligible for this MSW option. Students admitted with Advanced Standing receive credit by credentials for all first-semester courses (15 credits).

**Year:** 2003-2004

**Method Used:** Ongoing student and faculty feedback; feedback from BSW program administrators at IU and other Indiana institutions.

**Changes Made:** Previously, applicants accepted with Advanced Standing were limited to follow the intensive two summer sessions and one academic year program. We changed this policy, allowing qualified students to enter any of the MSW program options with Advanced Standing status.

**Impact of Changes:** Still in process – outcome not yet known.

### **Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work**

#### *Addition of Teaching Course: S724-Theory, Practice, & Assessment of Social Work Teaching*

**Year:** In Spring 2004 we first offered an elective course on academic teaching as part of the doctoral curriculum. Students may take this course as an elective.

**Method Used:** The addition of this course was based on faculty discussion and student input about the need for a course focused on enhancing teaching skills of doctoral students who intend to become future faculty. The course was developed by Dr. Valerie Chang as part of her sabbatical project focused on best practices in teaching social work at the college level.

**Changes Made:** The course received final approval from the Graduate School in fall 2003. The course addresses theories, practice, and assessment of social work teaching. The official course description is as follows:



This course prepares doctoral students to effectively and competently teach social work courses. Content includes teaching philosophies; curriculum and syllabus development; teaching methods; technology related to teaching; assessment, testing, and evaluation of students; and research related to teaching. Students will learn accreditation standards for bachelors and masters social work education.

**Impact of Changes:** Seven students enrolled in or audited the inaugural offering of S724 in Spring 2004—including an Assistant Professor and an Associate Faculty member. Student comments about the course were uniformly and overwhelmingly positive. Unsolicited comments about the course sent to the Doctoral Program Director included:

*“I have already implemented many of the techniques learned in this course. From the use of rubrics for grading and involving students in the revision of syllabi to meet their needs, this class has been instrumental in my teaching. I think this should be a required course for all PhD students...in all disciplines.”*

*“I think this course will be invaluable because I have learned to develop a teaching portfolio that will be an asset when I’m up for rank and tenure or when interviewing for a position.”*

*“This course should be a requirement. In my educational career, I encountered many gifted professionals who were teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Unfortunately, all too often they had very limited abilities to ‘teach.’ Since most doctoral students are involved in teaching and will likely be teaching to some degree when they complete their dissertation, it only makes good sense to provide them with the skills and knowledge to do so in the most effective manner.”*

Teaching portfolios assembled by students in the course were put on display at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Doctoral Symposium held April 23, 2004. Current plans are for the course to be offered every other spring.

### *Revision of Practice Theory Course*

**Year:** Spring 2004

**Method Used:** The instructor of our existing practice theory course, *S740: Social Work Practice: Theory and Research*, revised the course title, description, objectives, and some of the course content to encompass a broad range of various forms and contexts of social work practice.

**Changes Made:** The word “Interpersonal” was dropped from the course title, description, and objectives to reflect its more inclusive content. The revised course description is as follows:

This seminar provides students opportunities to refine the knowledge, skill and judgment necessary for competent analysis and evaluation of various aspects of social

work practice. During the seminar, students conduct an intensive analysis of the effectiveness of practice services to a distinct at-risk population affected by a contemporary social problem.

**Impact of Changes:** Students prepared chapter length practice effectiveness evaluation reports related to social policies, prevention or intervention programs, as well as various forms of direct or interpersonal practice. This year's topics included:

- *Evidence-Based Services for Children and Adolescents Exhibiting Anti-Social Behavior,*
- *Promoting Educational Achievement among Foster Care Youth,*
- *Improving Maternal Support for Child Victims of Incest Following Disclosure: Treatment Implications for Non-offending Mothers,*
- *Communities of Violence: Promising Strategies for Prevention,*
- *Effective Strategies for Reducing the Rates of HIV/AIDS among Crack-Cocaine-Using African American Women,*
- *Mindfulness, Meditation, and Anxiety: Guidelines for Clinical Social Work Practice with Anxious Clients,*
- *Best Practice Guidelines for Treating Acutely Suicidal Elders, and*
- *Promoting Successful Aging among Older Adults*

### *Strategic Planning Retreat*

**Year:** During the spring 2004 semester the PhD Program Committee initiated a strategic planning process to examine the content and structure of the curriculum. The PhD Program in Social Work celebrated its tenth year in 2004 and the Committee felt it was time to review the curriculum for both coherence and adherence to the program's mission.

**Method Used:** A progressive curriculum retreat was held in the spring 2004 semester consisting of three separate sessions. The retreat sessions were facilitated by Dr. Bill Barton, Director of the IUSSW Office of Research Services. The first session, held in January 2004, focused on identifying desirable outcomes for the graduates of our PhD program. Before the second session was held, the outcomes identified in the first session were categorized into broad categories and were laid out in a table format. Both faculty (including emeriti faculty) and students participated in the retreat. The goal of the second retreat session, held in February 2004, was to extend and validate the outcomes and their categorization. At the third retreat session, held in May 2004, the committee brainstormed about which components of the existing PhD program—including components beyond the curriculum—contributed to the attainment of the outcomes that had been

identified. This process will allow us to identify gaps in program structures or processes that detract from achieving the intended program outcomes.

**Changes Made:** Although the work of the faculty and students in analyzing the PhD program is expected to continue in fall 2004, a number of excellent suggestions have already surfaced. Proposals included offering an orientation for graduate faculty members in Social Work to review the expectations of graduate faculty members, especially those new to serving on dissertation committees. Another proposal was to formalize a mentoring/ advising system so that every incoming doctoral student has a specified advisor. In addition, we discussed the possibility of instituting a dissertation seminar for the purpose of supporting students who have completed coursework in continuing to make progress on their qualifying exam and/or dissertation.

**Impact of Changes:** Suggestions that have arisen in the course of the retreats will be considered by the PhD Committee when it reconvenes and are expected to lead to improvements in program structures and processes.

### *Creating a “Culture of Completion”*

**Year:** Throughout the 2003-04 school year, the PhD Committee discussed ways of promoting a “culture of completion” among social work doctoral students.

**Method Used:** The PhD Program Director attended the national GADE (*Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education*) meeting in October 2003. This is an annual meeting of the PhD Program Directors in Social Work. Based on presentations at the meeting, Dr. Adamek shared with the PhD Program Committee several ideas for creating a “culture of completion” among our doctoral students. In addition, doctoral students were surveyed through the doctoral student listserv to seek their input about what is needed to support them through the program.

**Changes Made:** The Committee discussed several options for providing support to doctoral students who have completed coursework and are at the qualifying exam or dissertation stage. One idea considered was using ONCOURSE to offer an online dissertation seminar. While this option was appealing in terms of staying connected with doctoral candidates who do not live locally, there was concern that the role of the dissertation chair might be supplanted by the

course instructor for such a seminar. Nevertheless, students are supportive of the idea of a dissertation seminar that would provide an ongoing structure for support of their work once their coursework is completed. The seminar would require a limited time demand—meeting perhaps once or twice a month. The Doctoral Program Director is pursuing a new course approval to add a dissertation seminar.

**Impact of Changes:** While the dissertation seminar is not yet in place, an active program of informal mentoring has resulted in significant progress during the past academic year among several doctoral students who had completed their coursework. Since April of 2003, four social work doctoral students have passed their qualifying exams and been advanced to candidacy and five have obtained approval for their dissertation proposals. The program is now poised to double its number of graduates in the coming academic year.

## **Summary**

From this year's report, it is evident that the three educational programs have been involved in assessment and program revisions based on selected assessment approaches. Perhaps the center piece of assessment for academic years 2003 – 2004 has been that of working toward our reaffirmation of accredited status. The fact that we are the second school in the country selected by the CSWE to write an alternative self study rather than a full self study is something we are very proud of. It acknowledges our excellent accreditation standing and the growing recognition among our peers of the School as a leader in social work assessment. In the process of working on our 'special project', we are making progress in the implementation of our assessment road map and we are building our concept of scholarship of assessment.

## **References**

Council on Social Work Education (2001). Educational policy and accreditation standards. Alexandria, VA: Author.