

Florida Gulf Coast University
Program Review Report

Division of Social Work
Master of Social Work Program

Submitted
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Introduction

The Division of Social Work at Florida Gulf Coast University offers a Masters level degree in Social Work (MSW). Full-Time, Part-Time and Advanced Standing students are mainstreamed together in one program of study. Students take a total of 60 credit hours that can be completed in two years of full-time study. Currently, there are seven full-time and one half-time academically and experientially qualified faculty including the Division Chairperson. Six of the full-time faculty holds doctorates and one faculty member is “ABD”. Total student enrollment is 25, with the first cohort scheduled to graduate May 2003.

The Division of Social Work admitted its first MSW students Fall 2001 to the Full-Time, two-year clinical community practice MSW Program. A Part-Time four-year clinical community practice MSW program began during the second year of operation (Fall 2002) in order to meet the needs of employed professionals who have an interest and a need for the MSW degree.

This review provides a dynamic and ongoing assessment of major components of the MSW Program. It is used by the faculty and other constituents to develop recommendations for revisions, corrections, and/or improvements to the Program. The MSW program review provides an opportunity for Continuous Improvement based upon data obtained from Outcome Measures. These Outcome Measures provide an assessment of the Foundation Year Curriculum, integration of Foundation Year Curriculum and the Foundation Year Field Education experience.

The MSW students have only completed the first year of the program, therefore the evaluation materials are limited to that year. A program review for Continuous Improvement has been developed utilizing Concentration Year (2nd year) data obtained from Outcome Measures. These Outcome Measures will assess the Concentration Year Curriculum, integration of Concentration Year Curriculum and the Concentration Year Field Education experience, retention and alumni employment.

This Report contains evaluative information and data for elements of the Program Review as specified by the Board of Education, and specific data related to the performance measures and standards established by Senate Bill 2502, Section 54. Much of the information is contained in a Self-Study prepared for the accrediting agency for the MSW program. The Self-Study document accompanies this report, and the following table indicates the specific locations in the Self-Study where the different categories of information, specified above, are to be found.

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Accreditation

Accreditation Agency

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation (COA) accredits all master's level (MSW) and undergraduate (BSW) Social Work education programs in the United States. The Commission on Accreditation of CSWE is responsible for establishing standards and authorized to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education in the United States. Master's programs are reviewed for their preparation of students for advanced-level social work practice. The Commission on Accreditation certifies whether a program is functioning at an acceptable level to accomplish these goals. All standards must be met.

Accreditation Process

Program review is a specific requirement for accreditation. In the Accreditation Standards and Self-Study Guides it states, "The program must specify the outcome measures and measurement procedures that are to be used systematically in evaluating the program, and that will enable it to determine its success in achieving its desired objectives...The program must show evidence that it engages in ongoing, systematic self-study and evaluation of its total program, and show evidence that the results of evaluation affect program planning and curriculum." Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures 4th edition (p. 118-119).

Findings are used to assess the extent to which program objectives are achieved. The findings are fed back into the curriculum or other program revisions, and possibly into revision of goals and objectives.

Accreditation Status

The MSW Program initiated the accreditation process in July 1998 by submitting the required materials for Candidacy to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for the MSW Program in July 1998. The FGCU application was accepted and a pre-candidacy visit for the MSW program was scheduled for Spring 2000. In August 2000 the MSW Program at FGCU was awarded Candidacy by CSWE. The Commissioner's first site visit was scheduled and successfully completed in Spring 2001. The first class of MSW students was admitted in August 2001. A second post-candidacy visit was conducted successfully in April 2002 and the program was granted permission to apply for Initial Accreditation. August 2002 self-study materials for Initial Accreditation were submitted to CSWE.

In December 2002, the MSW Program received a letter indicating that the program had met requirements for Initial Accreditation; however, CSWE wanted additional information on three topics before approving a site visit for Initial Accreditation. The Division of Social Work is currently preparing a response to CSWE's request for additional information and those materials will be submitted prior to the April 1, 2003 deadline.

The previously submitted self-study, accompanies this submission to the Division of Colleges and Universities. It is supplemented here by the following analysis of program strengths and weaknesses.

‘SWOT’ Analysis

Identification of Strengths

1. The MSW Program has a seasoned leader with an MSW and Ph.D. in Social Work. The Chairperson has more than 10 years experience developing and administering accredited Social Work Programs. She also brings more than 20 years teaching experience and is respected by colleagues in Social Work Education.
2. The MSW faculty all hold the MSW degree and have prior experience teaching in an accredited MSW Program. All of the faculty have post MSW professional experience (a prerequisite for graduate faculty) and continue to remain active in professional organizations locally and regionally. Four faculty have doctorates, and one is a doctoral candidate. They are productive scholars presenting at regional, national and international conferences as well as publishing in referred journals. Allyn & Bacon recently published a textbook on research methods written by one of the faculty and the faculty are currently collaborating on another scholarly text.
3. This curriculum was designed to address both the mission and philosophy of the MSW program, and the needs of the community. The curriculum is a collaborative effort of the MSW faculty, combining clinical practice skills with community practice skills, thereby providing enhanced skills that permit graduate social work students to comfortably conduct interventions with individual groups, communities and agencies.
4. The use of instructional technology is infused throughout the curriculum. This has not only provided opportunities for the students as adult learners but expanded avenues for them to interact among themselves, as well as with faculty.
5. The field education (practicum) experience provides dual supervision for students by experienced, licensed field instructors employed in local social service agencies and seasoned faculty. Faculty provide the second level of supervision through visits with students, and field instructors are based at the practicum site.
6. The Division of Social Work has utilized input from an Advisory Board comprised of professional social workers and professionals from related disciplines (gerontology and health care). The Advisory Board has been in existence since 1996 and meets on a regular basis providing insight into community issues, supporting student recruitment and fundraising.

Opportunities [for improvement]

1. Survey data on the curriculum suggest the need for more integration of Foundation Year course content. Faculty are meeting to discuss changes and to collaborate on improving integration of Foundation Year course content to increase integration.
2. Survey results indicate that students need more on-campus in-class preparation time prior to the start-up of the Internet courses. As a result of these findings faculty are reviewing and extending in-class preparation time for Internet courses. Faculty will increase monitoring of the list-serve and web board to identify students who may need assistance.
3. A major concern with the Field Education (Practicum) has been the numerous responsibilities of the Field Coordinator for the MSW and the HUS programs. As a result a part-time Field Instructor has been hired to assist the Field Coordinator, and faculty have assumed the responsibility of Faculty Field Liaison (visiting and evaluating MSW students' field experiences). These changes have resulted in increased Field Education placement choices for students, more timely feedback to students regarding their progress in Practicum, and quicker response time to possible problems in Practicum.

Barriers

1. The accreditation process for the MSW program requires a substantial commitment of time and resources. This process requires that all changes to the curriculum and/or Field Education must be in compliance and approved by the accrediting agency Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and FGCU's Graduate Curriculum Committee.
2. All faculty are overextended teaching and advising MSW students in the full-time and part-time, and advanced standing MSW programs. They also teach in the full-time and part-time Human Services undergraduate programs.

3. Another concurrent faculty responsibility involves preparation for the accreditation process related to the transition of the Human Services program to Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. This requires a substantial amount of resources and faculty time.
4. There are limited resources for recruitment (brochures, travel, marketing, etc.) and institutional support for graduate students (graduate assistantships, tuition waivers, scholarships). This has a profound impact on the ability of the program to recruit and retain exceptional students.

Recommendations

1. More faculty, money for marketing/recruitment, space for graduate students and adjuncts and additional support staff to assist with admissions.
2. Additional resources to transition from the HUS Program and to begin the Accreditation process for a BSW Program.

Plans For Continuous Improvement

1. Increasing student input into the development of the curriculum, program evaluation, admissions requirements, fund raising, and student recruitment.
2. Increasing Advisory Board input into the development of the curriculum, program evaluation, admissions requirements, fund raising, and student recruitment.
3. Continuous systematic review of the foundation and concentration curriculum and the field education practicum to ensure that all students are experiencing a MSW Program in compliance with Council on Social Work Education standards.
4. Expanded offering of workshops for Field Instructors to include utilization of technology in the form of Internet courses and materials on CD ROMs.
5. Expanded use of Faculty Field Liaison and Faculty advising to mentor and monitor student progress and to model ethical professional behavior.