

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Program Review Action Plan
Approved by Faculty; March 27, 2007

In Spring 2006, the School of Social Work received the report from the External Review Team that performed the program review. The final report from the Academic Program Review Committee was approved on May 16, 2006. Within this document, the Action Plan is described with particular attention to the **implementation process** and resources required. This document was reviewed by the faculty, and approved at the March 2007 faculty meeting.

CURRENT STATE OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The Georgia State School of Social Work initially started providing undergraduate social work education in 1981. In 1998, the first cohort of MSW students was admitted to the program with the first graduating class in May 2000. Since that time, the School has received **full** reaccreditation from the Council on Social Work Education until 2012. In an effort to address the functioning of the School, the areas of instruction, faculty productivity, and resources and support will each be addressed.

Instruction

As noted in the Reviewers' reports, the School of Social Work has the largest undergraduate program in Georgia. Currently, 221 students are enrolled in the BSW program which is an increase of 29% from 2004 (n=158). In the introductory course (SW 2000), for example, enrollment increased 76% between 2001-02 and 2005-06. This increase has resulted in an five additional BSW course sections which have been added to the 2007-2008 course schedule.

This year, the SSW received a **grant** from the Provost's initiative to enhance retention. In Spring 2006, the School implemented a new model of instruction in the Introduction to Social Work course (SW 2000). The course included a peer review writing project, a mentorship program with senior social work majors, and various activities that **enhanced** the students' sense of socialization to the profession. As part of the evaluation component, students will be tracked to determine if these methodologies increase the retention rate for majors. Hopefully, this grant will serve to recruit students into the BSW program, and provide **a method** to increase retention in the major.

The MSW Program has maintained a steady number of graduates. There are two entry points to the program; students without an undergraduate social work degree start during Fall semester, and students who have a BSW (termed Advanced Standing) are added to the class mid-way through the graduate program. This admission structure provides a method to address any attrition issues during the initial year, and provides the opportunity to admit enough **Advanced Standing students** to fill the class. The structure is an important reason that the MSW course enrollment has remained so constant between 2003-05 (44-47 per year).

There is, however, the opportunity to increase graduate level credit production by mounting a part-time MSW degree. This structure would allow students to take evening courses and complete the 2 year degree within a 3 year time period. A cohort size of 20 - 25 part-time students would increase graduate credit hour production by 180 - 225 credits per semester, including summers. While this possibility is attractive, faculty resources need to be secured to mount additional course sections in a part-time format.

During the previous academic years, discussion about implementation of an Interdisciplinary PhD program was undertaken within the College. This possibility received favorable response from the external reviewers, and was supported by the previous Director of the School. The program would be a great addition to the School related to generation of credits (e.g., SSW faculty teaching a doctoral course, supervising research projects, chairing dissertation committees). In addition, the opportunity to work with doctoral students could potentially increase faculty publication rates through collaborative projects.

Faculty Productivity

In several areas, the SSW faculty have been an extremely active and productive group. One area is in external funding with a total of \$2,992,000 from 2003 – 2005 as stated in the APRC report. Since then, additional funding has been secured from the JHET Foundation (Dr. Elizabeth Beck), DeKalb County Government (Dr. Jan Ligon), Georgia Department of Human Resources (Dr. Jim Wolk and Dr. Peter Lyons). Clearly, faculty members continue to have success in obtaining external grants and contracts.

Faculty members have also maintained high profiles and visibility in professional positions. Two faculty held leadership positions within the state: Dr. Deborah Whitley was President of the National Association of Social Workers Georgia Chapter, and Dr. Jan Ligon serves on the State Professional Licensing Board. Dr. Mindy Wertheimer holds national office and Dr. Jan Ivery serves on a national commission within the Council on Social Work Education. Dr. Nancy Kropf serves on the Executive Committee of the Social Research, Policy, and Practice Section of the Gerontological Society of America. In addition, many faculty members serve on local boards of directors for social welfare agencies.

As indicated in the APRC report, the publication rate for the faculty was lower than peer institutions. The stated average for scholarly works per tenure track faculty was 1.4. While this average is low, several factors are expected to positively impact the faculty publication rate. First, a new assistant professor (Dr. Lionel Scott) was hired this year after he completed a post doc at one of the top research programs in the country. Although he is starting as a new assistant professor, he brings a track record of peer reviewed publications to GSU. In addition, Dr. Nancy Kropf assumed the Director position within the School. Dr. Kropf has an extensive publication record in the social work and gerontology literatures. **To assist with publications, all faculty members who request support will receive a GRA, as resources permit.** In the FIMS report for this year,

a total of twenty peer review articles were published by faculty or **are in press** which is an equivalent of 1.8 publications in peer reviewed articles. In addition, four books were either published or in press during the same time period.

Resources

The School of Social Work moved to new offices last year, which are well furnished and pleasant. While space is currently adequate, expansion might create space limitations for grant funded programs or development of a more comprehensive staff infrastructure for the School.

A change in staff support has taken place during the time since the APRC was drafted. A new staff line was created as a shared (50%/50%) position between the Professional Excellence grant and the School of Social Work. This newly created position provides administrative support to the program directors (Director of the School, BSW Program Director, Field Education Director, Student Personnel Director) within the School.

However, additional support is needed for graduate students. With the new pay scale for GRAs, the School's operating budget includes resources for **only** 1.5 GRAs. Ways to support additional GRAs are currently being devised within the School.

FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Nine recommendations were included in the APRC report. Each of the Committee's recommendations will be addressed. Included in the Action Plan strategies are both funded and unfunded initiatives with the potential outcomes of enhancing program functioning within the area addressed by each recommendation. Finally, funding that is needed to accomplish this Action Plan will be provided.

Recommendation 1: Increase the quality and quantity of faculty publications, with a focus on peer-reviewed outlets, and higher quality journals. To increase publication rates, both support and mentoring will be provided to faculty members within the School. These initiatives will include:

- Providing GRA support to all faculty who request one for purposes of supporting research and scholarship.
- Committing funds to provide professional development activities for faculty. In particular, travel to at least two professional conferences per year will be allotted as the budget permits.
- Instituting a professional development and mentoring plan. Each untenured faculty member will be mentored by a tenured associate or full professor who can provide assistance and guidance for areas of publication.
- Implementing the Center for Collaborative Social Work. The Center (approved last academic year) will promote research and scholarship for faculty, and provide infrastructure support for producing publications from externally funded projects.

Recommendation 2: Hire only tenure-track faculty who have completed the Ph.D. The School currently has three assistant professors, all of whom were hired upon completing their PhD. In addition, all received their degrees from top 20 Schools of Social Work. Our newest assistant professor completed a post-doc at the school of social work ranked second within the country. Future hires will continue to have a doctoral degree completed prior to assuming a tenure track position.

Recommendation 3: Assign additional teaching and service duties to faculty who are not research productive in order to distribute the workload evenly across the department. Each year, faculty productivity will be reviewed during annual evaluations with the Program Director. Each faculty will be asked to summarize productivity in publications, grant submission, peer reviewed presentations, and related research outputs. Tenure and tenure track faculty who are not meeting the level of productivity which is expected at a Research University (typically defined as the equivalent of two juried publications per year) will be asked to draft a professional development plan for the next year. This plan will be reviewed the Director. This plan may include the following:

- Publications goals for the next year which meet or exceed the expected level at a Research University
- Reassignment of research time to instructional responsibilities
- Reassignment of research time to service responsibilities that will ultimately lead to publications

Recommendation 4: Hire additional staff, especially in the areas of grants management and IT supports. Additional ways to enhance the staff infrastructure will be a priority, especially on grant related projects. Currently, a faculty committee is constructing a process to use indirect funds to support a staff position within the Center for Collaborative Social Work to help with grant proposals, funding, and research opportunities.

Recommendation 5: Increase the number of graduate assistants by writing these positions into internal and external grants and seeking innovative sources of funding. The School of Social Work's original budget only provides for 1.5 Graduate assistants at the 40% FTE level. Additional GRAs need to be written into grants, and this will be a priority over the coming five years. In addition, however, other sources of support need to be developed to enhance the research productivity of non-funded social work faculty, especially untenured faculty members who are working toward promotion and tenure. Various strategies will be implemented including:

- Working to identify potential donors to support GRA ships within the School
- Reconfiguring Foundation awards as GRAships
- Utilizing a combination of support strategies for GRAships (e.g. different levels of FTE) to distribute available funds in an equitable manner

Recommendation 6: Improve the quality of the curriculum, by introducing elements of globalization and internationalization at all levels and making both the BSW and MSW programs more rigorous and challenging. In relation to the issue of internationalizing the curriculum, both curriculum committees within the School will review ways to:

- Infuse courses with additional international content
- Seek strategic partnerships within the University to promote study abroad programs for students
- Investigate avenues external to the University that might provide students with independent study credits related to international activities such as participating in alternative spring breaks, involvement in service learning activities that are part of other campuses, etc.

The Committee also recommended that both degree programs be reviewed for rigor and challenge. The following issues will be reviewed by the curriculum committees this year:

- In the BSW program, enrollment management strategies will be instituted to determine the flow of students throughout the curriculum. This information will be used to determine the need for additional sections of courses. In addition, it will minimize the need to have students take a course in an independent study format which is typically less rigorous than the stand up section of a course.
- **The faculty will also review the written requirements in the curriculum. Appropriate courses have been designed as Writing Intensive. In addition, Critical Thinking Through Writing initiatives are also being planned.**
- In the MSW program, the curriculum committee has approved a **multicultural requirement to be a credit – generating course** beginning in 2008 - 2009. This requirement will be considered part of the Field Education sequence.
- The MSW committee will also evaluate Writing Intensive courses within the Graduate curriculum.

Recommendation 7: Continue to collect data on learning outcomes, and begin to assess these data in order to improve program quality. The School has a Learning Assessment Plan that has been successfully used to review progress of both undergraduate and graduate students. Both plans received positive feedback from the Center for Teaching and Learning review committee. In addition, the School was **fully** reaccredited by the Council on Social Work Education until 2012. In addition to the current learning plan, the School will collect additional data on:

- An evaluation of the retention grant that was received by the Provost's office this year.
- Additional systematic tracking of undergraduate students for timely progress through their program of study and on-time graduation.

Recommendation 8: Focus resources on expansion, improvement, and further establishment of the MSW program. Next year, the MSW program will celebrate its 10th year anniversary. During the previous decade, the faculty has engineered a solid curriculum and programmatic base. In order **to expand**, an evening part-time program will be planned and implemented. Pending appropriate resources, a part-time cohort will be admitted in Fall 2008. In addition, the School is working with the College of Law to begin a joint MSW/JD program (approved by SSW faculty in February 2007).

Recommendation 9: Participate in the development of a joint PhD program in Urban Health with other College of Health and Human Sciences departments. The School is in a good position to be a partner in a joint PhD program in Urban Health. Several

faculty **members** conduct research in health-related topics including substance abuse/addiction, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, poverty, and aging. In addition, the new Director of the School, Dr. Nancy Kropf, has extensive experience in doctoral education having served as a Doctoral Degree Program Chair, a member of the Board of Directors for the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, and a Major Professor for seven doctoral students. The faculty has the knowledge and skills to be involved as course instructors, supervisors for doctoral student research projects, and serve on dissertation committees. This opportunity would also provide Social Work faculty with additional opportunities for joint publications and presentations with doctoral students within the program.

RESOURCE NEEDS:

Associate Professor: This person would have primary responsibility for teaching and advising students in a part-time MSW program. This level of faculty is desired as the person needs to have some knowledge about social work education, and can take a leadership role in implementing the curriculum. **Funded requested for FY 2009**

Budget.

Salary for 9 month position = \$70,000

Fringe: \$18,746

Start Up Funds = **\$3,000**

GRA = \$4,000

TOTAL: \$95,746

Non-Tenure Track Faculty: An additional non-tenure track position (e.g., Clinical Assistant Professor) is requested provide administration in the Field Education component of the part-time program. This person would teach the Field courses, and work on recruitment and placement of students in appropriate agencies. **Funded requested for FY 2009.**

Budget

Salary for 9 month position = \$53,000

Fringe: \$14,193

TOTAL: \$67,193

GRAND TOTAL REQUESTED: \$162, 939

TIME FRAMES:

2007- 2008:

- Devise part-time program curriculum
- Convert appropriate courses using technology for inclusion in both FT and PT MSW programs

- Develop recruitment strategies for PT program
- Develop internship sites for part-time students
- If additional faculty lines are funded, recruit faculty
- Appoint permanent Center Director for Center for Collaborative Research
- Through use of indirect funds, hire support person for Center
- Host a second Community Forum to showcase community partnerships and research

2008 – 2009

- Admit initial cohort to part-time program
- Increase number of students who complete international opportunities by 5%
- Increase student support by 3 graduate assistantships
- Integrate multicultural requirement into MSW program as credit generating content
- Admit students in MSW/JD program (contingent upon curriculum approval within College of Law)
- Hire new Associate Professor and NTT faculty for Part-time Program

2009 - 2010

- Increase internship sites to provide field education opportunities for PT students
- Increase grants funding within School by 10%
- Increase faculty publications to amount that is equivalent to 2.0 per academic year

2010 – 2011

- Host biennial Community Forum
- Admit second cohort of part-time students