School of Social Work

Academic Year 2014-15 Assessment Report

MISSION STATEMENT
The following mission statements were developed in 2009 when the School of Social Work was undergoing its re-accreditation process.

Mission of The University of Montana School of Social Work Bachelor of Social Work Program
The mission of The University of Montana School of Social Work Bachelor of Social Work Program is to prepare entry level generalist social workers who can practice at multiple levels and assume a variety of social work roles to address social issues and promote social justice. The program educates students to be ethical, reflective, collaborative, innovative, and culturally competent.

Mission of The University of Montana School of Social Work Master of Social Work Program:
The mission of The University of Montana School of Social Work Master of Social Work program is to prepare social workers who will promote the profession’s historic commitment to social justice and equality. The program educates students to become ethical and collaborative integrated practitioners who are culturally competent, use critical thinking skills, and understand the intersection of rural and global contexts.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES
The following is the set of objectives that was developed in 2009. The objectives are currently under review as we prepare for or re-accreditation during the latter part of 2016. The objectives are divided between the undergraduate (BSW) and graduate (MSW) programs and are consistent with UM’s Strategic Issues as described below.

BSW Program Objectives
1. Build on the liberal arts perspective in preparing generalist social work practitioners who possess the requisite ethical, value, knowledge, and skill base for effective practice at local, state, tribal, regional, national, and global levels.

2. Promote informed citizen participation in addressing issues of social and economic justice, particularly when disadvantaged populations are involved.
DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES

3. Faculty provide service at the local, state, and national levels and conduct research and scholarly activities related to analyzing and addressing social problems, improved social work practice, and more effective approaches to educational preparation for the field.

**MSW Program Objectives**

1. Prepare social workers to integrate and evaluate direct-level practice with community and social-change practice.

2. Prepare social workers to utilize substantive knowledge, skills, values/ethics base, and critical thinking necessary for effective social work practice in both rural and global contexts.

3. Prepare social workers to advance professional knowledge, to promote best practices, and to be aware of historical context, cultural diversity, and the political and economic challenges at the intersection of rural and global environments.

4. Prepare social workers to engage in life-long professional learning and to promote innovative practice responsive to emergent social conditions and human needs.

5. Prepare social workers to assume leadership positions in the profession, public and nongovernmental human-service organizations, and community action and social policy-making arenas in the state of Montana and beyond.

6. Prepare social workers to promote democratic participation, human rights, and social justice through collaboration with policy makers, service providers, community members, and those affected by inequitable social conditions.

7. Promote program development and partnerships that enhance the quality of human services and social work education in the state of Montana.

8. Promote scholarly inquiry and professional development to advance social work knowledge and practice.

**Alignment – UM Strategic Issues**

I. Partnering for Student Success

One of the School’s greatest assets is the consistent and high quality academic advising, practicum supervision, and professional/personal mentorship. Faculty know their students well and make it a point to provide the personal and professional support that is often needed for the to succeed. The School also does each of the following:
DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Annual assessments to measure the School’s effectiveness in academic advising
- Adheres to pre-established acceptance criteria for BSW and MSW programs to ensure readiness to enter the professional field
- Supervises and mentors students placed in practicum by both a professional in the field and a faculty member to ensure professional growth.
- Graduates an average of 50 undergraduate and 27 graduate students annually.

II. Education for the Global Century

The School is continually seeking innovative forms of pedagogy to more effectively engage students in and out of the classroom to help ensure that they acquire the practice behaviors and competencies required by the accrediting body. The School routinely offers on-line and blended course options, and two day short-courses to improve accessibility across Montana. Finally, the School encourages students to travel abroad and to complete their practicum in rural areas and tribal reservations in Montana and in foreign countries. The following provides a more detailed description:

- The BSW 2+2 program uses distant technologies to provide the second two years to students across Montana. May students have participated from Flathead Valley Community College and Stone Child College. A number of elective courses are also offered on-line.
- The MSW program has an integrated practice emphasis recognizing that rural contexts of practice pose unique challenges in terms of geographic distance, isolation, and lack of access to resources and services.
- Students in both programs are encouraged to enroll in the School’s globalization in social work course, an experiential winter session course in Nogales Mexico, and to complete their practicum in foreign countries.

III. Discovery and Creativity to Serve Montana and the World

A core group of faculty members have been involved in treating and preventing problems associated with high-risk and vulnerable children throughout Montana. This research has provided ample opportunities for student involvement, developing prevention and treatment programs in Indian country, and improving mental health treatment statewide. The program initiatives and research outcomes have significant implications for dissemination of knowledge to those states with similar social, economic, and geographic challenges.

The School’s newly minted Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development positively and directly impacts the lives of vulnerable children and families. The Center’s services are innovative and have implications for other centers being developed across the nation.

The School’s work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in developing a trauma-informed systems of care in treating and preventing child abuse has a direct impact in tribal areas and has tremendous capacity to be replicated nationally.

The school is in the final stages of developing partnerships with the Sojourner Center in Phoenix, Arizona, Neural Injury Center, and the Montana Board of Crime Control to advance research in domestic violence, traumatic brain injury, and statewide workforce development.

IV. Dynamic Learning Environment

The following examples describe opportunities that support the School’s endeavors to create a dynamic learning environment

- Public Policy and the Montana Legislature: This course brings students to Helena to both observe and participate in Montana’s legislature biennial meeting.
DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Social Work Justice along the US/Mexican Border: Students travel to Nogales, Mexico to observe the needs and living conditions of Mexican immigrants along the US Border and learn and observe first hand the US court proceedings of immigrants who are declared illegal.
- Globalization and Social Work; BSW program second two years available on-line

V. The Planning-Assessment Continuum

The School of Social Work’s undergraduate program has been accredited for approximately 45 years and the graduate program for 10 years. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has established a set of student competencies and corresponding practice behaviors that must be analyzed on an annual basis. The competencies and practice behaviors correspond to the professional attributes that are expected of professional social workers at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Since the educational standards recently changed the school has just begun to organize its data collection processes and measures to ensure that they are aligned. The collected data will be fed back into the respective programs annually to ensure continuous renewal that is driven by relevant data.

Noteworthy programs/initiatives
BSW 2+2 distance program – Students wanting to complete their BSW degrees from an off-campus location can complete the degree’s prerequisites from a community or tribal college or from a UM department that offers online courses. The second two years of the degree (junior, senior) can be completed through internet technology (Moodle) and by visiting the campus twice each semester for lab-based educational components. The program connects UM to two-year campuses, specifically addresses workforce shortages in social services outside of Missoula, and capitalizes on UM’s existing technological resources.

The School’s Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development pools UM’s expertise to promote innovative prevention and treatment options to improve child well-being in the areas of education, health, social functioning, emotional stability, and vocational training. The Center has been working with tribal, public, and private non-profits to improve services statewide.

The following section identifies each of CSWE’s 10 competencies. Each competency contains a series of practice behaviors (41 total) that must be measured two ways (classroom assignments (papers/tests), practicum, competency examination (BSW) or portfolio (MSW). The 41 practice behaviors are not listed but are currently being evaluated the respective BSW and MSW programs.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS

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<th>GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. (Six practice behaviors)</td>
<td>BSW tests, papers, projects, practicum, or competency</td>
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STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS

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<td>2.</td>
<td>Apply social work principles to guide professional practice. (Four practice behaviors)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments (Three practice behaviors)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Engage diversity and difference in practice (Four practice behaviors)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Advance human rights and social and economic justice (Three practice behaviors)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. (Two practice behaviors)</td>
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RESULTS AND MODIFICATIONS

The following example is based on competency one above (2.1.1) and the corresponding practice behaviors.

1. **Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.**
   a. advocate for client access to the services of social work
   b. practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development

No curricular changes have been necessary since preliminary results indicate that students have met the benchmarks for each of the practice behaviors.
c. attend to professional roles and boundaries
d. demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
e. engage in career-long learning
f. use supervision and consultation

APPENDICES

1. The assessment plan (map) and initial data collection procedures to date have been attached.

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

The process for collecting data to measure each of the CSWE competencies and practice behaviors was initiated in fall semester 2014. By collecting data during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years the school will provide two years of data that will determine its ability to meet the 10 core competencies. Although initial data has been collected in multiple areas, the competencies and corresponding practice behaviors are measured by individual course assignments that include classroom tests, papers, and projects, practicum, competency examination and portfolio. Students enrolled in the course will meet the practice behavior if 85% attain a grade of an “A” or “B.” If the competency is not met modifications will be made to the course or assignment to improve the likelihood that students will achieve reach the practice behavior. Data will be collected at the end of the next four semesters and the results will be analyzed during the winter session and summer months. The results will inform faculty prior to the beginning of the next semester if adjustments are needed.