

CHAPTER 1: MSW PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

MSW Collaborative Program Background Information

Formal planning for the Collaborative MSW Program was initiated in Fall, 1999 through a series of joint meetings between the UW Green Bay and Oshkosh Social Work Faculty and their administrators. These meetings culminated with the submission of an application one year later to the University of Wisconsin System for joint entitlement to plan a collaborative graduate program. The UW System granted initial approval to begin planning in Spring, 2001.

The two social work faculties from Green Bay and Oshkosh then met regularly together with their advisory group members to plan how the new program was to be implemented, including structural arrangement and curricular options to be derived from formal needs assessment. In August 2001, at a large invitational gathering of administrators, community agency representatives and faculty members, there was unanimous agreement to formally request authorization from the UW System to implement a graduate MSW program and to apply for Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation.

The preparation process was parallel because documents required by the UW System and by CSWE were remarkably similar. The UW System authorization request was approved by the UW Board of Regents on October 11, 2002. The application for candidacy was approved by the CSWE Commission on Accreditation in July, 2003 and full accreditation was granted in June, 2006. Program implementation began in Fall, 2003 with the enrollment of the first cohort of students. The faculties are proud of the efforts to add a Graduate Social Work Degree Program in this region—an event anticipated for several decades has become a reality. It is important to acknowledge that this field manual will be used by the Collaborative MSW Program throughout the region because it is a singular program established by an inter-institutional agreement. Note that this graduate program is independent of the respective BSW programs uniquely operated by each University and possessing their own field education policies and practices.

Themes, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The Collaborative MSW Program Themes

As a result of extensive faculty planning, market research results, and feedback from consulting outside reviewers, six major program themes are interwoven with content that was recommended for advanced concentrations in (1) advanced direct practice and (2) administration and management. As a result, these major themes were subsequently integrated within those two areas of concentration. These themes reflect the unique needs of social work practitioners and clients in the region, the broad mission of the social work profession, and the academic standards for graduate education established by CSWE. These six themes include the following:

- **Public Sector Practice**—improving the quality of life of people and communities served by publicly funded agencies (including private sector programs receiving public funds) and

encouraging democratic participation in community decision making in order to influence quality of life concerns.

- **Leadership Roles**—assuming leadership roles in direct practice, administration and policy development in order to strengthen communities, organizations, and families.
- **Family Focus**—enhancing family functioning, improving community and agencies supports for families, and enhancing the quality of life for families within the community.
- **Diversity**—promoting advocacy and interventions to enhance the well being of vulnerable and oppressed people within the region.
- **Rural Emphasis**—reflecting the inclusion of the unique needs and circumstances of rural people, agencies, and communities in the region.
- **Interdisciplinary Cooperation**—encouraging active involvement with other academic units and professional disciplines in order to address quality of life concerns.

All course work throughout the program is built on and infused with these themes.

The Collaborative MSW Program Mission Statement

The development of the program’s mission was strongly influenced by the UW System Cluster Core Mission with respect to interinstitutional collaboration as an effective means for sharing of resources and educational outreach. It was further influenced by CSWE support for collaborative education.¹ The mission statement further embodies the six themes that emerged from the program planning process. The mission statement of the Collaborative MSW Program is stated as follows:

The advanced professional Master of Social Work degree is a joint effort by the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and Oshkosh to prepare social workers for advanced practice as facilitators, partners and leaders in planned change activities with service users and community service providers in the region. The program’s goal is to educate professionals ready to assume administrative and direct practice leadership roles within this region’s increasingly diverse and transforming rural environments. It aims to prepare practitioners who can work to strengthen families through programs, services, and policies supportive of family and community well being, with special emphasis on family needs in rural and tribal settings. Concomitantly, the program aims to promote interdisciplinary learning and coordinated interprofessional practice to actively address social issues. Additional emphasis is placed on professional acceptance of responsibility to participate in civic life and to provide leadership in the community and to encourage the inclusion and representation of Native Americans and members of other cultures and diverse groups in the region. Finally, the advanced program strives to address adult learner expectations for ease of access and user-friendly content delivery.

¹ CSWE (1999) “Myths and Opportunities, The Impact of Discipline-Specific Accreditation on Interprofessional Education (46-52).

This mission is reflected in the goals that have been developed for the Collaborative MSW Program.

The Collaborative MSW Program Goals

The seven goals of the Collaborative MSW Program are to:

1. Prepare advanced degree social workers to assume administrative leadership and direct practice leadership roles in public and tribal sector practice within an increasingly diverse and transforming rural environment.
2. Promote and provide regional professional development activities that support advanced practice learning, including commensurate use of Internet and distance education modes of course delivery.
3. Through research, evaluation of practice, and program evaluation, contribute to the development of professional knowledge aimed toward the strengthening of family functioning and the enhancement of community and agency supports for users of social work services.
4. Undertake activities inside and outside the classroom that will contribute to the development and improvement of social policy at local, regional, state, and national levels as it pertains to families or other users of public, tribal, and other culturally relevant social services.
5. Develop and utilize collaborative partnerships with other academic units and degree programs in the UW System or elsewhere and with other organizational entities in the Northeastern region.
6. Provide active leadership in the social work profession and engage in public service activities within the Northeast region, actively encouraging democratic community decision-making in order to favorably influence quality of life concerns.
7. Through teaching, research, evaluation, policy development and advocacy activities inside and outside the classroom, actively confront oppression in the community, especially as it affects individuals and families using public social services.

The Collaborative MSW Program Competencies (Student Outcome Objectives)

The Collaborative MSW Program is a competency-based program and as such, the competencies serve as educational outcomes in the preparation of master's prepared social workers. While competencies or student outcomes relate to the goals of the Collaborative MSW Program, there are two distinct set of competencies – those for students in the foundation year and those for students in the advanced year. While curriculum development efforts were undertaken with these competences in mind, students also embrace the competencies in their assessment of learning needs and subsequent goal setting for the field.

Foundation and advanced competencies, are written in a general way, which allow students to tailor their concentration (either direct practice or administration and management) and their specialization (child welfare or an individualized specialty) to their field experiences. The foundation and advanced year competencies are listed below. These competencies reflect “end points” or outcomes students are expected to achieve by the time they graduate from the program. Foundation year competencies indicate steps toward achievement of these outcomes, levels at which MSW students should be performing by the time they complete the foundation curriculum.

2013-14 Competencies & Foundation Practice Behaviors

COMPETENCY 1: PROFESSIONAL SELF

- 1.1:** Advocate for client access to the services of social work.
- 1.2:** Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.
- 1.3:** Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
- 1.4:** Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.
- 1.5:** Engage in career-long learning
- 1.6:** Use supervision and consultation.

COMPETENCY 2: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1:** Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
- 2.2:** Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers "Code of Ethics" and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work "Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles"
- 2.3:** Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.
- 2.4:** Employ strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

COMPETENCY 3: CRITICAL THINKING

- 3.1:** Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom
- 3.2:** Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.
- 3.3:** Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

COMPETENCY 4: DIVERSITY

- 4.1:** Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.
- 4.2:** Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
- 4.3:** Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.
- 4.4:** Review themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

COMPETENCY 5: SOCIAL JUSTICE

- 5.1:** Understand the forms and mechanisms of privilege, oppression and discrimination

- 5.2:** Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
- 5.3:** Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

COMPETENCY 6: RESEARCH

- 6.1:** Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry.
- 6.2:** Use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 7: HBSE

- 7.1:** Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
- 7.2:** Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

COMPETENCY 8: POLICY PRACTICE

- 8.1:** Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
- 8.2:** Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

COMPETENCY 9: SOCIAL WORK CONTEXTS

- 9.1:** Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.
- 9.2:** Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

COMPETENCY 10: CHANGE PROCESS

ENGAGEMENT

- 10.1:** Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- 10.2:** Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
- 10.3:** Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

ASSESSMENT

- 10.4:** Collect, organize, and interpret client data.
- 10.5:** Assess client strengths and limitations.
- 10.6:** Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
- 10.7:** Select appropriate intervention strategies.

INTERVENTION

- 10.8:** Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals
- 10.9:** Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities
- 10.10:** Help clients resolve problems
- 10.11:** Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
- 10.12:** Facilitate transitions and endings.

EVALUATION/TERMINATION

- 10.13:** Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

2013-2014 Competencies & Advanced Practice Behaviors

COMPETENCY 1: PROFESSIONAL SELF

- 1.1. Demonstrate leadership and professionalism in practice.
- 1.2. Contribute to the professional growth and development of colleagues
- 1.3. Demonstrate knowledge of the Field Placement agency mission, goals, and objectives.
- 1.4. Demonstrate leadership in both collaborative and team building activities.
- 1.5. Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving individual professional practice with and on behalf of client systems.

COMPETENCY 2: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. Possess a working knowledge of the elements of ethical professional social work practice.
- 2.2. Use this knowledge to successfully resolve ethical dilemmas in practice.
- 2.3. Critically assess the congruence of the Field Agency mission and goals with ethical social work principles of practice.
- 2.4. Engage in activities that support Field Placement agency goals and ethical principles.

COMPETENCY 3: CRITICAL THINKING

- 3.1. Articulate a vision for a leadership role in public/tribal organizational program planning and policy development informed by and grounded in organizational theory, policy analysis models, and leadership theory.
- 3.2. Engage in systematic and sustained evaluation of practice using multiple methods including, seeking and effectively using feedback, continuous personal reflection and assessment, and effectively integrating new learning to increase efficacy in needed areas.

COMPETENCY 4: DIVERSITY

- 4.1. Effectively use social work roles with vulnerable and oppressed client systems.
- 4.2. Demonstrate cultural competency in the systematic change process (e.g., intake and assessment, plan development; interventions; evaluation and reassessment; and/or termination) with multilevel systems.

COMPETENCY 5: SOCIAL JUSTICE

- 5.1. Demonstrate an understanding of resource gaps.
- 5.2. Effectively utilize current resources.
- 5.3. Encourage resource enhancement, and/or develop new resources.

COMPETENCY 6: RESEARCH

- 6.1. Provide leadership by conducting empirical research activities designed to shape more effective public/tribal family intervention practices.
- 6.2. Research and assess best-practice interventions using an empowerment and strengths perspective framework.

COMPETENCY 7: INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

7.1. Apply an interdisciplinary orientation in the systematic change process (e.g., intake and assessment, plan development; interventions; evaluation and reassessment; and/or termination) with multi-level systems.

COMPETENCY 8: SOCIAL POLICY

8.1. Provide supporting data for policy changes that enhance family well-being.

8.2. Articulate program and social policy change methods directed at improving conditions for children and families that are based on social work theory and informed by the specialized needs of rural and local communities.

COMPETENCY 9: SERVICE DELIVERY

9.1. Understand and respond to an array of important issues with a specific client system using a systematic, multi-level, change process and intervention approach.

COMPETENCY 10: CHANGE PROCESS

ENGAGEMENT

10.1. Utilize the strengths perspective and a capacity-building approach in the systematic change process with multi-level systems.

ASSESSMENT

10.2. Effectively process record a client contact that demonstrates application of theory to practice.

10.3. Carry out assessment/planning that reflects Social Work practice principles and approaches.

INTERVENTION

10.4. Competently employ interventions that reflect principles and methodologies consistent with social work practice in community-based, family-focused settings, particularly those that reflect practice from an empowerment and strengths-based perspective.

10.5. Appropriately apply such interventions relative to their practice methodology (ADM/ADP).

10.6. Integrate best-practice interventions into the community-based agency setting using an empowerment and strengths perspective framework.

EVALUATION/TERMINATION

10.7. Evaluate impact of best-practice interventions within the community based agency structure using an empowerment and strengths perspective framework.

Advanced Field Seminar Competencies:

- A. Understands and responds to an array of important issues with a specific client system using a systematic, multi-level, change process and intervention approach (e.g. completion of the case presentation assignment).
- B. Effectively process records a client contact that demonstrates application of theory to practice (e.g. completion of the process recording assignment, or the Integrating Theory into Your Agency Practice assignment).

The curriculum depicted in the next chapter reflects the program's mission and goals. It includes the foundation curriculum for students without advanced standing (to be taken by students either without the BSW, or those who enter at least eight years post their BSW) and the advanced curriculum to be taken by all students. Note that the advanced curriculum includes two concentrations, one of which is to be designated as the student's plan of study. Furthermore, a specialization can be determined by each student, which might consist of child welfare or another specific field of practice in which the student would then take elective courses related to this interest.