May 10, 2007

To: Sue Hammersmith, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
From: Mark Everingham, Academic Affairs Council chair
Re: Social Work Program Review Self-Study Report

The Academic Affairs Council completed its evaluation of the Social Work Program Review Self-Study Report submitted in 2006. On May 1, 2007, the AAC engaged Social Work chair Anne Kok in a productive dialogue and received cogent answers to questions about the program.

Social Work’s faculty and staff offer a well-designed program that demonstrates a strong commitment to the intellectual and practical dimensions of understanding and facilitating solutions to complex and deep-rooted social problems in our community. The program is exemplary of interdisciplinarity with 12 required or selected supporting courses from a variety of disciplines. The course Human Behavior in the Social Environment is a requirement that examines how multiple settings and conditions influence human behavior. Additional staff in the past two years has led to a drop in the number of ad hoc course sections.

The assessment plan for the program is well-conceived and robust in its capacity to measure fourteen student learning outcomes and program effectiveness with a variety of classroom-based evaluations and presentations as well as field assessments and experiences. In response to the 2000-01 Program Review, the program developed and added specific indicators and measuring instruments for each of the fourteen Core Competencies. The data in appendix C of the Self-Study Report present a concise and accurate picture of student performance from 2001 to 2005. Social Work reviews the relationship of courses to the core competencies in an effort to improve assessment. The AAC expects this type of diligence to continue.

A concern was raised about negative student feedback in the Graduating Senior Survey (2001-2006) with regard to the perceived ineffectiveness of general education courses in helping to meet proficiency requirements. This result may indicate students comparison of the value of broad general education courses to specific core Social Work courses. Nevertheless, Social Work maintains its commitment to providing its graduates with a broad liberal arts background through rigorous general education requirements and strong student advising. The program is to be commended for the development of a new course in Ethnic Studies in conjunction with the arrival of a new faculty member in 2005. While the course Cross Cultural Diversity and the Helping Professions 280 is popular, Social Work students can take any Ethnic Studies course to satisfy the general education requirement.
The Diversity Mentorship Committee was created to address diversity issues among faculty and students. Unfortunately, the Committee is inactive at this time. The initial focuses were on recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students and review of curricular content. The chair indicated that the recent creation of the Masters of Social Work program draws energy and time away from this effort, but there is a commitment to revive the Committee next year. The program will continue to work with personnel from Human Services agencies in surrounding communities and former Indian reservations. It should be noted that 10 percent of all Social Work students and 13 percent of graduates are minorities, higher than the university as a whole. Also, the newly approved Bachelor of Applied Studies would help recruitment in the area of diversity as well as address declining in numbers of nontraditional students. However, prospective BAS students could not enroll as majors in the Bachelor of Social Work program.

The Child Welfare sequence is a direct response to needs in the region. It requires four additional courses to the BSW degree. The emphasis is characterized by much turnover and burnout because of heavy demands on students. Stipends will be available in 2007-08 for students who work in public child welfare agencies for one year after graduation.

The impact of the Master of Social Work on the Bachelor of Social Work was discussed. While the MSW was not part of the BSW Self-Study Report, the AAC wished to explore this aspect. The MSW requires at least three faculty members to be involved in classes and meetings held at the UW-Fox Valley campus for purposes of accreditation. Travel and teaching related to the MSW has added to the workload of the faculty and staff who must also serve the BSW. The MSW depends heavily on Title IV-E funding, but some courses will be taught on a cost recovery basis starting in summer 2007.

CC: Anne Kok, Social Work chair
    Fritz Erickson, Dean of Professional and Graduate Studies
    Pat Przybelski, Program Associate, Secretary of the Faculty and Academic Staff
    Tim Sewall, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs