To: Dean Scott Furlong

From: Steve Dutch, chair of the Academic Affairs Council

Date: May 24, 2011

Subject: Academic Affairs Council Review of the Masters in Social Work Program

Overview

The Academic Affairs Council received documentation and reviewed the Masters in Social Work Program in the spring of 2011. This is the first AAC review since the program started in 2003. The Academic Program Review Self-Study Report was written and submitted by the department Chair, Professor Judy Martin. After reviewing the report, AAC members invited Professor Martin to answer questions and to elaborate on the current state and future position of their program.

The Masters in Social Work program is a unique collaboration between UW-Green Bay and UW-Oshkosh. The full time program started in 2003 after four years of planning and meetings with both campuses. To meet student needs a part-time program was started in the fall of 2007. The Collaborative MSW Program prepares social workers for leadership in careers of Direct Practice or Administration/Management. The equity principle guides planning and distribution of resources. The part time program is self funded receiving Federal Funding through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, which provides support for students in child welfare to complete their degrees. These funds are distributed equally to both campuses. The full time program is funded through undergraduate 102 funds. Half of the courses are offered by UW-Green Bay faculty and the other half are offered by UW-Oshkosh faculty. The credits offered are split between the two campuses with three full time faculty from UW-Green Bay and three full-time faculty from UW-Oshkosh. Half of each incoming student group is assigned to each campus, and courses have students from both campuses in them. The assignment is purely for purposes of sharing enrollment counts and has no practical impact on the students. Courses and meetings are held at UW-Fox Valley which is a central meeting point between the two campuses. Administration of the program is shared, with each campus trading leadership every 4 years. There is an “oversight” committee which includes equal representation from each campus. This committee serves as the “executive” committee responsible for generating policy and programmatic changes. The Program recently received accreditation for 8 years by the Council on Social Work and Education.

Upon graduation students are eligible to take a licensure exam to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Goals are organized in six program themes: public sector practice, leadership roles, family focus, diversity, rural emphasis, and interdisciplinary cooperation. The program is competency based and has 14 foundational competencies for beginning first year students and 14 advanced competencies for advanced second year students. These competencies are sprinkled throughout the courses. Applicants having a BSW degree from an accredited program are admitted into the advanced cohort. Other applicants are admitted into the foundational cohort. The program offers a full-time curriculum which can be completed in
two calendar years for students entering at the foundation level or one year for students entering at the advanced level. A part-time program is also available, which can be completed in nine semesters for students entering at the foundation level or five semesters for students entering at the advanced level. Students entering the Foundation Program complete the part-time option in four years.

The Collaborative MSW Program offers students a choice of two concentrations as part of the Advanced Curriculum: Advanced Direct Practice and Administration/Management. Concentration courses are taken within the advanced curriculum. The curriculum of the MSW is also divided into foundational and advanced courses. For program applicants who do not have a BSW degree completed within the last eight years, 60 credits are required for graduation. This includes a 28-credit two-semester foundation curriculum (fall and spring), and a 32-credit three-semester advanced curriculum. Applicants who have completed a BSW degree within the last eight years receive advanced standing and recognition for having completed all foundation requirements. Competencies are written for both the foundational and advanced tracks. There are 14 foundational competencies and 14 advanced competencies. Student evaluation is structured around the competencies (foundation competencies for beginning students and advanced competencies for advanced students). The MSW Program Competencies provide a structure for the curriculum and guidance for student learning in the classroom and in the field.

All students are required to take 12 credits of required advanced course work. In addition, Advanced Direct Practice students are required to take 6 credits of required course work and 6 credits of additional electives. Administration/Management students are required to take 9 credits of required course work and 3 credits of additional electives. Eight credits of the advanced curriculum are associated with a field practicum in which students practice as social workers in a supervised field setting, with either advanced direct practice or with administrative responsibilities.

Program Accomplishments

The MSW program is highly successful. It was accredited in 2010 for 8 years by the Council on Social Work and Education. Each year twice as many applicants apply for admission as places are available. Currently there is a full student body of 90 students. The program functions effectively and graduates 30-35 MSW students each year. About 80 percent of program graduates are hired in Wisconsin in the social work field within three months of graduation. Many are hired at their field practicum agencies. Others remain with the agencies that employed them during their graduate studies, where they are better prepared for promotions upon graduation.

Using the foundational and advanced competencies as criteria, student satisfaction with courses and the program on a four point scale is consistently rated three or above. Students feel the curriculum is cohesive with no competition between campuses noted. The MSW program has strong presence in the community. The community provides leadership and guidance for Program development though the Community Advisory Committee. Continued successful collaboration between the two campuses needs to be noted. The program's goal is
to educate professionals ready to assume leadership roles within this region's increasingly diverse and transforming rural and metropolitan environments.

To meet student needs a part-time program was started in the fall of 2007. Students entering the Foundation Program complete the part-time option in four years. Students entering the Advanced Standing curriculum complete the part-time option in two years. The MSW meets the needs of advanced practitioners and social service agencies in the region

**Program Strengths**

A major strength of the program is the collaboration itself. The way the curriculum and leadership are shared is a strength of the Program. Admission to the Program is seamless. The faculty and leadership are strong and there is no problem in teaching courses according to periodicity. The program's website is informative and easy to navigate. Faculty are exploring use of new technologies such as Second Life. The program uses Facebook to communicate with students. Students of color are higher than the general University. The collaborative MSW program faculty are proud of their enormous and successful effort to develop and implement a substantial program, fully accredited.

**Areas that need improvement**

The areas of concentration are well laid out; however there are only few students in the Administration/management concentration. Advising is an issue; some students are satisfied and seek out advising, while other students do not seek out advising and are therefore not satisfied. At the present time the program offers courses face to face and hybrid format. There are plans to develop some (but not all) fully on-line courses. At present seven classes have been approved for fully on-line development to meet the needs of students who are currently driving two hours each way to attend class. Diversity of faculty continues to be a problem.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

The MSW program is highly successful with a well developed sense of direction and identity. It is an evolving program that is secure in its position in the state and communities that it serves. 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 and metropolitan environments. The MSW Program Competencies provide a structure for the curriculum and guidance for student learning in the classroom and in the field.

**Recommendations**

1. Continue to work on increasing the diversity of the faculty and students
2. Continue to work effectively in collaboration with UW-Oshkosh
3. Increase enrollment in the Administrative/Management concentration
4. Explore use of on-line teaching formats
5. Consider offering “starter” courses in remote areas