

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability

NO.: AAC 09-18

COMMITTEE DATE: May 29, 2009

BOARD DATE: June 4, 2009

WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE
Master of Social Work

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Westfield State College** to award the **Master of Social Work**.

Upon graduating the first class for this program, Westfield State College shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Dr. Francesca Purcell, Associate Commissioner for Academic and P-16 Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Westfield State College

Master of Social Work

INTENT AND MISSION

In April 2009, Westfield State College (WSC) submitted an expedited proposal to offer a Master of Social Work (MSW). The proposed MSW program intends to prepare advanced level social work practitioners who have specialized knowledge and clinical skills for working with children and families that are based on a firm generalist foundation. The proposed program seeks to prepare students for positions as clinical social workers, clinical case managers, school social workers, child welfare workers, and clinical social workers. The program will prepare graduates for licensure in the Commonwealth as Licensed Certified Social Workers (LCSW) and ultimate licensure as Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW).

The proposed MSW grows out of the currently-offered Bachelor of Social Work that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Presently, the passing rate for BSW graduates for the state social work license exam for bachelor's level social workers is 100 percent. The proposed program intends to achieve similar success rates for its graduates. Based on the Commonwealth licensing requirements, the proposed MSW will seek CSWE accreditation.

Both WSC and the profession of social work focus on social responsibility and social justice, the importance of working to improve communities and the importance of intellectual development of the individual. Further, the proposed program is in line with the College's strategic plan, which includes an objective to "design new programs which develop the knowledge base, skills and sensibilities to be educated citizens and which are responsive to student and community needs and interests."

The required Letter of Intent was circulated March 24, 2009. No comments in response were received. The Westfield State College board of trustees approved the proposed Master of Social Work on February 12, 2009.

NEED AND DEMAND

Need

Despite national economic uncertainties, there is still a documented need for social workers in the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Division of Unemployment recently reported:

Education and Health Services has continued to show modest job growth throughout this recessionary environment. Employment edged up by 100 in March but has increased 3,800 over the first quarter of 2009. Health Care and Social Assistance alone accounted for 3,000 new jobs over the first quarter. At 647,100, Education and Health Services jobs are up 10,500 or 1.6 percent from one year ago, the only private sector to add jobs over the year. Health Care and Social Assistance added 9,200 new jobs, while Educational Services were up 1,300 from one year ago. (Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Workforce Development, Division of Unemployment Assistance, April 16, 2009, news release)

The proposed program will address a shortage in child welfare workers in the state, and upcoming strains on the work force that will be created by implementation of the Children's Behavioral Health Care Initiative (CBHI). The CBHI is a Department of Health initiative to increase and improve mental health service delivery to children statewide and is on track to start this summer (June 8, 2009). Projections are that this program will create approximately 2,000 to 3,500 new jobs for social work professionals in the Commonwealth.

The proposed program also seeks to respond to the need for current employees to retool and/or to gain more advanced skills for the workforce. *The Boston Globe* reported that during the current fiscal crisis, there have been increases in applications to graduate schools in the Boston area (*The Boston Globe*, 10/12/08). The MSW program proposed at WSC is designed to address workforce preparation as it is designed for both part-time and full-time completion, for the employed and the unemployed. The program is also designed for those in the social work field and those who wish to make a career change and enter the profession of social work. Additionally, although the BSW degree is a common entry degree, the MSW has become the standard for advanced practice and supervisory or administrative jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics quoted in Eduventures report, Number 261CPECRR0308). Specific to Massachusetts, Department of Children and Families employees who wish to advance in the system need a master's degree to be a supervisor and a master's degree is preferred for internal promotion. Thus, the proposed program will provide students with the training to further their careers in social work.

On the national level, the need for new social workers will rise based on the aging of the profession. In 2003, the National Association of Social Workers reported that the median age of social workers nationally was 50, that 73 percent of the profession was over 43, and that 39 percent were over 53. The aging of the social work profession will place a strain on the entire social-work workforce over the next 20 years.

The Alliance for Children and Families in their 2006 report titled, "Child Welfare Workforce: Implications for the Private Nonprofit Sector," drew the following as one of their conclusions about the current workforce issues:

The schools of social work on which the field currently relies for needed child welfare professionals do not graduate sufficient numbers to meet workforce needs. In some cases, the schools produce staff who do not have a long term commitment to child welfare work. The public and private child welfare systems must continue to work with the schools of social work to produce staff with the right competencies to do the job, and also seek other innovative workforce strategies to attract people to the field.

Demand

Members of BSW advisory board expressed a need in the WSC geographic area for an MSW. To evaluate the accuracy of this perception, a survey was conducted with program alumni and current WSC BSW students. (The alumni data are based on 70 respondents out of the 98 graduates the program has accurate email addresses for, or a 71.4 percent response rate. The current student data are based on a survey emailed to all current social work majors at WSC. Of 115 majors who were accessible by email, 81 responded for a response rate of 70.4 percent.)

Of the surveyed alumni, 70 percent have not gone on for a graduate degree. Of that group, 76 percent are considering attending school for an MSW degree. Of those considering an MSW, 89 percent report a clear interest in returning to WSC for an MSW. Of the 10 percent who were not interested in coming to WSC, the most common reason was that they presently live in the eastern part of the state. Of the alumni who have received an MSW, 100 percent report that they would have considered WSC for their graduate education if WSC offered an MSW.

Of the surveyed current students, 46 percent would like to pursue an MSW immediately upon graduation with their BSW, 36 percent see themselves pursuing an MSW within two years of graduation, and 12 percent see continuing their education but are not sure when. Of those who are interested in pursuing an MSW, 95 percent would be interested in completing an MSW at WSC. Again, the most common reason for not being interested is geographic location.

In May 2009, the baccalaureate program will graduate 36 seniors and an additional 42 seniors in May 2010. The Social Work graduates from WSC combined with the graduates from Psychology who frequently pursue an MSW will provide a clear pool of applicants. Beyond this pool, Sociology and Criminal Justice graduates often pursue MSW degrees, and local agencies, including DCF, have employees interested in pursuing advanced education in social work.

There are eight MSW programs in the state of Massachusetts. Bridgewater State and Salem State Colleges offer MSW programs. The other six programs are at private colleges. Two private MSW programs are located in the western part of Massachusetts. The remaining six programs, including the two programs at Massachusetts state colleges, are located east of Interstate 495 in the Greater Boston area. At this time slightly less than 25 percent of all MSWs graduate from programs outside of the greater Boston area, and neither program in the western region specializes in practice with children and families.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

To apply to the proposed MSW program, applicants must submit :

- a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university that includes a liberal arts base and a firm foundation in the social sciences, government, and human biology. (Students who do not meet this requirement may be accepted into the program but will be required to take courses to meet these requirements prior to starting the program. To apply for Advanced Standing, the candidate must have a BSW from a CSWE-accredited program.)
- a 2.8 overall undergraduate G.P.A. (For advanced standing candidates, the applicant should also have a 3.0 social work GPA.)
- scores from the Miller Analogies Test or the Graduate Record Examination.
- a completed Graduate Admission form, specifying MSW program.
- three letters of reference completed, including one academic reference. (Advanced Standing applicants need to have one of their letters of reference from their BSW Program Director. A letter from their Field Placement Supervisor is highly recommended.)
- a personal statement

The BSW program at WSC enrolls approximately 18 percent students of color while in the overall college, 8 percent are students of color. An affordable MSW, building on an undergraduate social work program that has a proven track record of promoting diversity, intends to continue to respond to the needs of underrepresented and underserved groups.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

	# of Students Year 1	# of Students Year 2	# of Students Year 3	# of Students Year 4*
New Full Time	26	26	26	26
Continuing Full Time	0	24	12	12
New Part Time	13	26	26	26
Continuing Part Time	0	12	36	48
Totals	39 (33.5 FTE)	88 (69 FTE)	100 (69 FTE)	112 (75 FTE)

CURRICULUM (Attachment A)

The proposed curriculum requires 20 courses (66 credit hours) and will consist of two parts. The first part is designed to give students a generalist practice foundation that is common to all social work programs and required by CSWE. The foundation curriculum includes eight courses and a 400-hour hands-on practicum. The course work includes research, human behavior and the social environment, diversity and social justice, social policy, and generalist practice.

The second part of the curriculum is designed to give students advanced knowledge, values, and skills for practice with families and children. The advanced curriculum includes required classroom work, two electives, and a 500-hour hands-on practicum. Students who have completed a BSW from a CSWE-accredited program can apply for advanced standing to start the program in the second year after completing a summer bridge course. The advanced courses include mental health, child welfare policy, advanced clinical practice, and two electives.

The proposed program is designed to be completed in two years full-time or four years part-time. Building upon the technologies used to improve the delivery of the BSW curriculum and make the program more accessible for students, the proposed MSW program will be offered through a combination of traditional face-to-face classes, hybrid classes (part face-to-face and part online) and fully online classes. Presently, the BSW program offers two classes—Introduction to Social Work and Research—in a totally online format, and has integrated a number of technologies into most other courses, such as online discussion boards and chat rooms. The proposed MSW program also plans to use this technology and take advantage of audio and video technology that allows faculty to pre-record lectures and make other video information available.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET (Attachment B)

Faculty and Administration. The social work program currently has four full-time faculty and three adjunct faculty who are qualified to teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. To staff a BSW program and an MSW program with sufficient faculty to

meet the CSWE accreditation recommendations, Westfield State College will hire six additional faculty over a two-year period of time. When fully staffed, the program will have a full-time faculty of 10, who can teach across both programs. Specifically, a minimum of six will have a majority of their appointment in the MSW program and a minimum of two with a majority of their appointment in the BSW program. There will be approximately six part-time faculty.

The MSW program will be housed in the newly created Department of Social Work at WSC. The Department will be the home for both the BSW program and the MSW program. Each program will have its own director who reports to the department chair. The field component of both programs will be managed by a single field coordinator. The role of this person will be to develop and oversee all practicum sites and to place all students. The Department of Social Work will need a full-time secretary (which will be funded by program revenues), and future clerical needs will be assessed as the program is developed and becomes operational.

Library. In the last accreditation review by CSWE, the social work collections in the Governor Joseph B. Ely Library were found appropriate with the following comment “(e)lectronic holdings appear to be impressive.” The Library also offers in-print book and journal holdings available to students and faculty that are supplemented by electronic holdings. The Library has access to the electronic search engines, *Social Work Abstracts Plus* and *Social Service Abstracts*, for student and faculty use. Beyond holdings, the library staff aid students in their searches and use of library facilities. Westfield State College is expanding acquisitions to include the MSW program and feedback from CSWE during the initial accreditation process. Over \$16,000 for this purpose is included in the four-year budget.

Physical Resources. The proposed MSW program will have the appropriate office classroom space to implement the program. Each faculty will have a private office, as required by CSWE, as well as office space for administrative staff. The faculty will be housed together, have access to a conference room, as well as ample classroom facilities near their offices. Physical space will be provided by September 1, 2009.

Advisory Board. The Social Work Program presently has an advisory board for the BSW program. This board is represented by area social workers, college representatives, student representatives, past graduates and program faculty. The board has provided oversight and long-range planning for the program. The board will be expanded and provide advisory services regarding both the BSW program and new MSW program.

Field Resources. The proposed MSW program at Westfield State College will require students to complete two practicums. As per accreditation requirements, the first-year practicum will be a generalist placement, and the second-year practicum will be a specialized practicum for work with children and families. The BSW program has relationships with many area agencies and schools that are interested in additionally taking on graduate practicum students from Westfield State College, including the following:

Bay State Medical Center
Enfield, Connecticut

Educational Resources for Children
Springfield, MA

Behavioral Health Network,
Child Guidance Clinic
Springfield, Massachusetts

Bellamy Middle School
Chicopee, Massachusetts

Brightside for Families and Children
West Springfield, Massachusetts

The Care Center
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Catholic Charities
Springfield, Massachusetts

Carson Center
Westfield, Massachusetts

Center of Hope
Southbridge, Massachusetts

The Center School
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Children's Program,
Center for Human Development
Springfield, Massachusetts

Community Resources for People
with Autism
Easthampton, Massachusetts

Connecticut Children's Place
East Windsor, Connecticut

Crocker Farm Elementary School
Amherst, Massachusetts

Department of Children and Families,
Massachusetts
Holyoke, East Springfield, Springfield,
Pittsfield, and Worcester

Department of Youth Services,
Western Area Office
Springfield, Massachusetts

HAP (Holyoke Alternative Program)
Holyoke Middle School
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Holyoke Hospital, Center for
Behavioral Health
Holyoke, Massachusetts

John Ashley School
West Springfield, Massachusetts

Kelly Elementary School
West Springfield, Massachusetts

Pittsfield Schools
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Providence Behavioral Health
Hospital
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Shriner's Hospital
Springfield, Massachusetts

West Springfield School
West Springfield, Massachusetts

Westfield High School
Westfield, Massachusetts

Westfield Infant & Toddlers
Westfield, Massachusetts

Westfield Public Schools
Westfield, Massachusetts

Westfield Public Schools
Westfield, Massachusetts

Fiscal. The College submitted a budget for the proposed program indicating that revenues will begin to exceed expenses starting in year two. A copy of the budget is attached as Appendix B.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Westfield submitted goals and objectives for the proposed Master of Social Work as follows:

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
1. Provide graduate level social workers trained to work with children and families to Massachusetts workforce.	Enroll 24 full-time and 12 part-time students for the first year	Develop marketing plan for program utilizing current students, program graduates, and area agencies.	Spring 2009-summer 2009
	Enroll 24 full-time and 24 part-time students annually, starting the second year.	Track program retention and completion rates.	Starting fall 2010 and ongoing
	Graduate 92% of students who start the program	Develop support mechanism to aid retention.	Starting fall 2010 and ongoing
	Expect 80% of graduates to find employment in Massachusetts	Track program graduates initial job search and state licensing success rate.	Starting May 2012 and ongoing
2. Obtain CSWE accreditation	Be granted candidacy in February 2011	Follow accreditation time lines outlined by CSWE for completion of each step toward accreditation	Starting January 2010 and ongoing
	Be granted initial accreditation by February 2014		
3. Assess program competencies and adjust program as needed	Develop program evaluation plan that meets CSWE accreditation requirements	Utilizing the program evaluation plan used by our CSWE-accredited BSW program. A matching plan will be designed.	Spring 2010
	Expand Advisory Board to include MSW support for program feed back	Develop expansion plan with current advisory board that includes addition of new board members and program evaluation	Spring 2010
	Develop departmental assessment committee	A departmental assessment committee will be formed to oversee program evaluation, including data analysis	Fall 2010

4. Monitor faculty effectiveness	All faculty evaluated as outlined in the collective bargain agreements.	Student class evaluations will be completed as contractually required Peer and department chair evaluations will be completed as contractually required.	Starting fall 2010 Starting fall 2010
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EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The proposed program was reviewed by Dr. Terry Singer, Dean of the Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky; and Professor Robert Rivas, Department of Social Work, Siena College. Both reviewers were favorably impressed with the proposed program, stating that the MSW will respond to an emerging regional workforce need and that the curriculum and other program features are aligned with Council on Social Work Education accrediting standards. One reviewer stated, “An excellent accredited undergraduate program provides the base for this program, as well as the presence of a seasoned social work educator at the helm.”

The reviewers recommended that the program track the foundational and advanced-level courses learning objectives, hire faculty who can support the advanced curriculum components related to children and families, plan for workload differentials between undergraduate and graduate faculty, and provide the necessary space and physical requirements required for accreditation.

In its institutional response, the College outlined actions taken or in progress in accordance with each review report recommendation. The College is designing methods for assessing the program competencies and course objectives, with input from the Council on Social Work Education, such that faculty will be able to assess the foundational and advanced levels of the program. The six new faculty hired will meet the MSCA contractual requirements for service, scholarship and advising and will be able to teach across both the BSW and MSW programs. Faculty will be hired with the following areas of teaching expertise: human behavior and social environment, clinical practice with children and families, applied social work research methods, social welfare policy analysis with expertise in child welfare programs, generalist social work practice, and human diversity. Finally, the College committed to providing the proposed program with the necessary space by September 1, 2009.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Board staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Westfield State College and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the Master of Social Work.

Upon graduating the first class for this program, WSC shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources and program effectiveness.

ATTACHMENT A: CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total number of courses required=18)		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
	Foundation Curriculum	
SOCW 0511	Research 1	3
SOCW 0512	Research 2	3
SOCW 0521	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) I	3
SOCW 0522	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) II	3
SOCW 0523	Diversity and Social Justice	3
SOCW 0531	Social Welfare Policy Analysis	3
SOCW 0541	Generalist Practice I	3
SOCW 0542	Generalist Practice II	3
SOCW 0561	Foundation Practicum I	4
SOCW 0562	Foundation Practicum II	4
	Advanced Curriculum (plus two electives)	
SOCW 0621	Mental Health and Children	3
SOCW 0622	Mental Health and Adulthood	3
SOCW 0631	Child Welfare Policy	3
SOCW 0641	Advanced Practice I: Child and Youth	3
SOCW 0642	Advanced Practice II: Adults	3
SOCW 0643	Advanced Practice III: Family	3
SOCW 0661	Advanced Practicum I	5
SOCW 0662	Advanced Practicum II	5
	Subtotal Number Core Credits Required	60
Elective Course Choices (Total courses required=2) (Attach list of choices if needed)		
SOCW 0543	Advanced Standing Bridge Course	3
SOCW 0652	School Social Work	3
SOCW 0652	Substance Abuse Treatment	3
SOCW 0699	Special Topics in Social Work	3
	Subtotal Number Elective Credits Required	6
Curriculum Summary		
Total Number of Courses Required for Degree		20
Total Credit Hours Required for Degree		66
Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:		
Students accepted into the Advanced Standing Program complete SOCW 0543 and then complete the Advanced Curriculum		

ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET

One Time/Startup Costs		Annual Expenses			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Cost Categories				
	Full-Time Faculty (Salary and Fringe)		\$235,840	\$490,547	\$510,169
	Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary and Fringe)	\$19,392	\$20,168	\$20,974	\$29,364
	Staff (Salary and Fringe)	\$23,450	\$46,900	\$48,776	\$50,727
	General Administrative Costs (DGCE overhead costs)		\$65,000	\$138,000	\$138,000
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions		\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000
	New Computers for New Faculty and Staff	\$1,500	\$6,000	\$6,000	
	Faculty Search Expenses	\$4,200	\$4,200		
	Marketing	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
\$2,000	Other (Specify) DHE review and CSWE Accreditation Costs	\$9,575	\$4,000	\$7,200	\$7,400
\$2,000	TOTALS	\$59,117	\$389,108	\$718,998	\$743,660

One Time/Startup Support		Annual Income			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Revenue Sources				
	Grants				
	Tuition		\$101,270	\$228,228	\$237,353
	Fees		\$234,520	\$528,528	\$549,665
	Departmental				
	Reallocated Funds				
	Other (specify)				
	TOTALS	\$0	\$335,790	\$756,756	\$787,017