

Report of the Program Review Committee: School of Social Work

Site Visit: May 20-21, 1997

10/15/97

Submitted by:

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I. Committee Charge and Review Process

The Review Committee was appointed in February 1997 and given the charge to "assess the quality of the three degree programs and provide the faculty with constructive suggestions for strengthening the programs." Members of the Review Committee were provided with the School's Self-Study which described: (a) the degree programs for the BASW, MSW, and Ph.D. in Social Welfare, (b) supporting program documents, (c) faculty curricula vitae, (d) summaries of Graduate School Exit Questionnaires for recipients of the MSW and Ph.D. degrees, Graduate School Representative reports for recent general and final Ph.D. exams, and summary data on budget sources, use of instructional resources, and characteristics of undergraduate and graduate degrees. These materials were reviewed by the members of the Committee prior to the site visit. In March 1997 the on-campus reviewers met with the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Dean for Undergraduate Education, and Dean of the School of Social Work for an overview of and orientation to the review process.

Prior to the site visit, the on-campus reviewers met and identified additional material that was needed from, and subsequently provided by the School. The committee, in conjunction with the Graduate School and Dean of the School of Social Work, formulated an interview schedule (Attachment A) for the site visit. Interviews were scheduled with faculty and staff holding administrative or leadership positions in the school, key committees of the School (curriculum committees, diversity committee, practicum advisory council), students in each degree program, and separate meetings with faculty holding research appointments and those appointed as assistant professors.

The site visit was held at the School of Social Work on May 20-21, 1997. With the exception of the interviews with two student groups, all interviews were conducted with all members of the Review Committee present. Interviews with the BASW and MSW students were conducted concurrently with two review committee members present for each meeting. To encourage their participation, students were invited to lunch to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the School of Social Work's programs. The Committee was also interested in the perception of the School by members of the community; this perspective was represented by members of the Practicum Advisory Council who are predominantly involved in social work practice in the community.

Interviews focused on gathering the perceptions of each group about the major strengths, challenges and problems of the School. Additional specifically targeted questions were intended to validate or clarify issues identified in the Committee's review of materials submitted prior to the site visit, or to follow-up on issues or themes identified in the course of the site visit.

At the conclusion of the site visit, an exit interview was held including members of the Review Committee, the Dean and Associate Deans of the School of Social Work, the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education. At this time the Committee chair summarized the key themes identified by the Committee, including

areas of strength, challenge, and preliminary recommendations. Following this meeting the Review Committee met in Executive Session to plan for preparation of the final report.

II. Findings

A. Overall Quality of the Program and its Faculty

The University of Washington School of Social Work began with the establishment of the MSW Program in 1934. Today, the School is highly regarded nationally; it was ranked 6th among social work education programs by US News and World Report (1994) and among the top 10 in terms of scholarly and research productivity. The School became an independent professional school in 1958; the undergraduate program in social welfare (BASW) was created in 1959, and the first class of Ph.D. students was admitted in 1975. The School currently offers three degrees, the BASW, the MSW, and the Ph.D. The demand for each of these programs exceeds capacity. In general, program graduates are in high demand by employers and are functioning in positions consistent with their respective program goals.

The BASW program prepares graduates for entry level, generalist social work practice and for graduate education. Students are admitted after completing a minimum of 65 college level credits. In response to budget cuts, the size of the program was reduced by 50% in 1981 and in 1996 admission was changed from twice to once a year to reduce administrative burden. Approximately 55 students are admitted annually, with the acceptance rate averaging 45%. About 50-60 BASW degrees are awarded annually. Attrition after admission averages 15%. Based on a recent alumni survey (with an acknowledged low response rate), approximately 41% of graduates hold social work positions and an additional 15% were enrolled in graduate education. In the Committee's interviews, it was also noted that a substantial number of graduates leave the social work profession for other occupations. While some faculty expressed concern about the loss to the profession, others believed that this outcome was a positive one, bringing the values and goals of social work and social welfare into other professions and occupations.

The MSW program prepares graduates for advanced social work practice with the poor and oppressed in the contexts of both public agencies and private non-profit settings. The majority of students enter the full-time, "day" program which averages 7 quarters in length. In 1981 the school started an evening program which allows part-time study for the first two years to promote access to a more diverse student body; time to degree averages 11 quarters. In addition, the School offers an "advanced standing" program whereby qualified recent (within 5 years) graduates of an accredited social work baccalaureate program may complete the MSW in three quarters of full-time academic work. The program is built upon a set of foundational courses (which may be waived for advanced standing students) that provide the basis for advanced work in one of four areas of concentration: Children, Youth and Families; Health and Mental Health; Multi-Ethnic Practice; Social Work Administration. The evening program offers only one concentration, Children, Youth and Families. The acceptance rate for the MSW program

is 33%; 118-136 students are admitted annually and 121-137 MSW degrees have been awarded in each of three recent years, with a low attrition rate of 4%. Alumni surveys conducted 6-9 months following graduation consistently indicate that 90% are employed, with over 75% employed in public and private non-profit positions, consistent with the program's goals. Employer evaluations of graduates is good to excellent and has improved over the past decade.

The Ph D program prepares graduates for leadership positions in teaching, research, administration and policy analysis and for the advancement of knowledge and practice in social work and social welfare. Each year 8-10 students are admitted to the program, with an acceptance rate of 33%; 5-7 degrees are awarded annually. Average time to degree is 17.8 quarters (4.4 years), which is similar to other programs in related fields. The external reviewers validated that the doctoral program is highly regarded nationally, and its graduates are sought nationally for academic positions; a recent alumni survey indicated that 92% of the graduates obtained the kind of position they sought upon graduation, with 73% of those in academic settings and the majority of the remainder in administrative and research consultation roles. A 1992 study of the productivity of social work doctoral graduates ranked this School second for papers published in peer-reviewed social work journals. This empirical evidence suggests that the program is achieving its stated outcomes. The MSW and BASW programs were reviewed and reaccredited by the Council on Social Work Education in Spring 1997.

There is a strong emphasis on research and scholarship in the School of Social Work. The School receives more grants from NIH than any other social work program in the country, including the recent NIMH funding of a Social Work Research Development Center, one of five funded nationally. The amount of external funding for research and training has increased from less than \$3 million/year in 1988 to over \$8.9 million in 1996. A relatively small proportion of the faculty are currently externally funded for research; according to the self-study report, 7 tenure track and 5 non-tenure track faculty are partially or fully funded by grants. However, according to the external reviewers, among schools of social work, nationally, this program is viewed as one of the pacesetters for research in social work. This forms a strong base of support for graduate education.

The strength of the Dean and the faculty is recognized within the University and nationally. The School has 40.25 FTE state-funded faculty positions; 39 hold Graduate Faculty appointments and 84% hold a Ph D. or DSW degree. In addition, 5 doctorally prepared faculty hold research appointments and are PIs or Co-PIs on extramurally funded projects. Additional faculty resources include part-time, state-supported teaching faculty and 177 clinical and affiliate faculty who serve as practicum instructors. The School also employs 21.70 FTE support staff. The Dean as well as other faculty are visible among the social work profession and provide national leadership to the development of the profession and especially for increasing the scholarly and research base of social work practice. Faculty serve on national research review panels and as editors and reviewers for major journals.

B. Special Program Strengths/Innovations/Challenges

1. Emphasis on multiculturalism and cultural competence

Faculty: strengths. The School of Social Work has been recognized within the University and among Schools of Social Work nationally for its commitment to and success in preparing graduates for effective practice in a multicultural and diverse society. Attributes of the program which support this emphasis include active efforts to promote diversity among the faculty and student bodies and curricular programs which emphasize cultural competence.

Currently 45% of the tenure track faculty are women and 24% are faculty of color. Of the 37 tenure track faculty hired since 1986, 70% have been women and 30% faculty of color. The School's record for hiring minority and women faculty exceeds the overall University performance in every category and exceeds the CSEW average in percentages of women, American Indians and Asian Americans. Women and faculty of color are also well represented among the 7 major administrative positions in the School. In the past decade the School received new or supplemental funding from the Provost's office to hire four faculty members of color and funding for loaned or bridge positions for five faculty members of color. Other incentives have included summer salary support for Assistant Professors of color, TA support, computer equipment, and research assistant support. The School was also able to recruit and hire two faculty specializing in practice with gay, lesbian and bisexual populations.

Faculty: challenges Retention of faculty of underrepresented groups is a major challenge. In the past decade, among faculty promoted and/or tenured, 25% were faculty of color and 43% were women. No women or faculty of color have been denied promotion or tenure in the past decade, although the position of one American Indian faculty member was recently successfully converted into a non-tenure track position prior to a tenure decision. The School's success in hiring and nurturing faculty of color has been, to some extent, a factor impacting its retention statistics, as promising Assistant Professors have been recruited away to peer institutions such as the University of Michigan, UCLA and the University of North Carolina. In the past five years, four tenure-track women faculty of color have been lost to other institutions. Two additional women faculty of color have been successfully retained through competitive offers supported by the Provost's Office. The School is meeting these challenges by actively discussing and developing strategies to increase retention of faculty of color in its Diversity and Executive Committees. These recommendations include review of teaching evaluations, as well as of equities related to internal service, in terms of rank, gender, race and sexual orientation and, strengthening senior faculty mentoring of junior faculty, and improving integration of new faculty into ongoing funded research activities.

Students. strengths. The commitment to a diverse student body is evident in favorable statistics for representation of students of color within the School's undergraduate and graduate programs. In recent years, 40-50% of the BASW student population were students of color, compared with 31% in other UW undergraduate programs. In the most recent year, 32% of the

students in the MSW day program and 37% of students in the MSW evening program were students of color. Among all graduate students, 29% in the School of Social Work were students of color and 80% were women, compared, respectively, with 16% and 49% of graduate students in the University. Initiatives such as the Students of Color Network and the Bridge program evidence success in retention of students of color admitted to the MSW program. Financial aid awards also support recruitment and retention of students of color.

Alumni and employer feedback also supports the strength of the School in the area of preparing students for practice with diverse populations. Employers of BASW students reported they believed students were particularly well prepared to work with diverse, at-risk populations. One area of concentration in the MSW program is focused on Multi-Ethnic Practice; over 60% of the 1995 graduates reported they were very or extremely well prepared to work with "diverse clients, colleagues, and community members.

Students: challenges Several challenges face the School in this area. Retention of outstanding faculty from underrepresented groups will be an ongoing problem associated with the School's recruitment success. As other units on campus begin to make progress in this area competition for use of central university resources for competitive offers and faculty support will become greater and it is likely that the School will be expected to assume more responsibility internally for these initiatives. The School and faculty are already and will be increasingly called upon to serve as expert resources to others on enhancing diversity and multiculturalism. Resources to enable this outreach while not overburdening faculty, especially those of color, will need to be developed; the School should consider future UIF proposals as one source of support for this activity. The major emphasis of the School has been on increasing gender and ethnic diversity of the faculty and students, attention is now appropriately expanding toward other types of diversity such as disability, sexual preference, and age. As the student body becomes more diverse and brings differing backgrounds and levels of preparation to their degree programs, attention will need to be paid to providing a range of learning opportunities which meet the needs of students with limited academic background as well as those needing increased rigor. This appears to be most critical in the MSW program with its three concurrent admission pathways.

2. Research scholarship

Strengths The School has demonstrated an impressive growth in extramural funding for research within the past decade, from less than \$3 million per year in 1988 to over \$8.9 million in 1996. This increase is due in part to the recent funding of an NIMH Social Work Prevention Research Center Grant to foster the research capabilities of faculty and doctoral students whose interests are related to the prevention of mental illness. This Center is a major asset to the School and should enable faculty and students to leverage funding from other sources. A predoctoral research training grant was under review at the time of the site visit; if awarded, this will similarly enhance the research productivity of the School.

The faculty enjoy support from a variety of intramural and extramural funding sources which is also a source of strength. Collaborative interdisciplinary efforts are strong, as illustrated by the Social Development Research Group, headed by Professors Hawkins and Catalano, which includes an interdisciplinary team of more than 40 faculty and staff to conduct research in prevention science. Major projects address significant social concerns including mental health, AIDS/HIV, interpersonal violence, adolescent fertility, and multicultural research.

Challenges The challenge facing the School will be to continue to support and develop the research productivity and the school. Several areas of potential challenge were evident to the Review Committee: a) to balance individual investigator initiatives with the need to make scientific contributions in areas of importance to society and the profession, such as multiculturalism and social policy outcomes research, b) to maintain excellence and productivity of key investigators while increasing the proportion of the total faculty active in research, c) to develop funding sources for research ideas not likely to be funded from large, federal sources such as pilot work, qualitative and descriptive studies, and d) to provide an infrastructure within the School, including staff support, intramural funding, and bridge funding for research faculty, to meet the inevitable demands which accompany research growth in a unit.

3. Commitment to Academic Excellence and Enhancing Instructional Quality

The commitment of the faculty and administration of the School to academic excellence was evident throughout the visit. During the past decade all degree programs have undergone significant curricular revision to better achieve desired outcomes and to meet changing societal needs. Evidence is clear that each degree program is of high quality, program outcomes are being achieved, and both graduates and employers are satisfied with the program outcomes.

Recent efforts have emphasized enhancement of instructional quality. Teaching is a valued component of faculty workload, instructional competence is part of the Dean's annual evaluation of faculty and is considered in the evaluation of faculty for merit salary increases. The various curriculum committees have provided leadership in working with faculty on the improvement of teaching through discussions of grading, standards, feedback on writing assignments, etc. Practicum instructors have also been included in instructional enhancement efforts including working with students of diverse cultural groups. The Committee was particularly impressed with an initiative in the doctoral program, "Preparing Future Faculty," which provides teaching preparation content, workshops, and practicum experience in teaching for doctoral students.

The meaning of academic excellence was discussed throughout the site visit, and the School will be faced with ongoing redefinition of excellence for each degree program in terms of program outcomes. For example, is it desirable for a large number of BASW graduates to move into non-social work fields following graduation? What will drive the areas of concentration in the MSW program of the future: student interest? employment opportunities? societal needs? Should all of the concentrations in the MSW program be infused with an emphasis on multi-

ethnic practice, rather than having a separate concentration with this emphasis? What impact should the student interests in career opportunities for clinical social work in family practice, health care and mental health care have on the MSW curriculum? What impact are MSW and Ph.D. graduates having on macro-level concerns such as public policy outcomes? These and other questions will need to be addressed as potential opportunities arise in the future, but the financial resources of the School and University remain stable or more limited.

III. Recommendations to Improve Quality and Productivity

The Committee believes that the School of Social Work is one of the leading social work programs in the country and has the potential to emerge among the top three in the near future. The energy, commitment, and talent of the faculty, administration, and students is evident. With a future in which resources from state and University are predicted to remain stable or even decline, the Committee offers the following recommendations for consideration:

The Committee urges an active dialog between the School of Social Work and University Administration to plan for active efforts to retain excellent faculty of color. The University's role in providing resources to recruit and retain faculty in the School of Social Work has been outstanding but concern about maintaining this support exists. Active, two-way dialog and planning for the future is essential to ensure that the gains made by the School of Social Work, which are nationally recognized, are not lost.

The Committee recommends continued and expanded interdisciplinary relationships to enhance research collaboration and doctoral student experiences between the School of Social Work faculty and researchers in other disciplines on campus. As resources become more limited, interdisciplinary relationships can serve to extend the resource base available to faculty and doctoral students. The School has already established many of these relationships among the faculty; doctoral students voiced disappointment that the interdisciplinary opportunities were less available or more difficult to learn about than expected.

The Committee recommends that the BASW program outcomes and goals be re-evaluated relative to all School priorities. The faculty and administration are clearly committed to the BASW program; the program has outstanding direction from Ms. Spearmon. While the program's size has been reduced, it remains a major focus of the School's energy and resources. The external members of the Review Committee noted that none of the leading Schools of Social Work nationally maintain both a strong research emphasis and a BASW program. An evaluation of this program and its place among the priorities of the School should consider desired outcomes for program graduates, the role of the BASW program in identifying excellent candidates, particularly from multicultural backgrounds, for graduate study, and the advantages and disadvantages of moving the BASW program to the University's branch campuses. Meanwhile, more basic advising to BASW students could serve to enhance the core attachment of students to the field of social work and reduce attrition. Also, the advanced standing program was viewed as a good way to promote access and career movement between the BASW and MSW programs; however,

satisfaction with the program by both students and faculty was variable and deserves ongoing evaluation.

The Committee recommends evaluation of the distribution of faculty and staff resources to support the MSW practicum The Committee viewed the practicum experience as critical to the success of the MSW program and questioned whether the resources to support this experience were adequate and reflective of the practicum's relative priority in the School.

The Committee recommends increased attention to doctoral students in two areas, first-year advising and mentoring, and funding opportunities beyond the first two years of the program. First-year students appear to need an earlier and more formalized introduction to faculty researchers, within the School and the University, to better distribute mentorship and identify sources of support for students. This could be accomplished through regular faculty colloquia or enhanced communication. The School has done an excellent job providing funding for the initial years of doctoral study, but students are anxious about funding to complete their graduate work. As more faculty obtain research funding, more interdisciplinary connections are established, and predoctoral training grants are obtained, this issue might become of less concern.

The Committee recommends streamlining of the School's committee and administrative processes to enhance the productivity of financial and personnel resources. The School and its faculty have very ambitious agendas. Additionally, they value inclusion and participatory decision-making. As a result, the number, frequency, and duration of committee meetings (formal and informal) for each faculty member appear overwhelming and unduly burdensome. A limited number of faculty members also appeared to have heavy involvement across a series of committees. The Committee was concerned that time and energy spent in the abundance of committee responsibilities might, over time, detract from the faculty members' availability to mentor and advise students, to pursue research, publication, and public service activities, and result in fatigue and decreased morale. A new point system has been proposed as a way of promoting equitable distribution of responsibilities; however, the Committee is concerned that this may inadvertently reward more committee work rather than research and teaching. Greater use of time-limited "project" committees rather than standing committees might be considered. The committee also recommends evaluating the equity of distribution of personnel resources, particularly staff support, among various programs, practica v. classroom courses, and student services.

The Committee recommends long-range planning be directed toward obtaining adequate space to support expanding research and teaching programs of the School. Space is currently tight and while new space will soon be available, the trajectory of research growth of the School will make this an ongoing problem. Additionally, expanded distance learning programs may also create new needs for space. As more faculty and programs need to move off-site or to the branch campuses, issues of how to maintain relationships and involvement will need to be addressed.

IV. Summary

The Review Committee has concluded that the School of Social Work is emerging as one of the University's best programs. We believe it is worthy of investment for future growth and recommend that every effort be made to ensure its continuing success.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The Graduate School

AGENDA

School of Social Work Program Review
210F Conference Room
May 19, 20 and 21, 1997

Monday, May 19

7:30 p.m Dinner/Meeting - Review Committee
Ray's Boathouse Restaurant

Tuesday, May 20

8 30 – 9 00 a m Nancy Hooyman, Dean

9.00 – 9.30 Mary Gillmore, Associate Dean for Research

9 30 – 10 00 John Longres, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

10:00 – 10.30 Margaret Spearmon, BASW Program Director

10.30 – 11:00 Center Governing Board

11:00 – 11:30 BASW Curriculum Committee

11 30 – 1 00 pm Catered Lunch with Executive Committee

1.00 – 1 30 Staff
John Armstrong, Director of Admissions
Cindy Riche, Computing Services Manager

1:30 – 2.15 Paula Nurius, Director Ph D. Program

2:15 – 3 00 Ph D Steering Committee

3 00 – 4 00 Assistant Professors

4 00 – 4 30 MSW Curriculum Committee

4.30 – 5 00 Staff
Mary McMahon, Administrator

6.30 Dinner – Review Committee
Obachine Restaurant

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The Graduate School

AGENDA

School of Social Work Program Review
210F Conference Room
May 19, 20 and 21, 1997

Wednesday, May 21

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| 8:30 – 9.00 a.m. | Review Committee Session |
| 9 00 – 9.30 | Diversity Committee |
| 9 30 – 10.00 | Research Faculty |
| 10 00 – 11 00 | Ph.D. Students |
| 11:00 – 11.30 | Practicum Advisory Council |
| 11.30 – 12:30 | Lunch – Review Committee
Faculty Club –Table Reserved |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | MSW Students and BASW Students |
| 1.30 – 2.30 | <u>Exit Interviews</u>
Nancy Hooyman, Dean, John Longres, Mary Gillmore, Associate Deans,
and Dr Paula Nurius, School of Social Work
Marsha Landolt, Dean, Dale Johnson, Associate Dean, The Graduate School
Debra Friedman, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education (attending for
Frederick Campbell, Dean) |
| 2 30 – 3 30 | Marsha Landolt, Dean, Dale Johnson, Associate Dean, The Graduate School
Debra Friedman, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education (attending for
Frederick Campbell, Dean) |
| 3 30 – 5 00 | Review Committee - Executive Session |