

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
REPORT ON: Social Work
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS
 January 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review Preparation

In preparing this document, the Program Development Committee reviewed the following: Social Work’s Self-Study (SS) (2015/2016), the report of the external reviewers (ER) (May 2019), the response from the Director of Social Work, (June 2019), and the response from the Dean (DR) (September 2019) to the above material. The external reviewers were: Dr. Jackie Sieppert, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Dr. Michael Saini, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto; and, Dr. Emmanuelle Richez, Department of Political Science, University of Windsor.

Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

At the Undergraduate level, the School of Social Work offers a Bachelor of Social Work (Honours), a Bachelor of Social Work and Women’s Studies (Honours), and, in collaboration with the Department of Psychology, a Bachelor of Social Work and Disability Studies (Honours), a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Disability Studies, a Bachelor of Arts in Disability Studies and Psychology (Honours). Students also have the option of combining their Bachelor of Disability Studies major with a major from another discipline. In addition, the School offers a number of degree completion pathways and articulation agreements for College of Applied Arts and Technology (or equivalent) diploma holders for Disability Studies.

The School of Social also offers a Minor in Diaspora Studies and, in collaboration with the Department of Psychology, a Minor in Disability Studies.

At the graduate level, the School of Social Work offers a Master of Social Work, a PhD in Social Work, and a joint Master of Social Work/Juris Doctor with the Faculty of Law.

Enrolments

Undergraduate

| | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Full-Time | 446.03 | 393 | 393.50 | 376 | |
| Part-Time | 60.50 | 69.50 | 65 | 54.50 | |

Graduate

| | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| PhD Full-Time | 17 | 18 | 20 | 17 | |
| PhD Part-Time | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| MSW Full-Time | 120 | 136 | 113 | 123 | |
| MSW Part-Time | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| MSWwp Full-Time | 270 | 267 | 276 | 238 | |
| MSWwp Part-Time | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Human Resources

Faculty/Instructors

| | |
|---|---|
| Tenure/tenure-track faculty | 19 (including the Director) |
| Ancillary Academic Staff as Learning Specialists | 4 |
| Limited-Term Appointments | 2 |
| Faculty members involved in graduate program delivery | 18 (+2 external to the School with Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status) |

Full/Part-Time Staff

| | |
|---|---|
| Faculty Support Secretary | 1 |
| Graduate Secretary | 1 |
| Graduate Secretary (MSWwp Program) | 1 |
| Head Secretary | 1 |
| Undergraduate Secretary and BSW Field Education Secretary | 1 |

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (with Implementation Plan)

Significant Strengths of the Programs

The School's "unique combined programs at the undergraduate level", "widely recognized BSW and MSW programs", and successful PhD program are attractive to, and meet the needs of diverse populations, including students from the designated minority groups and non-traditional students such as working professionals. (SS, pp.291-297; ER, p.4, 7, 14) "While the stated learning outcomes for each degree cover all aspects of social work, there is distinct, strong focus on direct practice or social casework. [...] This is both a strength of the School and an important niche it can fill within Canada's social work education system." (ER, p.5) Moreover, the School "has adopted six High Impact Practices (HIP's) to facilitate student learning. These include creating a learning community, service-learning, research with faculty, field experience, study abroad and culminating senior experiences." (ER, p.10)

The External Reviewers also noted that the MSW for Working Professionals (MSWwp) is unique among MSW programs in Canada in that it provides traditional face-to-face instruction in a weekend-only delivery format. This distinctive feature (rather than online delivery model) has proven very attractive to students as evidenced by the growth of the program. (ER, p.8)

The programs are offered by "excellent teachers" with strong research productivity. (ER., p.11, 13, 16)

Opportunities for Program Improvement/Enhancements

The External Reviewers noted that, while a unique feature of the PhD program, civic engagement should be more clearly incorporated into the learning outcomes. (ER, p.5) The School should also consider reviewing the first two years of the BSW program and the Disability Studies program to determine whether and how more courses with relevant content within the social work discipline could be offered. (ER, p.7)

Although a very successful program, the External Reviewers noted challenges with the delivery of the off-campus MSWwp, notably ensuring student connection to the School and the University, providing sufficient supports and services to students, and identifying sufficient numbers of quality placements for 300 students. (ER, p.8) The External Reviewers also noted that while "highly experienced and dedicated professionals", sustaining a program mostly on sessional instructors "creates challenges in maintaining coherence of the program and connection to the School". (ER, p.9, 14)

These and other opportunities for program improvements are captured in the recommendations listed below.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendations (in priority order)

(Final recommendations arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report, the response from the Department Head, and the Dean's response.)

Recommendation 1: That the School of Social Work define clearly and report on what distinguishes it through:

- (i) a focus on determining its core mission to articulate the distinguishing characteristics of the School's balance between anti-oppressive, social justice content and direct practice, social casework content;
- (ii) distinguishing and communicating clearly its curricular strengths to potential students and eliminating any potential gap between what students expect and what they experience in the program;
- (iii) a curriculum review to include curriculum development that responds to shifts such as Indigenous reconciliation, immigration and global migration, demands to find voice for children and marginalized groups, issues related to disabilities and accessibility and the need to combat extremism in our society. [Attending to these emerging issues will benefit the School of Social Work in the long-term as these will be part of social work's accreditation standards];
- (iv) the inclusion of further communication and field orientation opportunities with all students on-campus and in the MSWwp to ensure that the students understand the balance and standards the school must maintain in its field program;
- (v) creating further consistency across the MSWwp as the students have identified limitations in the theoretical bases of the curriculum, in addition, to feeling a lack of connection to the School of Social Work;
- (vi) engaging with University of Windsor resources to develop a strategy which engages alumni of the MSWwp to strengthen this relationship.

Agents: School Council, Director

Completion by: Fall 2023

Supporting Faculty, Staff and Students

Recommendation 2: That the School, working with the FAHSS Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, report on its plan to provide additional support for faculty members' research development. Examples might include more formalized research mentorship strategies, additional seed funding or more research assistant support for targeted research opportunities.

Agents: Head, FAHSS Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

Completion by: Fall 2021

Recommendation 3: That the School, working with the Dean of FAHSS, determine the optimal size of the MSW program, particularly the MSWwp, based on the availability of high-quality placements.

Agents: Director, School Council

Completion by: Fall 2023

Recommendation 4: That the School of Social Work develop a strategic plan, following consultation with alumni and community partners, which should clearly identify what distinguishes its philosophy, programs and activities.

Agents: Director, School Council

Completion by: Fall 2023

Recommendation 5: That the School work with Alumni Affairs and Donor Relations to develop a communications plan to help position the School and support activities to raise its profile. It would also position the School to engage in dedicated fund development opportunities to support its visionary projects.

Agents: Director, PAC

Completion by: Fall 2021

Recommendation 6: That the School develop strategies to build connections with community partners and alumni.

Agents: Director, School Council

Completion by: Fall 2021

Recommendation 7: That the School complete the submission of learning outcomes and assessment methods for each of its undergraduate and graduate courses that clearly correspond to the University's stated "Characteristics of a University of Windsor Graduate".

[PDC notes that learning outcomes for each of its undergraduate and graduate programs and for most of its undergraduate and graduate courses have been submitted.]

Agents: School Council, Director, CTL

Completion by: Fall 2021