

Date: March 9, 2020

To: Cathv Saudeen, Chancellor

From: John Stalvey, Interim Vice President *John Stalvey*

Cc: Jeff Jesse, Dean of the College of Health Programs
Mary Dallas Allen, Coordinator of Social Work Programs
Tracey Burke, Professor of Social Work
Vanessa Maede, Assistant Professor of Social Work
Susan K...
Chancellor's Committee on Provost's Student Success

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings - Social Work MSW

I have reviewed the draft findings and the completed Program Review Report for the Social Work MSW. The review's source do not receive an additional program.

Recommendations

My recommendation is to accept the findings and recommendations and the commentary that this is a critical program of the state. The next Program Review will be included in the regular ongoing program review schedule.

Decision

Recommendation: **Accept**



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AY20Expedited Program Review Template

Submission date: January 29, 2020

Revised date: February 6, 2020

Program/s in this review: Master of Social Work

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): Council on Social Work Education

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Mary Dallas Alen, Associate Professor, Review Committee Chair, Anchorage campus

Tracey Burke, Professor, Anchorage Campus

Vanessa Meade, Assistant Professor, Anchorage Campus

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

Relevance

The UAA Master of Social Work (MSW) program is the only MSW program physically located in Alaska, and it is designed to address the complex health, mental health, and social welfare challenges in Alaska. The MSW is a versatile degree that prepares graduates for clinical practice, policy practice, and leadership roles in a variety of service delivery settings, including mental health, substance use, disability, education, health care, and child welfare. The mission of the UAA MSW program is to prepare advanced generalist social workers who address health and social issues in Alaska. Alaska's unique and rich multicultural populations, geographic remoteness, and frontier status allow the real potential for skilled social work professionals to make a profound impact on social, economic and environmental injustice in our state.

Alignment with UAA Mission & Interdependence with other Programs

In alignment with the UAA mission, the MSW program seeks to educate diverse, graduate social workers in communities across Alaska through high-quality distance education. In 2016-2017, the program combined the campus-based and distance-delivered programs into an integrated distance-delivered program to improve efficiency, increase student diversity, and serve rural students. During the 2019-2020 academic year, MSW students were geographically dispersed across Alaska: Anchorage, Bethel, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Metlakatla, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Sitka, and Wasilla. In 2019, 33% of the 33 MSW graduates identified as students of color.

The MSW program offers an advanced standing MSW program option in which students with a BSW degree are waived the first year of the MSW program (the generalist curriculum) and enter directly into the second year (the advanced curriculum). Students from the UAA and UAF BSW programs have a direct pathway from the AA to the MSW degree without leaving their home community.

The MSW program collaborates with other departments and graduate programs at UAA. In partnership with the Division of Population Health Sciences, we offer a dual MSW/MPH degree that includes a cross-listed program evaluation course. We also partner with Psychology to offer an interdisciplinary certificate in children's mental health, which includes cross-listed graduate electives. We partner with the Center for Human Development Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND), graduate-level interdisciplinary training program, and the Center for Community Engagement and Learning, which provides community engaged opportunities for MSW students and faculty.

Partnerships

MSW faculty foster strong community partnerships through service learning, research/evaluation, and professional service. The UAA MSW program partners with over 60 health and social welfare agencies across Alaska, which provide field practicum placements for MSW students. These partnerships benefit the MSW program by giving students the 900 hours of field experience required by the Council on Social Work Education. The agencies benefit from a strong workforce they helped train, as many graduates are subsequently hired by their field practicum agency. Additionally, the UAA MSW program has an international partnership with the University of the Arctic Thematic Network on Social Work.

Workforce Development and Employment Opportunities

A 2016 analysis of the social worker workforce in Alaska found that there will be a 24% increase in the need for social workers in Alaska by 2026 (Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2016). A 2018 national survey of MSW graduates found that 78% of graduates who searched for a job received a social work job offer (Salsberg, Quigley, Richwine, Sliwa, Acquaviva, & Wyche, 2018). MSW-level social workers are in high demand in rural Alaska, which experiences a shortage of mental health professionals. The MSW degree prepares students to meet this demand.

years) or

57.6) compared with the average credits per degree for all degrees at UAA (M = 36.6), MSW students complete their degree in fewer semesters (M = 5.5) compared with all degrees (M = 5.9) and in fewer years (M = 2.1) compared with all master's degrees (M = 3.0).

Within the MSW program, the fluctuation in the number of credits per degree, the number of semesters per degree, and the number of years per degree in the MSW program are influenced by the number of students completing the program with advanced standing in the full-time or part-time MSW program. Full-time advanced standing students with a BSW degree complete 35 credits in one year (2 semesters), while part-time students in the full MSW program complete 62 credits 4 years (8 semesters). In 2019, MSW graduates completed an average of 53.9 credits, the lowest number of credits per degree since 2013. This indicates that the MSW program graduated a higher number of students with BSW degrees who were admitted with advanced standing. The average terms to degree and average years to degree are influenced by the number of full and part-time students. In 2019, the number of semesters (5.9 semesters) and years to degree (2.7 years) were high relative to the previous six years, which indicates that a greater number of graduates were part-time students than in previous years.

Program Demand & Enrollment

The MSW program at UAA has a history of strong enrollment, and that trend is continuing. The number of students enrolled in all

enrolled (N = 71); highest number of MSW degrees awarded (N = 33); largest average class sizes (M = 12.4); highest student to faculty ratio (15.2); and highest tuition per student credit hour ratio (484.4).

When the program transitioned to a single, distance-delivered MSW program, the UAA School of Social Work faculty were committed to improving the delivery of distance education courses and programming. As a faculty, we decided to integrate Quality Matters standards into all MSW courses. All MSW faculty have received training in Quality Matters, and two faculty members have completed the training to be Quality Matters peer reviewers. One MSW course (SWK 634) is currently under a formal Quality Matters review to become a Quality Matters Certified Course.

Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Each year the MSW program undertakes a thorough program assessment and writes a detailed assessment report. The UAA MSW program assesses the explicit generalist and advanced generalist curriculum, which is the formal educational curriculum designed to prepare students to meet the generalist and advanced generalist competencies (student learning outcomes). The MSW program also assesses the implicit curriculum, which refers to the learning environment provided by the program and includes diversity, student development, student participation, and advising, retention, and termination. The entire School of Social Work faculty reviews the assessment report and contributes to identifying strategies for improvement of the explicit and implicit curriculum. In 2018 and 2019, the College of Health Dean's review of the MSW assessment report commended the MSW program for our commitment to academic assessment and program improvement.

The 2018 MSW program assessment report identified the need to increase the number of social work faculty to address the overreliance on adjunct faculty, to increase response rates for our program assessment measures, and improve curriculum content related to policy practice and practice evaluation. To address these needs, the School of Social Work has begun to recruit and hire tenure track faculty. We have also increased training and mentoring of adjunct faculty. We revised two advanced generalist courses, and we created several online base courses to improve course quality. We worked closely with students to improve assessment response rates. Results from the 2019 MSW program assessment demonstrated a positive impact of these efforts. However, program assessment is a continuous process, so the 2019 MSW program assessment identified three curricular areas for continued improvement: engaging in research informed practice and practice informed research; engaging in policy practice; and practice evaluation. The MSW program committee is currently working to improve the curriculum to strengthen student achievement of these competencies.

Student Success Initiatives

The MSW program advances student success by creating a strong sense of community, integrating high impact practices, and providing consistent advising. The MSW program creates a strong sense of community among MSW students through a yearly MSW program intensive, regular MSW program update newsletters, and regional MSW student coalition activities. We also have an online MSW program orientation in Blackboard that students complete upon their acceptance into the MSW program, which provides them with an opportunity to meet the other newly admitted MSW students.

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mission to serve the State of Alaska, reach out to students across the state, and fill workforce needs of the state make the MSW program highly distinctive and in alignment with the UAA mission.

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

The UAA MSW program fulfills an important workforce demand for graduate level social workers in Alaska, and we recommend that the MSW program receive strong support for growth through strategic student recruitment, engagement, and support. Since AY 2016-2017, the program has made several program changes in order to improve efficiency, increase program enrollment and retention, increase student diversity, and better serve rural students. These efforts have been effective and the program is nearing capacity with the number of faculty available to teach the courses. The MSW program currently has capacity for about 80 students, and in AY 2018-2019 71 students were enrolled in the program. In order to increase the number of students in the program, the MSW program would need to add at least one section of all generalist courses, which is 10 courses (30 credits). In addition to faculty support to teach the courses, we also seek support for a Student Success Coordinator, who can coordinate MSW student recruitment, admissions, advising, mentoring, alumni outreach, student engagement, and student communication. Such a position is essential for program expansion.

Given the strong research interests of MSW program faculty members, and their need to balance considerable teaching with the pursuit of those interests, funding that will facilitate faculty research can further strengthen the interplay among instruction, substantive inquiry, and civic engagement. This interplay will increase substantially the distinctiveness of the MSW program. In order to support this research, we recommend that the MSW program receive strong support for growth through strategic student recruitment, engagement, and support.