UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in FY2012 Annual Reports
<u>**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**</u>

DEPARTMENT__Social Work_____DATE___04/15/13_____

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW _____Master of Social Work (MSW)_____

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW___Deborah Worley, Mary K. Askim-Lovseth

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Were any goals referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- If so, were goals well-articulated?   YES _____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _X__
- Do goals address student learning?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:
The MSW program has two components, the foundation and the concentration. The foundation represents the base knowledge acquired in the BSSW curriculum or through a set of MSW courses taken as an alternative. The concentration component represents the "advanced generalist curriculum of the MSW program." Separate objectives were identified in the 2004-2005 Departmental Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (the most recent one posted). However, the FY2012 Annual Report included more recent information. More specifically, there are four program goals listed for the MSW program in the Department's FY2012 Annual Report, which is to prepare social work practitioners to:

- *have a strong identification with the social work profession, be committed to its highest ethical ideals, and embrace the role of change agent;*
- *continually strive to increase their cultural competence and understand and respect human diversity;*
- *understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and advocate for social and economic justice;*
- *synthesize and effectively apply a broad range of advanced knowledge and skills across practice levels that prepares them to assume leadership roles and work in a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary professional capacity;*
- *and have a passion for critical inquiry and a commitment to lifelong learning.*

These goals are very global and multidimensional in nature. It appears that assessment of student learning is driven primarily by ten competencies (and corresponding practice behaviors) listed in the Annual Report that MSW students should master (these are the same as the competencies listed for the BSSW program). The competencies are required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)'s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to be integrated into the overall MSW curriculum. All of these competencies address student learning in that students will:

- *Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly*
- *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice*
- *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments*
- *Engage diversity and difference in practice*
- *Advance human rights and social and economic justice*
- *Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research*
- *Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment*
- *Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services*
- *Respond to contexts that shape practice*
- *Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities*

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

- If so, were specifically chosen assessment
  methods appropriately aligned with individual
  goals?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach? YES_X___ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
As stated in the FY2012 Annual Report, the MSW Program has specific methods in place for assessing student learning. There are multiple measures, both direct and indirect. The direct methods include:
- *Instructor Ratings on student attainment of practice behaviors (aligned with competencies) using a rubric.*
- *Comprehensive Exam ratings (pass/fail) on essays relating to the ten competencies (see learning goals section for a list of the competencies)*
- *Field evaluation on student attainment of practice behaviors (aligned with competencies) using a rubric/evaluation instrument at the midpoint of the field experience and again at the conclusion of the field experience.*

A five-point rating scale is used to assess student competency of practice behaviors (PB) after each core course is completed. Anchors are 0, "Student has no knowledge of this practice behavior" and 4, "Student has advanced knowledge of and skill related to the PB." The field experience rubrics use a scale ranging from 0 ("No knowledge: Student has no knowledge at all") to 4 ("Does: Student can demonstrate the behavior independently").

The indirect methods of assessment include two types of self-ratings. Students rate themselves on the attainment of practice behaviors (aligned with the competencies) via a pre-post questionnaire. It appears that they complete this questionnaire at the beginning and end of each core course in the MSW graduate curriculum. Students also rate themselves during the field experience on their attainment of practice behaviors. Students use the same rubrics as the instructors and the field evaluators.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported? YES_X___ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? YES_X___ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement? YES_X___ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- Were the results tied to goals for student learning? YES_X___ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
The FY2012 Annual Report included assessment results from two groups of students: MSW foundation students and MSW concentration students. For the foundation students, a summary of classroom and field instructor ratings from spring and summer 2012 were reported. Specifically, the percentages of MSW foundation students attaining benchmarks (3.00 on a 4.00 rating scale for classroom instructor ratings; 3.50 on a 4.00 scale for field instructor ratings) for each competency were reported.

The MSW foundation student competency benchmarks were set in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education's requirements. Results indicated that student attainment in four competency areas "may merit additional attention": applying social work values and ethical principles, engaging diversity and difference in practice, engaging in research-informed practice, and applying critical thinking.

For the MSW concentration students, a summary of classroom and field instructor ratings from spring and summer 2012 were also reported. Specifically, the percentages of MSW concentration students attaining benchmarks (3.00 on a 4.00 rating scale for classroom instructor ratings; 3.00 on a 4.00 scale for field instructor ratings) for each competency were reported.

The MSW concentration student competency benchmarks were set in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education's requirements. Results indicated that student attainment in three competency areas "may merit additional attention": 1) engage in policy practice, 2) engage, assess, intervene and evaluate, and 3) applying social work values and ethical principles.

No assessment results were reported for the comprehensive exam, nor for the student self-ratings.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment
results reported?   YES__X_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, do curricular or other improvements/
  changes arising from assessment results
  directly address goals for student learning?   YES__X_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
The FY2012 annual report included mention of using assessment results to change course offerings. For example, they indicated that the student attainment of research, policy and "macro" competencies were ranked low by course instructors and field instructors. This served as the impetus to adjust course offerings (more sections, resulting in smaller class size in order to provide a more individualized student learning experience).

SUMMARY

Strengths	*Areas for Improvement*
__**X**__ A specific plan for assessment is in place.	____ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
__**X**__Student learning goals are well-articulated.	____ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
__X__Assessment methods are clearly described.	____ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
__X__Assessment methods are appropriately selected.	____ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
__X__Assessment methods are well-implemented.	____ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
__X__Direct and indirect methods are implemented.	____ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
__X__Results are reported.	____ No results are reported.
__X__Results are tied to closing the loop.	____ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)	(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

As previously stated, the most recent Departmental Plan for Assessment of Student Learning for the MSW program is dated 2004-2005; there is a 2012-2013 Assessment Plan for Social Work, but it only focuses on the BSSW program. The FY12 Annual Report included quite a bit of detail – and more recent information – on MSW program learning goals, assessment methods, assessment results, and closing the loop. The Department is encouraged to upload the revised MSW assessment plan as soon as possible.

Overall, the Department is to be commended for documenting significant changes to the MSW program assessment plan, and for successfully implementing those changes. The annual report includes a summary of the changes:
- *"Developed and implemented a new embedded measures assessment method to better ascertain student progress in relation the practice behaviors and associated competencies during the coursework portion of the curriculum. This process was implemented program-wide after piloting the method in selected courses over two semesters.*
- *Replaced the multiple choice exam with a comprehensive essay exam geared to the competencies.*
- *Revised Field Education's existing assessment methods to align with the practice behaviors and competencies at both the Foundation and Concentration levels."*

In general, the assessment plan has greatly improved, as has the practice of reporting assessment results in the annual report, and reporting the use of results to make informed, data-driven decisions.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

__X___ Annual report   __X___ Assessment plan (as posted)
_____ Appendices (cited in annual report)   __X___ Previous assessment review
_____ Other (please describe)

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Section 1: _Y____   Section 2: _Y____   Section 3: _Y____   Section 4: __Y___

Coding Key:
    Y   = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years)
    N   = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
    NA = no information available
    ?   = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done

Revision 10/11/12

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in FY2012 Annual Reports
<u>**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS**</u>

DEPARTMENT____<u>**Social Work**</u>_____DATE___<u>**04/15/13**</u>_____

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW ___<u>**Bachelor of Social Work (BSSW)**</u>_____

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW___*Deborah Worley, Mary K. Askim-Lovseth*__
1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Were any goals referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- If so, were goals well articulated?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- Do goals address student learning?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:
The Department has a "Plan for Assessment of Student Learning" dated 2012-2013. The plan includes specific information about program goals, program structure, a curriculum assessment plan, and a field assessment plan. Although the FY2012 Annual Report pre-dates the assessment plan, all of the information pertaining to student learning goals and assessment is aligned between the two documents. Thus, it appears that the 2012-2013 assessment plan was in development and guided the department's assessment efforts in 2011-2012.

There are four clear goals for the BSSW program. The goals address student learning while in the program (i.e., "build upon students' liberal arts foundation to provide the knowledge, values and skills necessary for competent social work generalist practice"). The goals also highlight efforts to link student learning in the classroom to practice (i.e., "prepare students for culturally responsive practice in rural communities"; "prepare students for service and leadership within the community and the social work profession" and; "prepare students for continued professional development opportunities").

There are also ten competencies (and corresponding practice behaviors) listed in the assessment plan:
- *Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly*
- *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice*
- *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments*
- *Engage diversity and difference in practice*
- *Advance human rights and social and economic justice*
- *Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research*
- *Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment*
- *Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services*
- *Respond to contexts that shape practice*
- *Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities*

All of these competencies address student learning. These competencies are required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)'s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to be integrated into the overall BSSW curriculum.

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses) and identify which goals are similar to departmental goals.
___X___ 1 Communication – written or oral ("able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience")
___X___ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or "be intellectually curious"; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
_____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or "be intellectually creative"; explore, discover, engage)
___X___ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning ("apply empirical data…analyze graphical information")
___X___ 5 Information literacy ("be able to access and evaluate…for effective, efficient, and ethical use")
___X___ 6 Diversity ("demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding…")
___X___ 7 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
___X___ 8 Service/citizenship ("share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of departmental goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals:
The BSSW competencies appear to be closely aligned with the Essential Studies goals. For example, the competencies include phrases such as "apply critical thinking…", "engage diversity and difference in practice…", "engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research…", "apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment…", "engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being…", "respond to contexts that shape practice…". The practice behaviors included in the assessment plan further support these competencies and alignment with the Essential Studies goals.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

- If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?   YES_X____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach?   YES_X____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
The BSSW assessment plan specifically states that EPAS standards require assessment of student learning. There are two components to the assessment methods used: curriculum assessment methods and field assessment methods. The methods are noted in the assessment plan and in the FY2012 annual report. The first method is the self-efficacy survey: the Course Objective Assessment Tool (indirect measure). As stated in the annual report, "The COAT is a self-rating survey given to students upon admission to the program, and again just before graduation. This scale was derived from the course competencies and the corresponding practice behaviors delineated by the Council on Social Work Education."

The second method of assessment is a field evaluation that is embedded within the field education component of the BSSW program. The field education program is the capstone course in the degree program. As part of this course, students develop a learning plan that is based on the ten competencies and practice behaviors. Students are then evaluated by their field instructor on each practice behavior grouped by competency using a rubric/evaluation instrument at the midpoint of the field experience and again at the conclusion of the field experience. The field evaluation done by the field instructors is considered a direct assessment measure in the BSSW program. Students, too, complete a self-assessment (indirect measure) of their practice behavior at midterm and the completion of the experience using the same rubric as the field instructors. Benchmarks of 80% achieving at least a 3.5(on a 5-point scale) were set in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education's requirements.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _ ___
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- Were the results tied to goals for student learning?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
The FY2012 Annual Report included a summary of field instructor ratings from spring and summer 2012. Specifically, the percentages of BSSW students "attaining benchmarks in the field education program per field instructor assessment" were reported:

- *Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly: 90%*
- *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice: 86%*
- *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments: 76%*
- *Engage diversity and difference in practice: 81%*
- *Advance human rights and social and economic justice: 81%*
- *Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research: 67%*
- *Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment: 81%*

- *Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services: 67%*
- *Respond to contexts that shape practice: 76%*
- *Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities: 86%*

Results indicated that the benchmark was met for six of the competencies; four of the competencies were identified as not meeting expectations and were noted that they "may merit additional attention"(applying critical thinking, responding to changing contexts, research, and policy practice).

The COAT (self-efficacy survey) data were not included but the report indicated that the data will be available in spring 2013.

Although not related to student learning, the BSSW program faculty also completed two additional comparisons and included them in their discussion of assessment results in the annual report. First, they compared field instructor ratings with student self-ratings using a Practice Behavior Rating Scale. No specific results were reported. However, the annual report did include a summary statement, indicating that "there were no statistically significant differences between Field Instructor and student ratings ($p<.05$). This finding may support the assumption that instructors and students interpret the scale in a fairly consistent way." Second, they compared field instructors and students across semesters to determine if there were any differences across cohorts. No specific results were reported, but a summary statement indicated that there were no significant differences and there is consistency in the BSSW student population.

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Indicate any goals for which the department presents findings, and, for indicated items, describe findings below. .
__X_____ 1 Communication – written or oral ("able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience")
__X_____ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or "be intellectually curious"; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
_____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or "be intellectually creative"; explore, discover, engage)
__X_____ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning ("apply empirical data…analyze graphical information")
__X_____ 5 Information literacy ("be able to access and evaluate…for effective, efficient, and ethical use")
__X_____ 6 Diversity ("demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding…")
__X_____ 7 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
__X_____ 8 Service/citizenship ("share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding results and the application of results to departmental, institutional and Essential Studies goals:
As previously indicated, the BSSW competencies appear to be closely aligned with the Essential Studies goals. The percentages of students attaining the benchmark in all ten competencies were included in the FY2012 Annual Report and in the "assessment results" section of this report.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment
results reported?   YES__X_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __ __

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/
changes arising from assessment results
directly address goals for student learning?   YES__X_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __ __

Comments:
The FY2012 annual report outlined a process where program faculty consider the results of the field instructor ratings. They determined that an action plan may be required if less than 80% of students attain the benchmark for any one of the ten competencies. After reviewing the spring and summer 2012 assessment results for the policy and research competencies (where field instructor ratings of students' competency was 67%), the department made changes to some course offerings (i.e., they now offer more courses to achieve small class size and a more individualized learning experience).

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
__X__ A specific plan for assessment is in place.	____ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
__X__ Student learning goals are well-articulated.	____ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
__X__ Assessment methods are clearly described.	____ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
__X__ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.	____ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
__X__ Assessment methods are well-implemented.	____ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.

__**X**__Direct and indirect methods are implemented.   ____ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
__**X**__Results are reported.   ____ No results are reported.
__**X**__Results are tied to closing the loop.   ____ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
    (Decision-making is tied to evidence.)   (Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The learning goals and assessment plan for the BSSW program are clear. Moreover, the plan reflects the department's commitment to adhering to national standards in social work education. The department is to be commended for making significant improvements to the assessment plan and for reporting assessment data, specifically for the field experience component of the program. Future reports will be even stronger when results of the self-efficacy survey are included.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

__X__ Annual report   __X___ Assessment plan (as posted)
_____ Appendices (cited in annual report)   __X___ Previous assessment review
_____ Other (please describe)

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Section 1: __Y___   Section 2: __Y___   Section 3: __Y___   Section 4: _Y____

Coding Key:
    Y   = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years)
    N   = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
    NA   = no information reported
    ?   = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done
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