

SWK DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

Preliminary comments:

The goals of the social work department (SWK) at WNMU (from our accreditation documents with the Council on Social Work Education [CSWE]) are the following, which reflect the department's philosophy as consistent with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics:

1. Prepare graduates for knowledgeable rural generalist social work practice
2. Encourage knowledge and understanding of and respect for the multilingual, multicultural population in the southwest
3. Foster a commitment to social work values and ethics
4. Emphasize social advocacy
5. Promote understanding of the nature of change in all systems
6. Promote and model knowledge and leadership development among all constituents with an emphasis on continuing education for the development of increasing professional skills

Each of these (except #4 and #6) is measured most directly with the results of the ACAT exams. #4 is measured most directly by our annual trips with students to conferences, and by taking students to the National Association of Social Workers annual Student Legislative Advocacy Day held at Santa Fe during the legislative session. #6 is measured most directly by the continuing education commitment demonstrated by faculty members as they renew their social work licenses (each is current).

1. Construct an overview of your departmental goals and tasks.

- The goals of the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance apply to the SWK Department. They include the following, as identified in the 8/07 School Retreat:

The five goals for 2007-2008

- 1). Implement SHSHP Recruitment and Retention Plan for Faculty and Students.
- 2). Maintain SHSHP web page.
- 3). Improve Student and Faculty life experience through interdisciplinary activities and community involvement.
- 4). Support external funding efforts.
- 5). Advocate for activities which enhance the health & wellness of the WNMU and regional communities.

Individuals were assigned to each of these Goals to serve as committees to address achieving each by the end of the school year. These School Goals were used when writing faculty MBOs, so that each of our MBOs was consistent with and reflected the School Goals. The Goals were written referencing the Strategic Challenges developed by the Strategic Planning group and reviewed by the Board of Regents.

The results of efforts to complete the 2007-08 goals are as follows:

1. Implement School of Health Sciences and Human Performance Recruitment and Retention Plan for Faculty and Students – plan was developed in 2006-07 and is available. It is an ongoing document, and in 2007-08 the disciplines reflected in the SHSHP worked together to put on a very successful float for homecoming. This work was designed to build teamwork among faculty in the different disciplines, and to encourage students to join our programs or persist through degree completion. We do not have enough data to document an outcome, but are gathering such data for future Assessment efforts.
2. Maintain School of Health Sciences and Human Performance web page – web page was developed and is being maintained. It uses the most up to date format design prepared by IT, and is updated regularly.
3. Improve Student and Faculty life experience through interdisciplinary activities and community involvement – we spent 2007-08 looking for activities we might engage in that would support this goal. A Wellness Weekend was identified, and the fall of 2008 will be spent making it a reality in spring 2008.
4. Support external funding efforts – Social Work applied for (in the name of WNMU) and received a Daniels Fund grant in 2007-08 to provide scholarships for tuition for students. We also applied and received a grant from our accrediting agency to infuse gerontological content into our curriculum, which will begin in 2008-09.
5. Advocate for activities which enhance the health & wellness of the WNMU and regional communities. Please see Goal 4. Tuition will be charged for some of the activities, and staff and faculty can use tuition credits for participation. Those in the communities can pay to participate. SWK faculty will serve as trainers and facilitators.

- In addition, the SWK Department has annual goals specific to the department, which are distinct from the broader goals outlined in the initial statement at the opening of the report. The annual specific goals include the following:
 1. Complete all work necessary to implement an MSW – this goal was slightly deferred, and is expected to be completed in 2008-09. However, the work was carried out successfully in 2007-08.
 2. Align curriculum, particularly the HBSE sequence, with other departmental courses and with the new state general education requirements – plans were successfully laid in 2007-08 to submit this alignment to C&I in 2008-09. Work on this alignment effort included identifying recommended curricular changes such as the removal of certain pre-requisites (such as Statistics). In addition, we identified anecdotally a lack of content knowledge in our students in the area of gerontology,

and obtained a small grant to infuse the content throughout our curriculum. This was carried out in conjunction with the School goal of increasing funding for the School.

3. Increase the number of community agencies with which the SWK Department is involved, across all communities where students live and work – Particularly in Gallup, this initiative was successful. One student was tasked with developing a community agency consortium, the beginnings of which are in place. Faculty and students are also working in more far-flung communities such as Window Rock. One student is an employee of The Wellness Coalition, doing research on the Total Community Approach in Lordsburg. Another is assigned for her field placement to that Approach effort, making us much more visible there. In terms of faculty statewide, the Chair serves on the Consortium for Behavioral Health Training and Research's University Collaborative, and one faculty member serves on the Child Abuse and Neglect Citizens' Review Board in Grant County. These are a significant increase in visibility over the previous year.

4. From within the goals identified in our first paragraph, we also emphasized for the first time avoiding plagiarism (goal 3 – values and ethics). We began an experiment with Turnitin, a plagiarism detection tool.

2. Identify two aspects of the department that were measured (assessed) this period.

- A. Student mastery of social work-specific content, by course area, with special focus on Practice and Research, as well as student mastery of social work-specific content, compared with previous WNMU students and with students nationwide.
- B. Our level of involvement in all communities where our students live and work.
- C. The originality (lack of plagiarism) in our HBSE students (typically juniors in the 1st year of the social work curriculum, but after Intro to SWK).

3. What was your specific measurement tool(s) and describe precisely the procedure used.

A. On the ACAT for which the most recent results are available:
in Policy & Services, our students were in the 42nd percentile
in Practice, the 35th
in HBSE, the 39th
in Research Methods, 54th
overall 41st.

(Note: with one outlier removed, all areas are above the 50th percentile. This student had a parent sick for an extended period before passing away.)

Compared to a cumulative group, consisting of the 66 students we have tested over the past 9 years:

Policy & Services - no change

Practice - down .25 SD

HBSE - no change
Research Methods - plus .25 SD
Overall - no change

The nationally normed ACAT test is administered as a pre-test to students in the first weeks of HBSE I, our initial course after Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare. Intro is occasionally taken by non-SWK majors, so we choose not to administer the pre-test to the students in that course, but to administer it to students taking the next course. It is again administered to graduating seniors, shortly before their graduation. A class period is given over to this testing in HBSE; for the seniors, each is required to take it during their final semester, but not necessarily in class.

Also, as with all faculty, we use the student evaluations and the MBO process to assess our performance.

B. Involvement in community meetings, collaboration with agencies and service providers, and internships for students were monitored for growth. The number of field placements, the depth of collaboration (whether relationships were collaborative and ongoing rather than merely informal contacts), and attendance at community meetings are a key component of discussions in our departmental monthly meetings.

C. We submitted all papers written for assignments in HBSE to Turnitin.com for review.

4. Analyze and report the results of your measurement(s).

A. In terms of Practice (our lowest area), we have made changes designed to improve mastery. We took a proposal through C&I for an additional course in the Practice sequence (Practice III), and given the catalog change required, the students taking Practice I in Spring, 2008, will be the first students to experience the three-semester sequence. Those students will graduate in Spring, 2009 or Spring, 2010. The most significant result here was that our decision to add this course (Practice III) was reinforced.

In terms of Research, we were looking at the impact of changes made beginning in 2006. These changes were in how the course sequence was taught, and how the students were given responsibility for their own learning. The most significant result here was that our decision to make these changes in approach was reinforced.

Each faculty member uses the results of student evaluation forms and feedback from the MBO process to make changes in “business as usual.”

B. In terms of involvement in the community, for 2006-07 we observed a lack of communication with some of our satellite campus communities. Community resource

lists are outdated. The level of involvement in SWK's advisory council in Gallup became more sporadic over 2006-07. Efforts were put in place during 2007-08 to reinforce these essential communications and involvements. More regular meetings of the BSW Advisory Group in Gallup have been scheduled, although attendance has not improved markedly. At the end of 2007-08, a new faculty member was hired with the express task of supporting the Gallup social work community, primarily to address this issue.

Our students have been involved with various aspects of the community over the past year through field placements/internships and volunteer work in Silver City, Gallup, Deming, T or C, and with the Navajo Nation in Chinle, AZ. Students worked with CYFD in Silver City and Deming. Placements at all locations have ranged from working in the schools, the Volunteer Center, The Wellness Coalition, mental health facilities, women's shelters, senior services, CASA, CASA DE LA CULTURA, case management with an independent social worker, Family Pride Foundation for treatment foster care, substance abuse treatment, nursing homes, and working with community organization groups over the past year.

Students in Gallup researched the need for a community networking group similar to those in Silver City (Grant County Service Collaborative) and Deming (Luna County Community Coalition). There was no such meeting in the Gallup/McKinley County area. Two locations were found to be appropriate for the meetings. Implementation was not completed at the time due to the lack of a full-time person in Gallup for the social work department and students having finished their course work, but the planning material developed is still being considered for this school year, facilitated by the hiring of a new person to support Gallup.

Students from all of WNMU's campuses went to a national Social Work conference in San Francisco last year. All of the 10 students who went volunteered to work at the conference and were recognized from the podium by conference officials. Programs from around the country noted the diversity of our students. WNMU also had a booth at the conference where our students handed out material regarding our university and the communities we serve.

Other student involvement has included working on puppets and floats for parades, going to Palomas to distribute clothing and food, attending the NASW-NM conference and Student Legislative Advocacy Day (SLAD), the Domenici Public Policy Conference (recognized from the podium), the BBC study on Healthcare in T or C compared to other parts of the world, and countless other volunteer work during the holidays and special events around the region.

C. Turnitin.com results indicated a problem the first time it was used, with an average of 7.1% unoriginality (indication of 7.1% non-original content – AKA, plagiarism). The subsequent times, the percentage fell to 2.2% and 3.1%, both of which are well with the acceptable percentage of 0-5%. Students have become familiar with the requirement, and aware of the penalties which will be imposed.

5. Comment upon the following:

a. How well did your measurement tool(s) measure the aspect(s) you sought to assess? – We feel that the ACAT is the best available tool to measure social work content mastery currently available. In terms of the community involvement component, we do not have a formal tool and our assessment here is more anecdotal. We also feel that the use of Turnitin.com has been very beneficial in achieving our goal of minimizing plagiarism on social work papers.

b. What conclusions can be reached from your results regarding the aspect(s) measured? One conclusion we reached is that the changes we have made as a result of the ACAT outcomes are appropriate. With regard to community involvement, our conclusion is that we will continue to seek a more formal way to assess these aspects rather than rely on anecdotal evidence. However, we are confident that with an N as small as ours would be, we can rely for the present rely on the anecdotal evidence. The use of Turnitin.com seems to have persuaded students of the lack of usefulness to them of plagiarism, and to make an additional effort to write original papers.

c. What is your “action plan” to address the conclusions from the measured aspect(s)? We plan to continue testing using the ACAT, and this year will be our 11th to accumulate longitudinal data with the same instrument. The changes in the Practice sequence will continue to be evaluated as students graduate after having taken three courses, versus the preceding students who only took two courses. Also at that point, we will begin to evaluate the curricular changes we plan to submit to C&I this fall. We plan to continue teaching the Research sequence using the methodology to which we changed in 2006, and will continue to assess that approach’s utility after additional cohorts are tested with the ACAT. In terms of community involvement, we will incorporate these discussions formally into our monthly meetings leading to program renewal. We continue working on developing a checklist to determine our level of community involvement and better assess our community outreach. We plan to continue the use of Turnitin.com, and request additional funds for next academic year to pay for it to be used across the SWK curriculum.