

College: Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department: School of Social Work

Degrees Offered: Bachelor of Social Work
Master of Social Work

Triggers: The undergraduate program continues to have a mean ACT composite score below 21. The department indicates that students are meeting high academic standards, are participating in scholarly activities including research papers at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum, and are eligible for the social work honor society. The students are non-traditional in that they are older (median age is 28) and two-thirds have more than 30 transfer credit hours from other schools. These students are more likely to not report an ACT score.

Brief Description of each degree:

BSW – Program provides students with “...knowledge, skills, and values for ethical and competent baccalaureate level generalist social work practice.”

MSW – Prepares graduates to be “... autonomous advanced generalist social work practitioners within complex, diverse, ever-changing metropolitan environments. Emphasis is placed on developing knowledge and skills for ethical, culturally competent and socially just and empowering interventions on all practice levels.”

Scheduling courses and space issues appears to be a problem.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

Both programs are fully accredited by the SW accrediting body. Learner outcomes for both programs (also called measurable objectives and, more recently, core competencies), are described in detail. The measurement processes are under revision due to changes in the accreditation standards. Completion of the revision is scheduled for AY2011-12. There are detailed and extensive charts provided for each program. These charts list the core competences, measurement processes, outcome standard (called Decision point), performance level and the procedures for addressing the identified issues when a competency standard is not met. When any competency falls below the standard (generally 100%) or does not meet a standard, a follow-up plan is described. Within the charts, there are descriptions of what was and is planned to be done. The feedback loop appears to be complete.

Results of license examinations are not available directly to the School. They do have some evidence based on surveys of graduates.

Student and employer satisfaction are measured, described, and the processes for addressing any issues are included and specific.

Placement of Graduates: Placement of graduates is well-documented as is continued demand for social work practitioners. 83% of graduates are employed in Kansas.

External Funding/Faculty: The existing faculty are productive in terms of their teaching and scholarship. The student faculty/ratios are out of line in terms of expectations of their accrediting body. There two grants listed but these were awarded to “community partners” rather than to faculty but faculty consulted on these two grants.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Commendations:

- Documentation of the employment of graduates of both programs within their field.
- Documentation that programs are addressing the work force needs of Kansas with 83% of graduates employed in the state.
- Efforts have been made by the faculty to become more involved in scholarly activities and submission of grants.
- Increase in the number of tenured and probationary faculty since the last review
- Detailed assessment plans.
- Learner competencies are well defined and a measurement process in place.
- Both programs are fully accredited.
- Commitment of the faculty to service although an evaluation of these activities in light of student-faculty ratio issues would be a reasonable step.

Recommendations:

- A major concern is the number of faculty and the faculty-student ratio. The report states that both programs do not meet accreditation standard for faculty student ratio, i.e., 25:1 for the undergraduate program and 12:1 for the graduate program. Additional faculty lines are not mentioned by the dean nor does he indicate any plan to cap enrollment. The Department states they will seek additional faculty.
- The School plans to offer FS general education courses. Consider not offering these courses until the faculty-student ratio problem is addressed.
- Work with the dean and others in addressing the scheduling and space issues if the move to the West Campus does not solve the problems described. Administrative support for faculty and advising for students needs to be sufficient regardless of the site for offering courses.
- Utilize the University UG and GR exit survey data in the future. The University implemented an electronic UG and GR exit survey in 2011 (by program) for this purpose.
- Utilize University alumni survey data in the future. The University is implementing an alumni survey (by program) for this purpose in 2012.