



**Scholarship of Assessment Grants
Final Report
Undergraduate Social Work Program Curriculum Mapping**

Project Summary:

In spring 2019, the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program Committee, under the leadership of Ms. Amy Peters, School Assistant Director and Senior Lecturer, and Ms. Sonyia Richardson, BSW Program Director and Clinical Assistant Professor, initiated a curriculum mapping process for the undergraduate social work program. The map identifies where essential content is being covered and learning activities to assess learning. In addition, the map ensures that the curriculum meets competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education Standards (CSWE), measure the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) identified for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and affirms that the BSW Program curriculum aligns with the foundation year of the MSW (graduate) program. The alignment with the MSW Program is pertinent as students who graduate from a CSWE accredited BSW program are considered to have met the graduate level foundation year competencies and are eligible to advance through a graduate social work program more quickly through what is termed *Advanced Standing*. During the first half of the spring 2019 semester, the BSW Program Committee aligned program outcomes with course outcomes, including identifying where the nine CSWE competencies and four SLOs are covered across the curriculum. In the second half of the spring 2019 semester, the committee identified areas of misalignment with respect to course outcomes, course content, and assessment across fifteen courses.

Ms. Peters and Ms. Richardson envisioned continuing this work with the support of the Scholarship of Assessment grant. Accordingly, when we submitted our project we planned to create two model syllabi with one being for an online course and the other for a seated one. However, when the committee identified areas of misalignment with respect to course outcomes, course content, and assessment toward the end of the spring semester, it became evident that two of our practice courses, both of which are seated/face-to-face formats, required immediate attention. Therefore, SOWK 3181 - Social Work Practice with Individuals (a fall course) and SOWK 3182 - SOWK Practice with Families and Groups (a spring course) were ultimately selected for this project. Accordingly, Ms. Sonyia Richardson and Ms. Amy Peters revised syllabi resulting in:

- Improved alignment between revised course objectives, module learning objectives, learning tools and assignments. *Examples* - Edited language in module learning objectives, added readings to help students meet module learning objectives, revised assignment instructions, and redistributed point values for assignments
- Revised and created standardized rubrics to rate student knowledge and/or skill development in order to more accurately assess whether they are on track for meeting the course objectives
- Aligned the course syllabi revisions to the curriculum map
- Met with Ms. Harriett Hobbs, Director of Assessment Systems and University Accreditation, and actively sought consultation

In addition, the SOWK 3182 Canvas page was modified for fall 2019 to align with the updated syllabus. The SOWK 3181 Canvas page will be modified in fall 2019 in preparation for the spring 2020 semester.

Describe what you learned:

Several valuable lessons were learned through the completion of this project. First, the expertise of full-time faculty with training in course design and alignment are vital for overall course alignment and restructure. We discovered that courses designed by part-time faculty and/or full-time faculty with limited training on course alignment and design, were not as well aligned. From an administrative standpoint, we are finding it helpful for full-time faculty who are trained in course design to take ownership of the syllabus and Canvas development and then share it with part-time faculty or full-time faculty with less expertise in design. These faculty are then positioned to become facilitators of a well-designed course and learn from the process. Both of the courses we designed for this project were previously taught by part-time faculty members and lacked necessary alignment.

Next, as part of this project, we piloted the creation of a Canvas blueprint for SOWK 3182. Once the blueprint was ready, it was associated with the fall class sections. The sections are being taught by three part-time instructors. Since there is not full-time faculty lead this fall, having the blueprint and master syllabus available helps to ensure the correct content will be taught and that learning will be appropriately assessed. There has only been one question raised in recent weeks by one of the instructors as they prepare to teach the course which may be an indicator that the design is thorough and easy to follow. Accordingly, we learned that the Canvas blueprint courses are helpful for ensuring that learners are positioned to meet course objectives and competencies.

We also learned by participating in this project that it is necessary to create opportunities for further skill development of existing faculty for course design and alignment. While we did revise the syllabus for SOWK 3181, we intentionally did not create the Canvas page. We are onboarding a new lecturer who previously served as a part-time faculty member for several years. We are guiding him through the process of using the syllabus as a guide to create the Canvas page. In essence, we are helping to cultivate future designers. This faculty member will

serve in 2019-20 on the BSW Program Committee so he will be able to observe how one course connects to the larger curriculum.

Finally, through this project we learned that it is important to revisit the curriculum map when engaging in course design. Even though the BSW Program Committee had already identified what EPAS competencies were to be assessed in the courses, when we went to revise the syllabi, it was found that some competencies really did not fit in SOWK 3182 and SOWK 3181. We also found that we had a number of gaps. As a result, we learned that if we are going to assess particular competencies, we need to incorporate related learning materials (i.e. - readings), as well as to make sure we have accurate assessment measures. The rubrics from 2018 were completely revised for 2019 because we realized we had not been measuring some knowledge and skills that we had intended to measure.

Describe how it will be incorporated into your instructional practice or curriculum (program or course):

In addition to sharing the syllabi and blueprints with the part-time faculty teaching SOWK 3182 this fall and guiding a new full-time faculty member who is developing a Canvas site to correspond with the revised SOWK 3181 syllabus, we are also using this project in other ways. In June 2019, over twenty part-time faculty members attended our annual School of Social Work training. We facilitated a brief experiential training for the part-time faculty to demonstrate how module learning objectives, learning tools, assignments, and rubrics align in an effort to achieve the intended course objectives. During the training, part-time faculty participated in exercises that helped them to apply alignment strategies.

In mid-August, Ms. Richardson and Ms. Peters will engage in a similar demonstration at our annual retreat for full-time faculty. This will provide existing full-time faculty with additional skills on course design and alignment. Lastly, as a result of our participation in this project, we have submitted a proposal to a national conference on a similar topic with the intent of providing training to social work educators across the country on course alignment and design. In sum, we plan to utilize SOWK 3181 and SOWK 3182 as model courses for trainings within our unit and nationally.

Describe the student impact (good, bad, or indifferent) or anticipated impact:

Ms. Richardson and Ms. Peters anticipate that students will be positively impacted by the changes to SOWK 3181 and SOWK 3182. Overall, students have indicated through course evaluations and informal conversations that they have enjoyed these courses and learned new information. However, there have been comments by students made about SOWK 3181 being taught in a disorganized manner and SOWK 3182 was noted as not having limited content related to groups. Ms. Richardson and Ms. Peters design courses that tend to be very structured. Anecdotally, we wondered if students thought SOWK 3181 was disorganized because it had not been prepared by us. Students were used to having us as their instructor for several of their courses, but did not for these courses in recent years. We anticipate students taking SOWK 3181

will notice the course is well organized. Regarding SOWK 3182, we added textbook readings related to groups which we also see as a positive. There were informal handouts about groups, but there had been no chapter readings.

Describe what you plan to do differently because of your project:

As a result of our work on this project, we plan to ensure that part-time faculty designing courses are equipped with the necessary training and experience with course design and alignment. For example, there is a high demand in our graduate program for online electives. However, content for these courses tends to be specific to client populations, problems, and/or practice settings (i.e. an elective about working with military families). We are now realizing that, while part-time instructors may have the social work practice experience, they may not have experience designing online courses, restructuring hybrid or seated courses, or even teaching online which makes for a very challenging semester. Ms. Richardson and Ms. Peters will seek additional funding opportunities to support the development of more online courses that are well designed and aligned. We also will be encouraging all faculty, who wish to further develop their skills, to register for more curriculum related trainings.

Our graduate program, in general, seems to experience more complaints from students about instruction than our undergraduate program. We suspect that this is due to course design and misalignment. More courses in the undergraduate program have been aligned over the past 18 months than in the graduate program. Not only do students seem satisfied overall with their undergraduate social work classes, but we have found that some part-time instructors are expressing a preference for teaching in the undergraduate program over the graduate program. The courses seem more organized to them and course alignment may play a role. As a result of this project, Ms. Peters is shifting to teaching in the graduate program in fall 2019, rather than undergraduate program as planned. She has been working on aligning SOWK 6121 for the upcoming semester and aligned SOWK 6171, an elective, in summer 2019 as well.