

Academic Program Assessment Plan: Department of Social Work, Colorado State University-Pueblo

Identification:

The Department of Social Work maintains national accreditation through the Council on Social Work Education, Commission on Accreditation. The plan was prepared through departmental deliberations according to the new Educational and Policy Accreditation Statements effective in January, 2010. The primary contact for assessment questions or concerns is Dr. Carol L. Langer, Department Chair. She can be reached at 719-549-2533 or at carol.langer@colostate-pueblo.edu

Mission, Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes:

Colorado State System Mission Statement

Colorado State University was established by state law:

“There is hereby established a University at Pueblo, to be known as Colorado State University-Pueblo, which shall be a regional, comprehensive university with moderately selective admissions standards. The University shall offer a broad array of baccalaureate programs with a strong professional focus and a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences. The University shall also offer selected masters level graduate programs” (Colorado Statutes 23-55-101, as cited in Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog, 2009-2010, p. 13).

Colorado State University-Pueblo Mission Statement

In April, 2005, the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System adopted a complementary, focused mission statement for the University that stresses its distinctiveness and central commitments:

“Colorado State University-Pueblo is committed to excellence, setting the standard for regional comprehensive universities in teaching, research and service by providing leadership and access for its region while maintaining its commitment to diversity” (Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog, 2009-2010, p. 13).

College of Humanities and Social Sciences Mission Statement

The college’s mission statement is:

“The mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is to help students develop critical thinking skills, aesthetic awareness, and ethical perspectives, to provide them with the tools and expertise necessary to function as responsible citizens and professionals and to engage in intellectual and artistic pursuits. Faculty members are committed to high quality teaching, theoretical and applied research, scholarship, creativity, to effective service to the University, the profession, and the region, and to the innovative use of technology in these endeavors. The college strives to be a community of learners, teachers, and scholars responsive to the challenges of a diverse society, a vulnerable environment, and an increasingly technological and interdependent world” (Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog, 2009-2010, p. 124).

Department Mission Statement

The department mission statement is:

“As part of CSU-Pueblo, a regional comprehensive university, the social work program prepares students for beginning generalist practice with diverse client populations across systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.”

Areas of commonality include professional preparation, acknowledgement of a diverse environment, and awareness of challenges within such an ever-changing environment. In addition, the department clearly situates itself within a regional, comprehensive university and a multi-faceted college.

Department Goals

The following goals further develop the mission of the department of social work and provide ongoing linkage with college, university, and system mission statements:

Goal 1 – Provide BSW students with a range of skills, attitudes, and knowledge grounded in social work values and ethics.

Objectives:

- Students will understand social work values and ethics as they apply to social work practice with diverse systems.
- Students will be able to evaluate the professional use of self in interactions with diverse systems.

Goal 2 – Develop culturally competent professionals who can intervene appropriately in systems of all sizes with emphasis on regional populations.

Objectives:

- Students will develop culturally competent knowledge, values and skills for beginning level social work practice with diverse systems.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to practice with diverse populations in a multicultural environment including Chicanos, Mexican, and First Nations.

Goal 3 – Develop the ability of BSW students to advocate for social and economic justice with systems of all sizes.

Objective

- Students will be able to identify factors which impact the attainment of social and economic justice for diverse systems.
- Students will be able to select and apply appropriate intervention methods to develop and enhance social and economic justice across diverse systems.

Goal 4 – Engage BSW students in a process of practice-informed research and research-informed practice.

Objective

- Students will use critical thinking skills to develop knowledge and understanding of research relevant to beginning social work practice with diverse systems.

- Students will be able to interpret, evaluate, and implement relevant research, linking theory to practice, as they engage in beginning level social work practice with diverse systems.

The new assessment standards are termed competencies and practice behaviors and have been established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Commission on Accreditation. They are:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior;
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice;
3. Advance human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice;
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice;
5. Engage in policy practice;
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Proficiency

The standard definition for the department of social work is that 80% of our students will meet or exceed the benchmark set for each measure. For example, even though the nationally standardized Area Content Achievement Test (ACAT) is typically reported as aggregate data, we can report individual scores. We say that 80% of our students should score at or above the 50th percentile. The aggregate benchmark is that each content area should be at or above the 50th percentile. For the pre- and post-competency measure, we intend for the learning gains between the pre- and post-tests to be significant at the .05 level. For the field evaluations, we intend for 80% of our students to score at 80% or above on each competency and each practice behavior.

Assessment Methods

The department of social work assesses nine competencies and accompanying 28 practice behaviors every year. Each competency is measured at least twice, including one direct and one indirect measure.

The department will utilize a standardized test of content area knowledge called the ACAT. This test is administered at the end of the second seminar and field experience, SW 482 and SW 489. They are given in the seminar, SW 482. This typically occurs every spring and summer.

A pre- and post-test survey will be administered to every student. The pre-test will be given during the first week of SW 320, a first course in the professional sequence. This will occur every fall. The post-test will be given during the final seminar, SW 482. This will occur every spring and summer.

Assessment of competencies during field placement will occur at two intervals: during the first semester in SW 481/488 and during the final placement, SW 482/489 (Appendix C). This assessment will occur at the end of the fall semester or half-way through the block summer

session and again at the end of the spring or summer. Assessments are completed by the field site supervisor for each student.

We intend to have a senior capstone that will be a comprehensive assessment measure for the nine competencies. Since one of our requirements is to prove comparability across site and modality, we utilize common syllabi and texts, as well as common assignments and accompanying rubrics.

Assessment Results

Assessment results will be summarized by the department chair and presented to the faculty during department meetings. The fall department meetings will be the primary times during which discussion of assessment results will be discussed. They will be discussed early in the semester in case there is a need to make changes in the catalog or curriculum. The results are used for program planning and improvement, strategic planning, and identification of areas of growth.

Continuous Process

The process of assessment is guaranteed to be continuous because we have institutionalized the process and the measures. The department chair will bring all data to the attention of the faculty, and all reviews, evaluations, and changes will be approved by the department prior to any changes being made anywhere within the curriculum or the assessment procedures. Reports are provided to the faculty during the beginning weeks of every fall semester. Annual reports to the university will be made utilizing a process of selective reporting. We reserve the right to not report on all nine competencies and attending practice behaviors. Instead we will choose an area where we need to experience growth or have seen a pattern that we need to address. Finally, assessment results are posted on the social work homepage, per CSWE requirements.