

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, Commission on Accreditation (See Appendix A).

Curriculum

Appendix A also contains the curriculum mapping that has begun in order to ensure linkage between the competencies and practice behaviors and course goals, objectives, and assignments. This mapping will demonstrate embedded assessment. Since we have our next reaffirmation visit in the fall of 2011 or spring of 2012, we will not have time to fully develop this portion of the assessment, but we will strongly defend the application of such assessment and will retain this documentation as evidence. The syllabus for each course will have each objective and each assignment linked to a competency and practice behavior. (This work is finalized but is not yet in a Word document.)

Assessment Methods

Direct and indirect measures will be included, and both embedded and summative assessments will be conducted.

The department will utilize a standardized test of content area knowledge called the Area Content Achievement Test (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 (Appendix B).

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.

Assessment of portfolio artifacts (nine total) will be conducted during the seminars, SW 481 and SW 482 (Appendix D). These artifacts will be randomly selected from all students in seminars and will undergo blind review by faculty members. This will occur every spring and every summer.

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. For example, we have selected a benchmark of the 50th percentile for our overall ACAT scores but aspire toward the 75th percentile. We have watched these scores for a total of four semesters and have begun to see improvement. Because we were concerned about our low scores, we have strengthened the content in the HBSE sequence, theory, and research courses. We hope to be able to share results with students, but as of yet, we do not have a formal mechanism in place.

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.