

# ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016-2017

## Social Work Undergraduate

## BSW

### **Program Mission:**

Consistent with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Mission of the School of Social Work is to educate students to practice social work competently with the diverse, multicultural populations of New Mexico and the Southwest. The School has a primary commitment to Hispanic and Native American people. The Social Work curriculum at NMHU strives to ground students in core professional social work values, skills and ethical principles, with a focus on promoting awareness and respect for cultural and gender differences and how poverty affects the well-being of people in the region.

### **Student Learning Outcome 1:**

Identify and conduct oneself as a professional social worker guided by ethical practice principles.

### **NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills

### **Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the community intervention assignment required of BSW students in conjunction with SW331 (Law, Ethics & Social Work Practice). This assignment is worth twenty percent of the final grade and is evaluated in terms of writing style, organization, scholarly sources, community problem analysis, and conclusion.

### **Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	125	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	14
Total Number of Students Assessed:	139	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	89.9%

### **Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

The number of scores reported by instructors for this assignment increased slightly, from 135 in 2015-6 to 139 this year, indicating only minimal change. The percentage of students, largely juniors, meeting the criterion on this assignment dropped slightly, from 93% in the previous year to just less than 90% this year. Data collecting in 2017-8 will help us judge whether this drop represents an aberration or a trend needing our

attention. Thus, while we are still well above our benchmark for this outcome, it is worth examining any changes in assessment procedures, curriculum or instruction that may account for this small change.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

Apply theoretically grounded critical thinking skills to contextual knowledge of person-in-environment transactions in social work practice engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2**

- Mastery of content and knowledge
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

**Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the SW468 (Theories of Social Work Practice) Signature Assignment. This assignment is comprised of two parts—an “Ecological Assessment” and a “Theory to Case Application” requirement. The grade earned on this assignment constitutes 20% of the final grade for the course.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	54	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	54	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

We clearly have missing data for this outcome measure, indicating some breakdown in data gathering. This year, in 2016-7, scores were submitted for 54 students, compared to 102 in 2015-6, a drop by nearly half. Future efforts are necessary to facilitate the posting of scores to the outcomes assessment team by instructors for more complete and useful data. Given the caveat of extensive missing data, it is exciting to see that 100% of the students for whom scores were submitted did, in fact, meet the criterion for this indicator. It appears as if these students, largely seniors in their last semester, are competent at biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment and intervention planning.

**Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Engage diversity in practice in the service of human rights and social and economic justice.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Critical and reflective thinking

**Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the SW383 (Human

Diversity and Multicultural Theory) Signature Assignment with a “B” or higher. This assignment consists of several parts: “critical self-examination,” “application of theory & literature,” and “in-depth analysis.” Additionally, use of APA format, written clarity, and grammar are also assessed. It is worth 20% of the final course grade.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	132	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	22
Total Number of Students Assessed:	154	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	85.7%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:**

We have had steady improvement in data gathering on this indicator, from 74 scores submitted in 2014-5, to 98 in 2015-6, and to 154 scores this year. Thus, SW383 instructors are likely increasingly informed of the need for and value of outcomes assessment. However, while we have achieved our goal of a minimum of 80% of students proficient on this assignment, with nearly 86% achieving the criterion score, this number represents a significant drop from 97% the previous year. This year’s 85.7% is actually closer to the results of 2014-5, when 86.5% met the criterion for proficiency, so it is possible that the high rate of success observed in 2015-6 was an aberration reflecting the particular instructors or students whose data was included or variations in the implementation of the assessment and rubric. In sum, while students do achieve a high level of success on this indicator, it is clear that there is room for improvement in preparing students for this assignment and in assisting them in growing the necessary self-reflection, application of theory, and analysis skills.

**Student Learning Outcome 4:**

Engage in research-informed practice, practice-informed research, and policy practice to advance well-being.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4**

- Mastery of content and knowledge
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective use of technology

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:**

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the Signature Assignment required in SW330 (Social Work Research Methods I). The purpose of this assignment is to assess “student ability to apply critical thinking to inform practice and communicate professional judgments.” This assignment is worth 100 points or 20% of the final grade for the course.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	81	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	31
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Total Number of Students Assessed:	112	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	72.3%
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**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:**

This assignment asks student to find, read, comprehend and assess the validity of the conclusions of published research evidence and to correctly apply research terminology and concepts in their summaries. Scores were submitted for 112 students, slightly down from 121 the previous year, and 72.3% met the criterion, down from 94.2% in 2015-6. This represents a sizeable drop. We will need to examine whether there have been changes in instruction or in assessment of mastery, but the team of research instructors will also need examine ways to improve our teaching of these skills and this content.

**Assessment of Center Students:**

The assessment activities described apply to all sections of the above-named courses. The same syllabus, course objectives, assignments and scoring rubrics are used at all sites, including the Centers.

**Utilization of Results:**

In our last report, it was indicated that an outcomes assessment committee would be formed to discuss alternative ways to assess mastery of NMHU traits in a more targeted way. This committee, consisting of representatives of multiple social work course content areas and of all campus sites, did initiate the discussion of how to improve outcome evaluation and did pilot a few evaluation tools. This work is ongoing. Of note is that of the above four assignments, only one assesses effective use of technology. Additional assignments may need to be included or new outcomes measured developed to assess this particular trait.

In terms of the results presented above, on all but the last outcome measure, we have achieved our benchmark of 80% of students achieving success. This is excellent news. Even though we cannot distinguish on which individual traits student students are strong or weak, it is clear most students have the composite skills necessary to succeed. However, the issue of inconsistent data gathering and/or participation by instructors will be brought to the Curriculum Committee and the Lead Faculty for all courses. Further, even with our high levels of student proficiency, the Curriculum Committee, Lead Faculty, and all instructors should initiate efforts to improve the curriculum and teaching to maximize student success.

Faculty met in early August to determine necessary steps to improve both the outcomes assessment process and student mastery. Please see the Plan for Improvement in 2017-8 submitted by our school for more information, but action steps include: (1) scoring assignments for mastery of each individual NMHU trait, (2) educating faculty about the importance of data collection and establishing a system to facilitate data collection, (3) obtaining faculty input on appropriate benchmarks, which might allow more room for growth and indicate more clearly areas for improvement.

**Changes to Program Based on Results:**

The Facundo Valdez School of Social Work has taken a number of steps recently which will enable more complete and more useful outcomes assessment. In an attempt to promote more consistency between instructors, a Summer Work Group met this past summer to, among other things, review peer-reviewed literature on the development of scoring rubrics, which may provide a starting place for future improvements in outcomes assessment. Further, the Outcomes Assessment Committee initiated last year will be reconvened to determine how to better target data collection to the traits and to analyze results in order to identify areas for improvement in teaching and curriculum.

Additionally, the social work program is up for reaccreditation by the national Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and a faculty member has been given a course release to coordinate assessment efforts on both CSWE standards and the NMHU traits. Our school also has new program leadership, a BSW Coordinator and an MSW Coordinator, who have also been given course releases in order to, among other tasks, oversee and support both faculty instruction and faculty collaboration in outcomes assessment efforts.

### **Retention Strategies:**

The Facundo Valdez School of Social Work actually has good retention and graduation rates, we presume, in part, because we have a well-defined course sequence or program map, providing students a clear pathway to degree completion. Of course, we can and do make steps to improve. Our primary efforts to improve retention have recently focused on improving our advisement structure. This year, efforts were redoubled to make sure all students are assigned an advisor, and that both the student and faculty member are informed of how to contact one another. These advisors are all full-time (contingent and tenured or tenure-track) faculty members, and all advisors are assigned both BSW and MSW advisees. Faculty advisors receive training and support on the course sequence and curriculum and on effective advisement strategies, including methods of outreach and use of Degree Audit. Further, our school holds regular faculty meetings to disseminate updates in both curriculum and advisement, and at these meetings, we also confer as a team to identify students academically at-risk, to problem-solve regarding these students, and to weigh options for intervention. Lastly, this year, the School of Social Work hopes to develop both a social work faculty handbook (on standards for teaching, advising and student support) and a social work student handbook (on available supports and guidance and on school policies and expectations).