

# ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016-2017

## Social Work Graduate

## MSW

### **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:**

Consistent with Advanced Practice at the Concentration Level, 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
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

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

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the Signature Assignment required in SW665 (Advanced Multicultural Practice I). In this assignment students are assigned a clinical diagnosis to research and define from multiple perspectives. Students conduct a social work practice skills role-play and submit a 5-7 page paper.

### **Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	90	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	18
Total Number of Students Assessed:	108	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	83.3%

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

Data for this indicator were gathered from 108 student assignments, compared to 96 the previous year, representing an improvement in data collection. 83.3% met the criterion of proficiency, slightly down from 87.5% in 2015-6, which was itself down from the previous years. Because the scores do not distinguish by specific NMHU trait, it is unclear on what skills students are faring worse or whether the students who do not achieve the criterion are struggling on all indicators. More targeted measures and more

standardized scoring rubrics are in development. While, clearly, the team of instructors teaching this class should be informed of the downward trend in proficiency, and should work to improve student capacity for success on this diagnostic role play assignment, it is noteworthy that we have met our own benchmark, with over 80% of all scores indicating proficiency on this assignment.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

In accordance with Advanced Practice Concentration, apply theoretically grounded critical thinking skills to contextual knowledge of person-in-environment transactions in practice engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation.

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

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

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

The evaluation of Educational Outcome 2 is based on a Signature Assignment required of all MSW students enrolled in SW665 (Advanced Multicultural Social Work Practice I). Key components of this assignment include: a proposed intervention plan: Assessment, Intervention & Evaluation. This project constitutes 20% of the final grade.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	89	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	18
Total Number of Students Assessed:	107	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	83.2%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

Using a second assignment from SW665, Advanced Multicultural Practice I, it was found that 83.2% of 107 students met the criterion for proficiency on this assessment and intervention plan. While there was a small increase in the number of scores being included, this represents a slight drop in rate of mastery, from 87.5% of 96 students in the previous year. As with Outcome 1, it is not clear which of the NMHU traits are most problematic for students. Future outcome measures will need to be more targeted. Until then, we can conclude that a sizeable majority of students succeed on this assignment, indicating mastery of the set of NMHU traits (content knowledge, communication, and critical thinking), and additionally, they can successfully apply theory to social work practice. The team of SW665 instructors should continue to work to improve proficiency and reverse the downward trend. On a separate note, faculty may wish to consider increasing the diversity of courses and assignments used to measure mastery of the traits. Two of four outcome measures use from SW665 as indicators, and yet this course is only taken by students in the Clinical concentration, who do not fully represent all students.

**Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Engage diversity in practice in the service of human rights and social and economic justice at an Advanced Practice Level.

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

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

This outcome will be demonstrated by successful completion of the Role Play Therapy Presentation required in SW666 (Social Work Multicultural Practice II). This assignment challenges student to demonstrate advanced practice competencies associated with skills, methods, and strategies obtained through the course. This Signature Assignment is worth 30% of the final course grade.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	83	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	18
Total Number of Students Assessed:	101	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	82.2%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:**

83 of 101 students, or 82.2%, met the criterion for mastery (in content knowledge and communication) on this role play assignment this year. This represents an increase in sample size, up from 94 scores submitted the previous year. However, a proficiency rate of 82.2% represents a significant drop from 2014-5 (93%) and from 2015-6 (94.7%). The reason for this drop will need to be examined more fully by the Multicultural Practice II instructors. It may relate to variation in curriculum, instruction, or the scoring of the assignment. Additionally, it is not clear from this composite score whether students struggle more with content mastery, communication or both. It is laudable, however, that we still have a higher rate of success than is our benchmark (80%) on this assignment. Future assessments should include more students from outside of the Clinical Concentration.

**Student Learning Outcome 4:**

Consistent with Advanced Practice Concentration, 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 knowledge and skills
- Effective use of technology

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

This outcome will be demonstrated by the student's ability to distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge in SW530 (Evaluation Research). This

Signature Assignment is graded on the Introduction, Methods, and overall quality of the student's Institutional Review Board (IRB) proposal. This capstone project represents 20% of the final grade.

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	131	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	8
Total Number of Students Assessed:	139	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	94.2%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:**

This assignment, completed at the end of the first year of all MSW students, asks students to develop a literature-informed research plan, using maximally valid research methodology. In 2014-5, 90% achieved proficiency, in 2015-6, 93.9% achieved proficiency, and this year, 94.2% achieved proficiency, possibly representing steady improvement in the curriculum and instruction used to prepare students for this assignment. This is the only outcome measure that addresses the NMHU trait of use of technology (through online research), so this high rate of success is reassuring. That said, more targeted measures of skills should be developed. Finally, it is encouraging to observe that the sample size was increased to 139 from 98 the previous year, indicating more participation by instructors. We will need to continue to facilitate compliance our instructors.

**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. Additionally, as noted above, 3 of the 4 outcomes measures include only MSW students pursuing the Clinical Concentration. While they do represent the majority of our students, we should be including students in the Leadership & Administration Concentration and the Bilingual-Bicultural Clinical Concentration as well, for greater representation. Thus, we may need to include either more measures from the generalist first year curriculum or measures from all three specialized second year courses.

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 begin 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 of the requisite skills. 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).