Outcome Assessment Report, for academic year 2018-9
Facundo Valdez School of Social Work
Bachelor of Social Work Program

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 Facundo Valdez School of Social Work is to educate students to practice social work competently with the diverse, multicultural populations of New Mexico and the Southwest. This context of cultural and regional responsiveness informs the School's creation and implementation of all its educational programs. The School has a primary commitment to Hispanic and Native American people. Our curriculum grounds students in core professional social work values, skills and ethical principles, and provides a focused awareness and respect for cultural differences and how poverty affects the well-being of people in the region.

Assessment Methods Overview:
The School of Social Work has recently applied for CSWE reaccreditation, with a decision expected in October of 2020. To prepare for this application, the School conducted an intensive self-study during the 2018-9 school year. As part of these efforts, for each of the nine social work competencies outlined by CSWE (ethical and professional behavior, engaging diversity, advancing rights and justice, etc.,) the School identified one classroom-based assignment that was used to assess student learning in that area. Every student in every section of required courses, regardless of teaching location or mode of delivery, was given the same instructions for these select assignments, and every instructor used a standardized rating scale targeted to the specified social work competency to rate the student's mastery, independent of the student's overall grade for the assignment. All instructors were trained on the use of these ratings scales. Each scale consisted of at least two questions that assessed the specific dimensions of the competency that was embedded in the assignments, and were rated on the same ordinal scale ranging from no competency to exceeds expectations for competency. For example, to assess the competency in the area of social work research, instructors rated the extent to which students successfully used literature to inform a research question and the extent to which they presented a maximally valid research plan to collect data, two dimensions of skill in this area.

In order to assess more general student learning outcomes for the University, the rating scales for four of the nine selected assignments additionally prompted instructors to rate student mastery of one of the NMHU traits. Thus, instructors administered a standardized assignment, and upon reviewing student work, they completed a rating scale consisting of at least two questions tapping into a social work competency, and then, in some cases, they *also* rated the student on an NMHU trait-specific question. The assessment of the student mastery of the social work competencies and the NMHU traits were thus integrated.

A summary table documenting the courses and assignments used to assess both the nine social

work competencies and the four NMHU traits at the BSW level appears below. You'll note that efforts have been made to select courses at both the junior and senior levels.

CSWE Social Work Competency	Course	Assignment	Supplemental Q re NMHU Trait
1) ethical, professional behavior	331 Law & Ethics	Research Assignment	Critical thinking
2) engage diversity	383 Diversity	Critical Self-Reflection	
3) advance rights & justice	466 Practice 4	Community Intervention	
4) research	430 Research 2	IRB Proposal	Use of Technology
5) policy practice	341 Policy	Action Plan	
6) engage	366 Practice 1	Life Span Role Play Assignment	Effective Communication
7) assess	468 Theory	Theory-Based Assessment	Content Knowledge
8) intervene	465 Practice 3	Family Assessment	
9) evaluate	465 Practice 3	Family Assessment	

The four ratings scales used to assess the NMHU Traits are described below, along with a presentation of the results. Of note is that while we had full participation by instructors for the ratings of the social work competencies, in some cases, we did have missing data related to the NMHU traits, as some instructors overlooked the last question on the rating scale (which often appeared on a second page).

For information on outcomes related to the social work competencies, please see Volume I (Narrative Response to Accreditation Standards) of the *NMHU Facundo Valdez School of Social Work Self-Study* for the BSW Program, the sections related to Accreditation Standard 4.0: Assessment, 4.0.1 through 4.0.4.

Specific Measures of Learning Outcomes, with Results:

Assessment #1:
CSWE competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical & Professional Behavior
NMHU Trait: Critical and Reflective Thinking

The Legal Research Assignment in SW331, Law & Ethics, was used to indicate student competency in understanding and demonstrating **Ethical and Professional Behavior**. In this assignment, students apply an ethical decision-making framework, the relevant sections of the New Mexico Social Work Practice Act and relevant areas of the NASW Code of Ethics to critically analyze how a court case about mandated reporting of intent to harm has influenced social workers, their ethical and legal responsibilities, and policy outcomes. This assignment was also used to assess the student on the NMHU Trait, **Critical and Reflective Thinking.**

In addition to rating students on dimensions of ethical and professional behavior, instructors rated them on the trait by answering the following question:

How well did the student demonstrate critical and reflective thinking? (e.g., integrating and weighing multiple sources of information, grounding conclusions in evidence, providing rationale for conclusions)?
- o   0 = Not at all (does not demonstrate this trait)
- o   1 = Inadequately (some problems evident in demonstration of this trait)
- o   2 = Adequately (demonstrates the trait, but falls short of full mastery)
- o   3 = Well (demonstrates mastery of the trait appropriate for BSW level)
- o   4 = Exceptionally well (exceeds expectations for mastery of the trait at BSW level)

The benchmark was set at 3, demonstrating mastery of the trait. Ratings of 0, 1 and 2 were combined to indicate that the student did not demonstrate mastery, and ratings of 3 and 4 were combined to indicate that the student did demonstrate mastery. Descriptive statistics reveal the following rates of proficiency, or mastery, in the area of critical thinking:

Number of students Assessed	109
Number of students meeting benchmark	89 (81.7%)
Number of students not meeting the benchmark	20 (18.3%)

Interpretation of Results:
Nearly 82% of the 109 students who were assessed on this trait were rated by their instructors as demonstrating proficiency in critical and reflective thinking, appropriate for the BSW-level. This is encouraging! However, just over 18% show less than full mastery and therefore would benefit from supplemental education and support to build these skills. Luckily, critical thinking is incorporated into many assignments in both the junior and senior year of the BSW program, and as SW 331 (now SOWK 3310) is one of the first courses that students take in this program, they have many additional opportunities to receive instruction and feedback on these skills.

Assessment #2:
CSWE competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
NMHU Trait: Effective Use of Technology

The IRB Proposal in SW430, Research Methods II, was used to indicate student competency in understanding and demonstrating **Research** knowledge and skills. In this assignment, students are asked to select a topic related to social work practice and the populations served, and to read at least 3 peer-reviewed research journal articles on the topic. They then use the findings of this literature review, their own practice experience, and their knowledge of maximally ethical and valid practices to craft a research question and methodology. They then communicate this planned research methodology by completing a research proposal for the NMHU Institutional Review Board (IRB). This IRB proposal includes, at the very least, outlining a study rationale, a data collection method (including a measurement instrument), a sampling method, and proposed efforts to protect research participants.

This assignment was also used to assess students on the NMHU Trait, **Effective Use of Technology.** In addition to rating the students on dimensions of research, instructors rated them on the trait by answering the following question:

How effectively did the student use technology (e.g., use of writing or presentation software, data management or analysis software, online research tools)?
- o   0 = Not at all (does not demonstrate this trait)
- o   1 = Inadequately (some problems evident in demonstration of this trait)
- o   2 = Adequately (demonstrates the trait, but falls short of full mastery)
- o   3 = Well (demonstrates mastery of the trait appropriate for BSW level)
- o   4 = Exceptionally well (exceeds expectations for mastery of the trait at BSW level)

Again, the benchmark was set at 3, demonstrating mastery of the trait. Ratings of 0, 1 and 2 were combined to indicate the student did not demonstrate mastery, and ratings of 3 and 4 were combined to indicate the student did demonstrate mastery. Descriptive statistics reveal the following rates of proficiency, or mastery, in the area of technology:

Number of students Assessed	105
Number of students meeting benchmark	79 (75.2%)
Number of students not meeting the benchmark	26 (24.8%)

Interpretation of Results:
Just over three quarters (75.2%) of the 105 students who were assessed on this trait were rated by their instructors as demonstrating effective use of technology, appropriate for the BSW-level. Roughly one quarter (24.8%) showed less than full mastery of this trait and will therefore benefit from supplemental education and support to build their technology use skills. Throughout their BSW program, students must learn to be critical users of internet-based information, and they must learn to use web-based and software-based applications. As progressively more of our course content is made available through technologies like Brightspace and Zoom, we will need to continually assess student needs in this area.

Assessment #3:
CSWE competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
NMHU Trait: Effective Communication

The Life Span Role Play Assignment in SW366, Generalist Practice 2, was used to indicate student competency in understanding and demonstrating **Engagement** knowledge and skills. In this assignment, students were asked to demonstrate basic social work interviewing and communication skills appropriate to the developmental life stage of a client system through a role play activity. Students were responsible for creating and writing a client scenario which describes the client situation**,** including current status, strengths and limitations, and current

goals and objectives. They also wrote a summary of the characteristics of the assigned developmental stage and discussed how it would influence their approach to interviewing the client system within the role-play.

This assignment was also used to assess the student on the NMHU Trait, **Effective Communication.** In addition to rating the student on dimensions of engagement, instructors rated them on the trait by answering the following question:

How effectively did the student communicate, orally or in writing (e.g., how clearly, accurately, appropriately for the audience)?
   o   0 = Not at all (does not demonstrate this trait)
   o   1 = Inadequately (some problems evident in demonstration of this trait)
   o   2 = Adequately (demonstrates the trait, but falls short of full mastery)
   o   3 = Well (demonstrates mastery of the trait appropriate for BSW level)
   o   4 = Exceptionally well (exceeds expectations for mastery of the trait at BSW level)

Again, the benchmark was set at 3, demonstrating mastery of the trait. Ratings of 0, 1 and 2 were combined to indicate the student did not demonstrate mastery, and ratings of 3 and 4 were combined to indicate the student did demonstrate mastery. Descriptive statistics reveal the following rates of proficiency, or mastery, in the area of communication:

Number of students Assessed	105
Number of students meeting benchmark	79 (75.2%)
Number of students not meeting the benchmark	26 (24.8%)

Interpretation of Results:
Just over three quarters (75.2%) of the 105 students who were assessed on this trait were rated by their instructors as demonstrating effective communication, appropriate for the BSW-level. Roughly one quarter (24.8%) showed less than full mastery, and therefore would benefit from supplemental education and support to build these skills. Oral and written communication is a part of nearly all classroom activities and assignments in the BSW program, and all field placements, so students have many opportunities to get support and feedback from a diversity of instructors. Our faculty are interested in creating new, additional opportunities to build written communication skills (such as a social work elective focused on professional writing), as this is an area where some students continue to struggle.

Assessment #4:
CSWE competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
NMHU Trait: Content Knowledge & Skills

The Theory-Based Assessment Assignment in SW468, Theories of Social Work Practice, was used to indicate student competency in understanding and demonstrating **Assessment** knowledge and skills. In this assignment, students were asked to complete a bio-psychosocial-spiritual assessment of and apply four theoretical paradigms (psychodynamic, cognitive-

behavioral, experiential, and trans-personal) to a sample case. They also were asked to describe how they would build and use self-awareness in serving such a client.

This assignment was also used to assess students on the NMHU Trait, **Content Knowledge and Skills.** In addition to rating them on dimensions of assessment, instructors rated students on the trait by answering the following question:

How well did the student demonstrate mastery of the relevant social work knowledge and skills (e.g., correct application of theory, terminology, or social work skills)?
- o   0 = Not at all (does not demonstrate this trait)
- o   1 = Inadequately (some problems evident in demonstration of this trait)
- o   2 = Adequately (demonstrates the trait, but falls short of full mastery)
- o   3 = Well (demonstrates mastery of the trait appropriate for BSW level)
- o   4 = Exceptionally well (exceeds expectations for mastery of the trait at BSW level)

Again, the benchmark was set at 3, demonstrating mastery of the trait. Ratings of 0, 1 and 2 were combined to indicate the student did not demonstrate mastery, and ratings of 3 and 4 were combined to indicate the student did demonstrate mastery. Descriptive statistics reveal the following rates of proficiency, or mastery, in the area of content knowledge and skills:

Number of students Assessed	74
Number of students meeting benchmark	63 (85.1%)
Number of students not meeting the benchmark	11 (14.9%)

Interpretation of Results:
Over 85% of the 74 students who were assessed on this trait were rated by their instructors as demonstrating content knowledge and skills, appropriate for the BSW-level. Only 15% showed less than full mastery of content knowledge and skills, which is very reassuring. The "content" in this case related to bio-psychosocial-spiritual assessment skills and the applications of social work theories of practice. This assignment is undertaken in the student's last semester in their BSW program, and we are gratified to see so many rated as mastering the social work content and skills. Of course, attention is needed to determine how we can support more students in achieving the benchmark in this area. Additionally, we should note that there was a lower response rate for this item, as a number of instructors failed to complete the NMHU trait on this particular rating scale. (Only 74 of 96 completed rating scales included a score for this item.) Thus, we will need to improve the data collection method to reduce this measurement error.

As this NMHU Trait relates most directly to the nine social work competencies, it should be noted here that our students demonstrated high levels of competence in most areas of the classroom-based assessments, but even higher levels of social work skill-based competence in their field placements. Again, please refer to Sections 4.0.1 through 4.0.4 of the BSW Program's self-study narrative for elaboration.

Utilization of Results:

CSWE required that we indicate the percentage of students meeting the benchmark for each competency-specific rating. Summary of this data identified a few of the social work competencies where students demonstrated somewhat lower rates of achieving the benchmark (notably, engaging diversity, research, and evaluation of practice). Please see the Self-Study, Volume I, sections 4.0.1 through 4.0.4 for full results and discussion of implications for program improvement.

For each NMHU trait indicator, we generated frequency data, as discussed above, and were able to determine where our students are struggling. Students achieved the benchmark roughly 75% for use of technology and effective written and oral communication, 80% of the time for critical thinking, and 85% of the time for content knowledge and skills. With our focus, as it was, on analysis of data related to the social work competencies, we did not break these findings down by program location, or mode of delivery, which might be helpful to do in the future. In any case, at all of our program locations we continue to identify and promote appropriate supports for students to help them build their academic skills, as indicated by the NMHU Traits. For instance, in Albuquerque, where formal university-level supports were historically limited, in recent years, we have added an onsite writing lab, run by a trained graduate student, and we have an emerging plan to add an onsite technology support lab, run by a trained work study student, who can assist with Banner, Brightspace, OneDrive, and the like. If needed, we might consider expanding these services to other centers that do not have university facilities at hand.

This was a new data collection process and therefore served as a trial. While we had full participation by instructors implementing the rating scales, we did not have complete data for the Trait questions. These questions nearly always appeared on a second page of a Word document that instructors used to guide their ratings. In the future, assuming we proceed with this assessment plan, we would like to move towards electronic forms to remove this barrier to full participation. This would also limit the need for data entry and data management. For our next wave of data collection, we hope also to expand the numbers of assessments, as per a recommendation put forth by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, so as to include more than one measure of each trait, perhaps by including one measure for juniors and one for seniors. Or, conversely, we can identify new ways to generate data to best identify student learning needs. The School's Curriculum Committee is currently evaluating our assessment plan for next year, for both the social work competencies and the NMHU Traits. Ideally, we will continue to expand and improve our generation of usable data that can help inform programming.

Changes to the Program Based on Results:

Changes made in response to the social work competency data are outlined in section 4.0.4 of the Self-Study. Changes made in response these data, related to the NMHU Traits, which tap into more general academic and life skills, are still under discussion. That said, the faculty members of the School of Social Work have carefully reviewed the outcome data related to the

social work competencies, and have initiated a few changes, which will hopefully benefit the NMHU Traits as well. The most important of these changes include improving the oversight and support offered by Lead Faculty members for each course, with the hope of promoting both educational quality and improved consistency between instructors. Attention will be given to supporting instructors in developing applied learning activities. Revisions and improvements have also been made to specific courses, or are still under discussion, in response to the self-study findings. The Law and Ethics course has been revised to promote greater attention to ethics and to critical thinking, and possible changes to the activities and assignments for the Diversity and Research courses are being explored.

Retention Strategies:

The Facundo Valdez School of Social Work actually has good retention and graduation rates. We presume this is due, in part, to our well-defined course sequence or program map, which provides students a clear pathway to degree completion. It is also likely due, in part, to the fact that we only teach upper-classmen, who have already achieved some academic success. That said, we can and do make steps to improve. Our primary efforts to improve retention have focused on improving our advisement structure. We have a system in place to assure 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. We are currently in the process of developing a way of tracking and structuring advisement efforts and outcomes, and also a student conduct policy, to better outline procedures for supporting students who struggle with the behavioral aspects of education in the classroom and field placement settings. In the future, the School of Social Work also 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).