Weber State University, which celebrated the grand opening of the completely renovated Lindquist Hall last spring, has something else to look forward to – a brand-new master’s degree program. In Fall 2020, the Department of Social Work & Gerontology will welcome its inaugural, fifteen-member cohort of Master of Social Work (MSW) students to the College of Social & Behavior Sciences.

The MSW program will build on the outstanding undergraduate education available with both the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees currently offered in the Department of Social Work & Gerontology featuring approximately twenty-three new courses. These courses will provide MSW students flexibility in cross-departmental elective classes with the Criminal Justice, Health Administration, and Education departments.

There will also be an option for advanced standing which is planned to begin in Fall 2021 with the second fifteen-member cohort. Advanced standing would be open to any student who has completed a bachelor’s degree in social work and allow a seamless transition from undergraduate to graduate education.

Chair of the Department of Social Work & Gerontology, Mark O. Bigler, LCSW, PhD, shared that the MSW degree is built on a harm-reduction framework and a local focus with clinical skills relevant to the population of Weber County, the state of Utah and the broader intermountain region; in other words, training social workers in their own backyard to take care of those in-need within their community.

The courses for the Master of Social Work program are being created keeping student requests, market demand and underrepresented skills in other state graduate programs in mind. The department would eventually like to offer graduate certificates in addition to the MSW; added credentials for marketability when students finish the program and begin looking for jobs.

Any student completing the MSW degree would be primed for becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and prepared for careers such as medical social worker, mental health therapist, substance abuse counselor or child welfare case worker.

To be eligible for admission to the Weber State University Master of Social Work Program, applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. A bachelor’s degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution.
2. A satisfactory scholastic average, generally a minimum grade-point average of B or better (3.0 on a 4-point scale).
3. Significant undergraduate exposure to courses in the social sciences.
4. A course in introductory statistics, research methods, or quantitative reasoning.
5. Candidates for advanced standing must also have a course in mental health diagnostics.
6. Recommended courses in both the social and hard sciences.
Graduation requirements will include 60 total credit hours (approximately 15 credits per semester) consisting of:

- 9 elective credits
- 12 field credits
- The balance will include core foundational, practice and science/research credits

For more information about this exciting, new Master of Social Work degree program, contact Department Chair Mark Bigler at 801-626-6156 or mbigler@weber.edu.