



# WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

July 1, 2024

## **Dean Response to Master of Social Work 2023-2024 Program Review**

I have read the documentation for the review of the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program and would like to thank all individuals involved with the report writing, accreditation process, and organization of the program. This was a herculean effort for all involved. We have had two graduations over the past two years with over 90 students receiving their MSW degree. These graduates are going out into the local and regional community and serving others in need. A special thanks to Dr. Corina D Segovia-Tadehara, Director of the MSW program and also Dr. Mark Bigler former chair of the Department of Social Work & Gerontology for their efforts in setting up the MSW program.

**Strengths:** The MSW program exhibits several strengths, including a highly competent faculty and relevant courses. The faculty's varied backgrounds and training enrich students' learning experiences, and their dedication to education and clinically-based training for students is highly commendable. Students feel well-prepared for their careers, thanks to both classroom instruction, field experience, and mentoring. Additionally, the program maintains valuable partnerships with community organizations, enhancing students' opportunities for employment.

**Program Recommendations and Program Response:** I appreciate the thought and time that went into the recommendations for improvement as outlined by the Board of Accreditation (BOA). To address the areas needing improvement, the BOA recommendations are summarized below along with recent steps taken by the MSW program.

1. **BOA Program Recommendation Accreditation Standard 3.0.3:**
  - The program must continually improve the learning environment to support varied identities. The program is reviewing state legislation (HB 261). I suggest working with WSU legal counsel to help navigate accreditation obligations and the Utah law.
  - It was suggested that although university-level goals and resources were described, specific plans at the program level to improve diversity efforts need to be detailed. The MSW program has hired a new recruiter/advisor for the department to help recruit potential candidates from various colleges and universities. Additionally, academic advisors, faculty, and the program director are available to affirm and support students with diverse identities. I continue to support the measures taken by the MSW program to have a varied student body as part of the MSW cohorts.
2. **BOA Program Recommendation Accreditation Standard 4.0.1:**
  - The program was asked to have a plan for ongoing assessment of student outcomes

for competencies at both “generalist” and “specialized” levels. While an assessment plan was provided, the BOA mentioned that it lacked clarity on how certain measures, such as the “Portfolio assignment” and “Competency Reflection Paper”, assess all nine (9) social work competencies.

- The MSW program has revised its assessment matrix and measures to ensure they reflect all competencies. The upcoming report will reflect these changes. I support the progress that has been made.
3. **BOA Program Recommendation Accreditation Standard 4.0.2:**
    - The BOA stressed that the MSW program must provide summary data and outcomes for the assessment of competencies for the most recent year, and that only one semester of data was provided instead of the required one year.
    - The MSW program has summarized and updated data and outcomes for the 2023-2024 academic year for both the generalist and specialized study years. This data includes the assessment of each of the 9 competencies and the percentage of students who met the program benchmarks. The MSW program is to be applauded for the advancement that they have made.
  4. **BOA Program Recommendation Accreditation Standard 4.0.3:**
    - It was stated by the BOA that the program must report its most recent assessment outcomes using specific forms on its website, updated every two years.
    - The program has addressed this recommendation and will continue to update the form AS 4(m) each academic year.
  5. **BOA Program Recommendation Accreditation Standard 4.0.4:**
    - The program must describe the process for evaluating outcomes and their implications for program renewal as stressed by the BOA and that more data is needed to fully comply.
    - The MSW program conducts “meet and greet” sessions with students to understand their needs and concerns. Feedback from these meetings, plus course evaluations, and exit interviews are used to make improvements. Changes include adding course sections, creating block courses, offering new clinically based electives, and hiring new faculty. Additionally, training sessions for agency supervisors on the 9 competencies have improved field experiences and competency ratings. The program will continue these initiatives, along with student orientations and community partner discussions, to enhance MSW education and support clinical social work, harm reduction, and work with the Latinx community. The Dean’s Office supports the progress that has been made.
  6. **MSW Program Recommendation - Hire an administrative/enrollment specialist:** The MSW program was authorized to hire an enrollment/recruitment specialist and that individual has been hired.
  7. **MSW Program Recommendation - Revisit admission deadline:** MSW Program has changed the deadline to an earlier time (from December 15 to November 30). This additional time will allow for a thorough review of application and time to secure field sites. The program is in discussion to possibly accept summer applications. I support earlier due dates for the applications and encourage the director to collect data and talk to other MSW programs to determine the best timing for deadlines.

8. **MSW Program Recommendation - Secure an intern tracking system:** MSW program is investigating a tracking system (TEVERA). The dean's office is hopeful that it will be up and running by fall semester and is willing to help accelerate the process.
9. **MSW Program Recommendation - Ensure a program-focused experience:** MSW program secured \$380,000 in state funds to enhance the program and will hire a new MSW faculty member starting July 1, 2024.

In summary, the MSW program boasts several strengths, including strong leadership, highly talented faculty, students who feel well-prepared for their careers, and strong community partnerships. The MSW program has strong support from the dean's office and I am willing to help in any way to ensure the program's success. As the program implements the BOA recommendations, the educational experience for its students will be enhanced.

Best regards,



**Julie Rich, D.Phil.**

Dean

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