The University of Hawai‘i School of Social Work is recognized nationally and internationally for its outstanding faculty; range of research and publications, including the development of the Social Welfare Evaluation and Research Unit (SWERU); focus on Asian and Pacific Islander groups in Hawai‘i; and diverse fields of practice in health, mental health, child and family, and gerontology.

The mission of the School of Social Work is to contribute to the advancement of social work practice in its many forms for the purpose of preventing or resolving the most critical social problems. Within this general purpose, the school reaffirms social work’s historic commitment to increase social justice and availability of opportunity for underrepresented and oppressed groups.

The principal responsibility of the School is the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge that will benefit Hawai‘i. In particular, it is the goal of the School of Social Work to increase comprehension of the ways in which social policy, social work practice, and research can be improved through understanding of the Asian and Pacific cultures of our state and region.

Academic Programs

Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work
Prepares students for beginning-level generalist practice and provides a base for advanced social work education.

Social Work, Master of Social Work
Prepares students for professional advanced social work practice. Career opportunities include direct practice, supervision and administration, research and other positions in public and private agencies.

Social Welfare, Ph.D.
Prepares students for leadership roles in the profession of social work and the field of social welfare. The program encourages scholarly inquiry to enhance knowledge of culture (particularly the cultures of the Asia and Pacific region) and the societal structures intended to enhance well being.

Key Programs and Centers

Social Welfare Evaluation and Research Unit (SWERU) is the School’s unit charged with meeting the evaluation and research needs of programs in the State of Hawai‘i that addresses social welfare issues. The primary objective of the unit is to provide evaluation and research consultation and services to relevant community agencies and programs. SWERU also has a mission to develop research initiatives that will contribute to empirical knowledge bases that are necessary to solve human welfare problems of relevance to Hawai‘i and the Pacific/Asian region.

International Dimensions

The geographic location of the University and the East-West Center’s close ties with the University afford opportunities for understanding of international social welfare. Cross-cultural aspects of social welfare, particularly those pertaining to Asian countries and the Pacific Basin, are included in courses and symposia in the School of Social Work and in other parts of the University. The School also undertakes partnerships with schools and other organizations in Asia and the Pacific. Special non-degree and short-term programs are occasionally arranged for students from abroad with varying educational backgrounds who wish to contribute to social welfare in their own countries through study in a different cultural setting.

For more information, please contact Interim Dean Jon Matsuoka at (808) 956-6300 or jmatsuok@hawaii.edu