REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE
PH.D. SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM

Presented to the
Graduate Division
University of Hawai‘i
April 9, 2012

REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Dennis Kauahi, Deputy Director of the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center
- Sandra A. LeVasseur, Associate Professor and Ph.D Program Director in the School of Nursing at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- David Takeuchi, Professor of Social Work and Sociology and Associate Dean for Research in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington.

REVIEW COMMITTEE CHARGE

The Myron B. Thompson School of Social Welfare (referred to as MBTSSW or the School) Ph.D. program was established in 1991 and formally approved by the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents on May 16, 2003. The MBTSSW Ph.D. is the only doctoral degree in social welfare conferred in the State of Hawai‘i and Pacific Basin. As part of its responsibility as the sole program in the region, the School emphasizes leadership development in education by requiring a teaching practicum after completion of the qualifying examinations.

The Ph.D. program is chaired by an elected member of the Ph.D. program committee and recommended to the School’s Dean for appointment to the position. Four instructional graduate faculty teach the Ph.D. fundamental courses with support from two specialist graduate faculty. Students have opportunities to collaborate with faculty in diverse areas of research including: Gerontology, behavioral health, child welfare, health disparities, Native Hawaiian and Asian American health, social development in indigenous communities, immigration issues, and trauma and disaster treatment.

The Review Committee was charged with assessing the Social Welfare Ph.D. program and its overall quality, educational value, role within the University of Hawai‘i, role within the academic discipline and profession, and resource requirements. The Review Committee examined the School’s self-study and additional materials that provided more details to the self-study:

- A list of the Ph.D. graduates over the past five years with placements
- A list of the completed dissertations
- The curriculum vita for faculty
- The results of a student survey conducted in Fall Semester 2011

In addition to these materials, two web links provided access to the UH system strategic plans and UH Mānoa vision:

- UH System: http://www.hawaii.edu/ovppp/stratplansys.html
- UH Manoa: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/vision/
A site visit was conducted on March 5-6, 2012 and the agenda included meetings with the Dean and the Ph.D. Program Director, Ph.D. faculty, and Ph.D. students representing different cohorts. At the exit meeting of the site visit, the Review Committee reported on its preliminary conclusions and recommendations to representatives of the Graduate Division, the Dean and Ph.D. Program Director.

The Review Committee’s report consists of a response to the guidelines for assessment of established programs, an overall context that helps to frame the conclusions, some key findings, and recommendations aimed at moving the School’s Ph.D. program forward. This School’s self-study provides a companion source for the data and narrative that serve as the foundation for the Review Committee’s observations.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT OF ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS

This section discusses the six questions that guide the assessment of established graduate programs. The Review Committee uses the self-study and site visit observations to respond to each question.

1. **Is the program organized to meet its objectives?**

The Review Committee finds that the MBTSSW Ph.D. program is organized to meet its objectives.

The application process for the Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare is geared toward selecting students who demonstrate the greatest potential for scholarship and future contributions to the field of social welfare in Hawai‘i and the Pacific Basin. The Doctoral Program Committee of the MBTSSW reviews Ph.D. applications for evidence of a Master of Social Work from a CSWE-accredited school/program of social work, post-M.S.W. experience in social work, demonstrated capacity for advanced academic work and potential for scholarship.

Students in the Ph.D. program are individually advised by the Program Chair at least twice per academic year. Students also participate in an annual review. The Ph.D. Program Committee, academic advisor, and Ph.D. course instructors are involved in the review. The purpose of the annual review is to address each student’s academic progress, identify areas of learning difficulty and individual needs such as research funding, computer access, and faculty resources that impact successful advancement in the program.

The Ph.D. in Social Welfare requires a minimum of 46 hours of course credit excluding dissertation credits. The goal of the curriculum is to provide structure that allows students to progress seamlessly through the program while providing flexibility and rigor. The curriculum is divided into two categories: (a) required core courses to ensure standardized basic knowledge and (b) specialization work, in which students determine and design their curriculum; teaching and research practica; electives; dissertation proposal; and the dissertation. As shown below the curriculum in the first year of the program is heavily prescribed to ensure all students are equipped with comparable basic knowledge.

**Fall Semester, First Year**

SW 651 (3) Quantitative Methods I  
SW 750 (3) Analysis & Development of Knowledge for Social Work  
SW 752 (3) Qualitative Research, Philosophical, Methodological and Analytic Approaches
Spring Semester, First Year
SW 654 (3) Multiple Regression and Behavioral Research
SW 731 (3) Social Policy Analysis
SW 751 (3) Quantitative Methods II

Once the required core courses are completed students may take the qualifying examination. The qualifying exam covers the content of the first-year courses in research methods, theory, and policy. After successful completion of the qualifying examination students are admitted to pre-candidacy and commence a program of study within the chosen area of specialization.

Students may begin discussing formation of their specialization committee with the Ph.D. Chair prior to passing the Qualifying Examination. However, the specialization committee is not official until students pass their Qualifying Examination. Students are also required to take Teaching and Research Practica after completing the Qualifying Examination. In the specialization phase, students work with their specialization chair and confer with committee members to identify their substantive area of study and select course(s) relevant to their scholarly objectives only after the specialization plan receives written approval from the Program Chair and members the committee.

After the specialization courses are successfully completed, students may take the SW 755 Specialization Integration Seminar. SW755 focuses on preparing students for the comprehensive examination (i.e., Dissertation Proposal Defense). The comprehensive examination is prepared under the supervision of the appointed Dissertation Chair. Once the Dissertation Chair and committee members determine the student is ready, the oral comprehensive examination may be scheduled. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination constitutes advancement to doctoral candidacy and the student may begin working on the dissertation research. The final requirements of candidacy are the successful defense of the dissertation at a public examination and the submission of the dissertation manuscript before the Ph.D. is conferred.

2. Are program resources adequate?

The Review Committee finds that program resources, especially the facility, the number of tenure line faculty and budget for graduate student assistantships, less than adequate to meet the ambition and potential of the program. This issue is discussed further in the summary and recommendations section.

The student: graduate faculty ratio for the Ph.D. program is 23:13 or 1.77. However, this ratio is attained because of the number of temporary and non-tenure line faculty. It is difficult for any program to have stability if it relies heavily on non-tenure line faculty.

Despite the limited resources, graduate faculty members of the MBTSSW Ph.D. in Social Welfare demonstrate diverse research areas that include:

- Gerontology
- Behavioral health
- Child Welfare
- Health disparities
- Native Hawaiian and Asian American health
- Social Development in Indigenous communities
- Immigration issues
- Trauma and disaster treatment
- Others
Below the Ph.D. program budget and sources of funding are identified for the 2011-12 academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>$84,025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returned Overhead</td>
<td>$2,110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH Foundation Support &amp; Scholarships</td>
<td>$9,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistantships</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$28,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funding: AY 2011-12</strong></td>
<td><strong>$155,214</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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One (0.5 FTE) Program Specialist (general funds) also provides all administrative support to the Ph.D. program.

One area of concern is related to graduate student assistantships. Eleven students received either grant funding, scholarships or award during their candidacy. However, patterns of graduate student support indicate that the school faces an ongoing challenge in obtaining resources and funding for doctoral students. For instance, Title IV-E federal funding for the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Human Services Eligibility Center, that provided 1 to 2 Graduate Assistantships (GA) positions, was no longer available as of November 2011. Currently the program has 1 GA position that is funded by the Consuelo Foundation.

Henke Hall is not a suitable home for the School. Henke Hall was intended as a temporary location for the School but it has remained at the present site since December 2000, a period spanning over 11 years. In Henke Hall, students have access to a computer Lab that is utilized by B.S.W., M.S.W. and Ph.D. students. Office and teaching space is available for the Ph.D. students in Henke Hall. In addition, Ph.D. students have access to a meeting room and a Ph.D. Program Assistant office. Information and technology office is also onsite to support student learning.

3. **Is the program efficient?**

The Review Committee finds that the program is efficient in its use of limited resources.

All instructional or tenured faculty are required to teach 5 courses per academic year. Teaching loads are adjusted by: Chairships; course buy-outs through research grants; workload credits (e.g., Dissertation Chairships); and other workload approved credits.

4. **Is there evidence of program quality?**

The Review Committee finds evidence that the program provides quality instruction despite its limited resources.

The overall quality of the current students is reflected in their diversity. Fifty seven percent are residents of Hawai‘i, 35% are international (representing Japan, Korea, Nepal, Malaysia and Singapore), and 8% are U.S. continental. Students in the program are encouraged to engage in grant writing and to disseminate their research both nationally and internationally. A number of
Ph.D. students (8) have published in peer reviewed journals or co-authored (1) a section of a book while a student in the program.

Twenty four students have graduated from the Ph.D. in Social Welfare program since 1996-97. Out of this number, 9 (38%) were conferred their Ph.D. degree between 2006 and 2011.

The number of publications per graduate faculty ranges from 3-158 with an average of 31 publications. Within the past 5 years, faculty produced an average of 1.6 publications per year. Publications include peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, books and encyclopedia chapters. Seventy-two percent of the graduate faculty received awards. The number of awards per graduate faculty ranged from 1-9 with an average of 3.5. Faculty development opportunities, however, made available by the school are limited due to budget constraints.

5. **Are program outcomes compatible with the objectives?**

The Review Committee finds that program outcomes seem compatible with the program objectives.

Graduate employment placement over the past 5 years include 46% (11) are currently in a faculty position, 29% (7) are non-tenure track instructors at universities or other educational institutions, and 25% (6) are employed in private organizations such as clinical settings, consultant positions or with government organizations. To date there is no survey data available on alumni.

6. **Are program objectives still appropriate functions of the college and the university?**

The Review Committee finds that the program objectives are appropriate and consistent with the mission of the university.

The Ph.D. program’s purpose, activities and outcomes support and encourage the pursuit of UH Mānoa strategic goals: Transformative teaching and learning environments; promoting excellence in research; increasing engagement, partnership and collaboration with multiple levels (community, state, national, international); and facilitating excellence. The mission of the MBTSSW and the purpose of the Ph.D. program are consistent with the core strategies in the University of Hawai‘i’s strategic plan and reflective of an overall commitment to create an educational environment that prioritizes diversity and prepares social work practitioners to effectively address the needs of the people of Hawai‘i.

The MBTSSW is committed to “indigenizing” its curriculum and including pathways of learning that not only promote the rigorous and scientific methods of research, but also honor, acknowledge and incorporate the inherent wisdom and cultural strengths of the people and communities of Hawai‘i. As it continues to strive to “indigenize” its philosophy and programs, the MBTSSW has demonstrated its commitment and capacity to strive for strong working relationships with local and regional communities. Collaborative relationships incorporate the University of Hawai‘i’s mission, vision, and values. These embrace native Hawaiian cultural values of aloha and respect, the environment, and the prudent management of resources. Although referenced as Native Hawaiian, the values are universal in nature and very much a part of Hawai‘i’s pluralistic island community. The long-term solution of securing resources for the Ph.D. Program at MBTSSW involves addressing the research needs of the community and partnering with communities in their endeavors.

The MBTSSW identifies a Hawaiian place of learning and global social justice as two strategic priorities underpinning its efforts in both education and research. The preparation of Ph.D. graduates capable of addressing contemporary social issues that resonates and is relevant to
indigenous and minority populations may make significant contribution to the advancement of global social welfare.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook (2010-11) job outlook for social workers is expected to grow faster (16%) than the average for all occupations through 2018. Job prospects are forecasted to be favorable for social workers who specialize in the aging population or work in rural areas. The highest growth is projected in the following specialties:

- Medical and public health social workers is expected to grow by about 22% particularly in the area of gerontology;
- 20% growth in mental and substance abuse social workers; and
- Child, family, and school social workers is expected to grow by 12%

A significant increase in educational capacity will be required to meet the growing local and national demand for social workers over the next 20 years.

In sum, the MBTSSW Ph.D. in Social Welfare Program and the University provide the only doctoral degree in social work in the State of Hawai‘i and Pacific Basin. Accordingly, the program plays a critical role at the University, the state, and the region.

**REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The MBTSSW is emerging from a period of flux. The School, like other academic units and centers at the University of Hawai‘i, has endured the financial problems that have consumed the state and nation. In addition to these fiscal challenges, the School has seen the retirement of several tenured senior professors. The timing of the budget problems, retirement of senior faculty, and other factors have led to several developments that affect the Ph.D. program and help frame the recommendations for this report:

The lack of senior faculty members leaves the School with an unusual faculty structure. Many academic programs (including social work) are top heavy with a large pool of Full Professors and a smaller number of Assistants Professors. The MBTSSW has the opposite structure with six tenure-line Assistant Professors (6.0 FTE) and three tenured Full Professors (2.05 FTE) While senior faculty have assumed leadership positions, the remaining gap in need requires less experienced, junior faculty to also prematurely take on leadership functions often reserved for more senior faculty. The situation also leaves all faculty seeking research and training grants with very little infrastructure support from the University.

- The loss of senior faculty leaves older cohorts of Ph.D. students without the mentors who worked with them when they first entered the program. This has left some students feeling adrift and unable to find mentors who align with their research interests.

- The School does not have the capacity to guarantee funding to Ph.D. students when they are admitted into the program. Many highly-ranked Schools of Social Work guarantee 3-5 years of funding. Without this funding, the School is not competitive for top graduate students. Ph.D. students who do enroll at MBTSSW often have to scramble to secure funding during their time at the School. This funding issue can affect the completion and quality of the dissertation.

- The School does not have an infrastructure to efficiently apply for and administer grants. It is commonly recognized that research funded through grants not only can provide support for
Ph.D. students but can enhance the quality of graduate education. The absence of a research infrastructure creates a disincentive for grant applications. In addition to developing the science for grant applications, faculty members are also responsible for all of the administrative work to apply for grants, including developing their budgets. When a grant is received, the faculty member is responsible for monitoring all of the administrative activities. The coupling of the science with pre- and post-award grant activities is burdensome especially for professors who teach a full load.

- Henke Hall, the physical plant for the MBTSSW, is in disrepair and is not a suitable home for the School. Henke Hall was intended as a temporary location for the School but it has remained at the present site since December 2000, a period spanning over 11 years.

- The School is limited in its capacity to support Ph.D. travel to conferences. While students can apply for funding through the UH resources, the lack of funds reduces the opportunities social work students have to present their work at national and international conferences, develop their professional networks, and learn about developing trends in their research areas.

Despite these serious and often discouraging challenges, the MBTSSW Ph.D. program is thriving. Dean Noreen Mokuau has been extremely supportive of the Ph.D. program and is working with the administration to resolve the temporary nature of the physical facilities, enhance the status of the School at UH, integrate the School in new UH initiatives, and garner more resources for the School. Professor Paula Morelli, the Chair of the Ph.D. program, has done an exceptional job of cobbling together available resources to help find financial support for students and to ensure a quality education for students. Ph.D. students are complementary about the efforts of Jen Kishida, Program Assistant, for her administrative and social support as they manage their way in the program. The Ph.D. students providing input to this review were engaged, thoughtful, and insightful. In addition, the students are quite diverse in their cultural backgrounds and their intellectual pursuits.

Since 2007, the Ph.D. program has admitted on average 6 students per year with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 9. Currently, there are 23 students enrolled in the program with a five-year enrollment average of 17.4 students. In the past five years (i.e., 2006 - 2011) 9 Ph.D. students have successfully graduated from the program with an average of 1.6 graduates per year. Overall the program has conferred 24 Ph.Ds. Eleven (46%) of graduates are currently faculty or in an administrative position, 7 (29%) of graduates are non-tenured instructors at a university or educational organization, and 6 (25%) are employed in a variety of settings in private or government organizations. The 2001 to 2011 program data indicates the majority of students attend the program part time and the median time to graduation is six years.

The committee’s review finds that the Ph.D. program is accomplishing what it has set out to do with minimal resources. Student attrition is low, students are completing dissertations in a reasonable amount of time, and students are being placed in both academic and non-academic settings. The review committee is impressed with the MBTSSW faculty. The faculty has research interests that align with the School’s mission and values, they are engaged and focused on interesting and timely research topics, and they seemed committed to doctoral education in general and to the MBTSSW Ph.D. program in particular.

While the Ph.D. program thrives, the Review Committee sees this time as an excellent opportunity to enable it to flourish. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that there will continue to be a considerable demand for social work professionals. Accordingly, there will be reciprocal demand for leadership to enhance social work research. Social work is playing an increasingly greater part in health research, especially around issues of disparities, community engagement, and translational science. These research areas are highly fundable at the National Institutes of Health and they are also key dimensions of the MBTSSW faculty’s research expertise and foci. The MBTSSW continues to
align itself with the overall mission of the UH and, as the sole doctoral program in social work in the Pacific, plays an important part in the state and the region.

With these observations and comments, the review committee makes the following recommendations to the Graduate Division and the MBTSSW:

1. **Enable the School to develop a research infrastructure for pre and post awards.** Since the School is a relatively small unit without a high volume of grant activity, the UH might consider alternatives such as combining smaller academic units under a common research infrastructure.

2. **Provide the School with a permanent home.** The School is slated to move into a remodeled Gartley Hall within the next two years. The committee regards this as an important activity that will stabilize the Ph.D. program.

3. **Facilitate the hiring of additional tenure-line faculty.** Some consideration should be given to the hiring of more senior faculty, especially faculty with excellent records of grant success. The importance of developing a research infrastructure, as outlined in item 1 above, is critical to the success of attracting senior faculty. UH and the School should consider the prospects of cluster hires that facilitate the School to immediately build an area of research.

4. **UH should work with the School on its advancement (fund raising) efforts.** Many research universities have advancement teams available to academic units to help facilitate fund raising. One of the priorities for fundraising, in addition to providing student fellowships or stipends, is to develop funds for faculty and students to travel to professional conferences.

5. **The School should examine the availability of courses for Ph.D. students.** Some Ph.D. students noted that a few recommended courses were either unavailable or lacked specialty focus which prevented them from achieving Ph.D. milestones in a timely manner. The School should determine how widespread this problem is and develop means to resolve the problem.