University of Hawai`i at Mānoa
Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

Three Campus Priorities: Preliminary Plan

Introduction

As a land, sea, and space grant university, the mission of the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa is dedicated not only to academic and research excellence but also to serving with aloha the local, national, and international communities that surround us. Taking as its historic trust the Native Hawaiian values embedded in the concepts of kuleana, `ohana, and ahupua`a that serve to remind us of our responsibilities to family, community, and the environment, Mānoa’s hallmark is a culture of community engagement (Achieving Our Destiny Strategic Plan 2011-2015). In order to enhance our commitment to the mission, the Chancellor designated three campus priorities for 2011-2012: (1) retention and graduation, (2) Native Hawaiian advancement, and (3) graduate education quality.

The Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work is working on a preliminary plan that addresses the three campus priorities. As we engage in strategic planning for the School, these priorities will emerge at different points of faculty discussion.

Retention and Graduation

With a stable enrollment of approximately 300 students across our BSW, MSW, and PhD programs in the last several years, retention and graduation rates are high. For AY 2010-11, 93% of 74 BSW students, 94% of 216 MSW students, and 94% of 18 PhD students graduated or are continuing in Fall 2011. Specifically, the 1st year retention rates for students entering the SSW in Fall 2010 are 92% (34/37) in the BSW program*, 83% (98/118) in the MSW program*, and 100% (2/2) in the PhD program (*One-year graduation rate among these students for AY 2010-11 was 3% (1/37) for the BSW program and 10% (12/118) for the MSW program). During the same academic period, the school had a total of 103 graduates – 28 from the BSW program and 75 from the MSW program.

There have been several intervention strategies employed by the School to foster retention and enhance graduation success. These strategies are designed to improve the academic experience for the student through orienting them to the educational program and services; engaging them through advisement; and continuously using a student listserv to inform them of services and events.
• New Student Orientation

All new students entering the social work program are required to attend New Student Orientation sessions. These full-day sessions are coordinated through the School’s student services. The orientations include introductions to the Dean, the program chair, faculty and staff, student organizations, Alumni & Friends, NASW-HI Chapter, student services; practicum office; UHM services, e.g., MyUH portal, class availability schedules, and UHM student services; program organization, curriculum, and degree requirements; student rights and responsibilities; academic advising and planning; registration information; other related activities. The goal is 100% compliance by students -- student services will follow-up w/ individualized condensed sessions for those who do not attend one of the larger group orientations. All students are provided with a package of information including a New Student Orientation Handbook, student rights & responsibilities, course lists, advising form, degree credit check form, and a powerpoint handout of the session. Students are also requested to complete an evaluation after the session as part of our assessment efforts.

• Mandatory Advising

Once students have completed Orientation and have enrolled, they are assigned a permanent faculty advisor. They are minimally required to meet with their assigned advisor prior to registering for the next semester’s courses. The School’s student services provides email reminders to all students and faculty advisors for scheduling appointments during Advising Week, which is typically held one week prior to registration. Advising materials are also placed in student and faculty mailboxes. Registration holds may be placed upon those students who do not meet or consult with their advisors.

• Student List Serves

Social work students are placed on an internal email list serve per each program (BSW, MSW, PhD). These lists are managed and accessed by the Dean’s office, program chairs, practicum office, and student services. Students are kept informed on important time sensitive matters, e.g., registration, advising, tuition deadlines, filing for degrees, etc.; as well as, training and fellowship opportunities; new course offerings; student club activities; employment; financial aid, etc. It has been a successful method in providing supplemental information to our students and ensuring access to resources that support degree completion and graduation.
Native Hawaiian Advancement

Native Hawaiian students are represented in all three programs of the School. In Fall 2010, Native Hawaiian students comprised 22% (16/74) of the BSW program, 20% (43/216) of the MSW program, and 5% (1/18) of the PhD program. In general, these statistics are comparable or better than university system statistics which show Native Hawaiian students to be 23% at the undergraduate level and 11% at the graduate level (Itano, 2011). The high number of Native Hawaiian students in the MSW program is partially attributed to student enrollment in our Distance Education option which provides access to residents of Hawai`i island, Kaua`i, Maui and Moloka`i.

The School has a strong history and background in providing access and promoting success of Native Hawaiian students. Presently, there are several intervention strategies to enhance Native Hawaiian advancement.

- Mission Statement

Since 2002, there has been a focus on Native Hawaiians in the School’s mission statement, and in 2010, the faculty revised the mission statement with a reaffirmation of attention to Native Hawaiians as the indigenous people of Hawai`i.

*The mission of the MBT SSW is to provide educational excellence that advances social work with its focus on social justice. The principal responsibility is the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge for the global enterprise with special attention to Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and Asian populations in our state and region.*

- Governance

Since 2007, a Director of Indigenous Affairs has been appointed, with dedicated focus on responsibilities related to global issues and advancing indigenous social work perspectives and practices. In 2011, an Indigenous Affairs committee was elected by the faculty to serve as advisory to the Dean, and under the leadership of the Director, to advance the School as a Hawaiian place of learning in which there is an appreciation of the local to global perspective.

- Hawaiian Learning Program (HLP) - Curriculum

The HLP began in 1975, producing approximately 35 Native Hawaiians who succeeded in graduating with MSWs, from 1975-1981. In 2007, the HLP, with 3-year funding support from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Queen Lili`uokalani
Children’s Center, continued training of Native Hawaiian and other social work students in cultural knowledge, values and practices relevant to Native Hawaiian clients. This initiative, was refunded for another 2 years by OHA and QLCC in 2011, and presently has approximately 25 graduates and students. All students in the HLP do their internships in community organizations and programs that serve Native Hawaiians.

- Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Along with JABSOM (lead unit), Nursing, Law, CTAHR, and Hawai`inuikea, the MBT SSW is moving forward on the strategic hiring initiative (cluster hire) in which there are three joint faculty positions to examine the health needs of the Native Hawaiian community. A major effort is to assist in the launching of the new Master of Public Health in Indigenous Health. The School retains .25 FTE.

Along with JABSOM, Nursing, Law, and Hawai`inuikea (lead unit), the MBT SSW is advancing a proposal for an interactive and interdisciplinary academy for Native Hawaiian master health system navigators who will address the health needs of this population. This proposal is in consideration for a UHF campaign.

- University-system and Mānoa Task Forces

The Interim Dean serves on two pivotal Task Forces established by the UH President and the UHM Chancellor to assess and recommend ways to promote the university as an indigenous-serving institution and guide Native Hawaiian advancement at the Mānoa campus. In parallel work, both Task Forces are scheduled to have final reports submitted to the President and Chancellor by the beginning of 2012. To date, major themes include: (a) leadership, (b) language, and (c) community partnerships.

Quality of Graduate Education

Standard hallmarks of quality graduate education are accreditation and on-going assessment of performance. In June 2010, the Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the Council on Social Work Education voted to reaffirm the accreditation of the MSW programs for eight years ending June 2018. The PhD program which is not accredited by the CSWE is undergoing self-study for program review by UHM Graduate Division this semester. In Fall 2011, a new chair for Assessment was appointed and is convening the committee, working in collaboration with the Assessment Office of the OVCAA, to coordinate, implement and evaluate assessment tasks across the three educational programs.
PhD Program

- Curriculum

Research and teaching practica are required of PhD students once they pass the qualifying examinations. These practica enable students to be mentored, participate in, and learn research and instructional methods from experienced, effective, field-recognized faculty. Examples:

- Research practicum: PhD Students work directly with primary investigators in community-based research (nationally or State funded). These types of reciprocal learning, relationship-building and community-outreach opportunities provide long-term benefits (e.g. socio-economic wellbeing, environmental, etc.) to communities, students and the University.

- Teaching practicum: Instructional faculty provides supervision and practice wisdom in a collaborative learning process with PhD Student. This is an investment in current and future instructional quality.

Aligning courses to maximize relevance, quality and timeliness of course offerings. Foundation courses were streamlined allowing students to complete requirements with less reliance on other graduate programs dealing with class seating shortages. Students can make timely progression through the program.

Synchronous Web, Distance Education through the use of Blackboard Collaborate. Over the past 3 years the doctoral program has collaborated with the College of Education to deliver a portion of the foundation courses via synchronous web. This enables students and faculty to meet in live, virtual classrooms from internet-based locations, while providing time, energy and cost savings.

- Learning Environment Enrichment

Faculty workload credit for dissertation chairs and committee membership became a policy in 2010 and is currently being implemented. The policy is intended to boost the PhD program’s educational quality by increasing the number of faculty available to mentor and collaborate with students.
Faculty and graduate student research collaboration opportunities are an essential part of doctoral education. The program is working to enhance and support:

- Student co-authorship with faculty on publications and presentations.
- Submission of funding proposals with students.
- The research practicum as a basis for collaboration.

- Resources and Renewal

Funding and resource development for students is an ongoing process that requires constant attention.

- Aside from the program’s reliance on faculty research projects for graduate assistant funding, the eligibility program (Department of Human Services, Title-IV-E matching funds) provides funding for one PhD GAship.
- Small, one-time scholarships from private donors are available on an annual basis.
- The program continues to seek more graduate assistantships, and other sources of funding.

Website enhancement is a critical part of developing educational quality. The PhD program seeks improvement and resources in website development and communication and this area. The effective use of information technology is critical in order to:

- Attract and recruit quality graduate students from local, national and international arenas,
- Provide information about our unique program strengths and students’ best fit with our program,
- Develop potential links to community outreach and collaboration in research, and reciprocal learning partnership projects,
- Disseminate information about our graduates for job placement.
MSW Program

- Curriculum

Enhancing Advanced Competencies. Currently, we are engaged in process of planning aimed at advancing competencies which align with the UHM and MBT SSW missions, as well as an assessment of current social welfare and social work professional needs. This process was initiated in 2009 and involves 3 phases.

- **Phase 1 (AY 2009-10).** **Accomplishment:** 5 Competency Areas were identified by the MSW Curriculum Committee and our general approach to each Competency Area was articulated in a definitional statement. The competency areas of leadership development, language/cultural competency, social empowerment, facilitative local and global perspectives, and social entrepreneurship were identified.

- **Phase 2 (AY 2010-11).** **Accomplishment:** Each of the 5 competency areas was operationalized through a general specification of relevant social work values/attitudes, knowledge, and skills which we intend to address in the MSW curriculum.

- **Phase 3 (AY 2011-12).** **Intended Accomplishment:** Theoretical and conceptual constructs, as well as practice models that are evidence-based or considered exemplars of “best practices” by the profession and/or consumer communities, will be identified and appropriately integrated into curriculum sequences (e.g., practice, research, policy) and courses (e.g., general social work practice, concentration level practice).

Increasing Integration of Courses and Field Placement. We continue to explore and pilot educational opportunities for enhancing the integration and application of academic course work and field placement opportunities (practicum). Currently, the Hawaiian Learning Program places students at Hawaiian-serving agencies and provides a series of learning activities aimed at strengthening the integration of classroom instruction and practice application. At present, we are piloting a series of integration seminars aimed at facilitating knowledge and skills gained through academic courses with students’ field placements at governmental and non-profit human service agencies.
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