



April 29, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Bruno, Provost

FROM: Noreen Mokuau, Dean, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work  
 Jing Guo, Chair, PhD in Social Welfare Program

RE: Response to the PhD in Social Welfare Program Review Committee Report

Aloha. The Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work's (MBTSSW) Department of Social Work (DSW) students, faculty and staff sincerely appreciate the time and effort the Review Committee devoted to examining our PhD in Social Welfare program. Thank you for your support in this endeavor. We have received the Review Committee Report on April 2, 2019. We are submitting responses with specific references to their recommendations.

We concur that our capability to achieve benchmarks in the following areas will enhance doctoral education and permit richer engagement of faculty and students. We believe that there is movement in all areas, and with continued UHM support, we can enhance our ability to meet our mission of educational excellence.

**Response to Recommendations**

**1. Seek increased support for extramural grant preparation from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR) at UHM**

**Background.** Given limited resources, we have made prudent and modest improvements in both research infrastructure and faculty support since our last full program review in 2012.

- In 2012, we hired a G-funded APT position dedicated to both pre and post grant awards.
- From 2012-2016, we have used a one-time OVCR investment of \$50,000 to partially support competitive professional development projects of four faculty aimed at research proposal development. In 2017, with School funds we continued to support one additional competitive professional development project.
- From 2014-present, we have partnered with the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) to access research infrastructure services provided by RMATRIX and Ola HAWAII, and have provided support to five social work faculty, three of whom received research project funding.
- In 2018-2019, performance funds issued by the OVCAA will be partially dedicated to fund two competitive research pilot projects for faculty, and one competitive Grant

Challenges initiative for students, which was given to two doctoral students engaged in research on grand challenges in social work.

**Action.** We strongly concur that increased support from the OVCR will enhance the competitive success of our unit and faculty in securing funding. Funding support would apply to both research infrastructure and faculty development. At the present time, we do not have an infrastructure to efficiently apply for and administer grants. The one APT position has provided overall value, but is not sufficient to supporting faculty in grants announcements, solicitations and development. Further, we continue to need financial support to invest in building faculty capacity in competitive research applications – trainings, conference travel, pilot projects, and mentoring. Finally, supporting doctoral students with mentorship and research capacity are also important.

## **2. Social Work faculty are highly encouraged to seek financial support for GA positions through increased extramural grant application activity.**

**Background:** The primary vehicle by which social work faculty secure financial support for GA positions is through grant application, awarded contracts, and endowed professorships and chairships. For Fall 2018 cohort of four new students, two received full-year GAs supported by the Barbara Cox Anthony Endowment in Aging (Mokuau), and the Takasaki Endowment in Social Policy (Browne), and one student is hired in Spring 2019 for a newly developed GA supported by a grant from the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust (Mokuau). Our faculty work closely with the UHM Graduate Division on selected UHM campus responsibilities for GAs to better understand types and duties, eligibility criteria, recruitment, appointment, and other relevant issues in the hiring and mentoring of GAs.

**Action:** We understand the value GAs bring to a department and how their work with faculty contribute to the greater good of the institution. Moreover, we understand that advancing the research climate of the school and department can lead to increased grant and contract funding and more financial support for GAs. Advancing the research climate requires both research infrastructure support and faculty development. As discussed in point #1, and at the present time, funds that allow for an improved and efficient infrastructure will enable faculty to increase their applications and administration of grants. In 2018, a newly initiated Faculty Professional Development Opportunity provides for course buyouts for selected faculty to develop research proposals with high potential for fund securement. We encourage faculty with similar research interests within the department and across campus to collaborate for grant applications. For faculty development, the department plans to investigate further examples of innovative opportunities for GA support and lessons learned from other department and universities. We will continue to invite our faculty and others who have GAs to share their positive experiences about the costs, benefits, and rewards of working with GAs. Finally, we will continue to work closely with Graduate Division on respective areas of education with GAs.

## **3. Explore external partnerships for increased exposure and possible funding sources.**

**Background.** Social Work is known for its engagement with the community through field internships, collaborative interdisciplinary projects, and faculty service on agency boards and

committees. Further, through recent partnerships with other entities, we are able to explore funding and mentorship opportunities. Some examples of partnerships are highlighted.

- RMATRIX and Ola HAWAII affiliates such as Clinical & Translational Research – Infrastructure Network (CTRN Mountain West);
- Hā Kūpuna – National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders;
- University of Washington Indigenous Wellness Research Institute;
- JABSOM HRSA grant on geriatric education in interdisciplinary settings
- Contributing partner of *The Hawaii Journal of Health and Social Welfare*, with a column of news from social work, including projects, activities, and curricula.

**Action.** We will continue to explore and develop partnerships nationally for extramural funding and mentorship. Further, we are committed to increasing our efforts with Hawai'i-based partnerships that address workforce and prevailing issues in the state and region that fit our vision and priorities. To that end, we have faculty who have contracts/grants with the State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services on child welfare training, the Department of Health on addiction and recovery services, and non-profit organizations such as the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust on Native Hawaiian family and child welfare.

#### **4. Provide mentorship for junior faculty and course release in employment years 2 and 3.**

**Background:** The School of Social Work and Department of Social Work together make a strong commitment to the mentorship of junior faculty in these primary ways. Junior faculty:

- Receive reduced instructional responsibilities in year one
- Are provided the opportunity for reduced instructional preparatory time by teaching multiple sections of same courses in years 2 and 3.
- Are invited to apply for departmental professional development opportunities that can further reduce instructional workload for one year
- Are provided mentorship by senior faculty; e.g., invited to collaborate on established grants and projects (Hā Kūpuna); offered [limited] leadership opportunities; and by endowed chairs (Liliuokalani Trust).
- Are invited to participate in research development opportunities (some that provide for course buyouts and summer overload) sponsored by Ola HAWAII, a collaborative research infrastructure grant with SSW and JABSOM, JABSOM's HRSA Geriatric Workforce Project, and other research training programs at UHM

**Action:** We will continue with these efforts and will explore new ideas for faculty mentorship. Since our last review, we actively engage with other UHM faculty and national university research mentorship programs for junior faculty via notification of new opportunities through the Dean, Department Chair, and Program Chair. For example, Dr. Burrage (first year faculty) has been selected as a research trainee for the NIH funded Center for Health Equity Research at California State University, Long Beach. We share communication of other inter and intra university opportunities with junior faculty from NIH, NSF, Roberts Woods Johnson and other funding sources. Finally, junior faculty are invited to meet formally at least twice annually with the Department Chair to review progress and receive research, instruction and service consultation and advice in preparation for their future tenure application.

**5. At a minimum, continue with the current policy of two-year Chair terms (unlimited) for the PhD Program Director. This would provide consistency in management and allow the individual to build expertise and skill.**

**Background.** Per our faculty policy handbook, PhD program chair shall be elected by graduate faculty, and be appointed by the Dean for a two-year term. There is no term limit per our policy. Previous PhD program chairs have served as the chair for longer terms: Kameoka (1991-2001); Mokuau (2002-2006); and Morelli (2007-2016).

**Action.** We concur that consistency in management and time to build expertise and skill are important for the sustainability and development of the program. The PhD committee is in the process of reviewing and updating the program-related faculty policies and procedures in AY2018-2019, and we will take this recommendation into consideration.

**6. Increase and expand efforts for student recruitment and retention and implement a smoother transition of first year students into the Program.**

**Background.** Since AY 2017-18, the program has identified student recruitment and retention as our priorities. The PhD committee and the faculty have engaged in substantive program improvements related to recruitment and retention, including but not limited to:

- Increased the number of program information sessions with in-person and online options;
- Increased financial support for new students through GAships and social work scholarships;
- Created and utilized the “Academic Plan” since fall 2017;
- Revised Annual Student Review forms and procedure;
- Revised Qualify Exam policy and procedure;
- Supported monthly PhD students gathering since fall 2018.

**Action.** We will continue to explore and develop ways to improve student recruitment and retention, and we will pay particular attention to the transition of first year students into the program. For recruitment, under the leadership of the Department Chair, the Department of Social Work (DSW) initiated a Student Recruitment Taskforce in Spring 2019, which aims to develop a comprehensive student recruitment plan for the DSW, including the PhD program. Building upon the Department initiative, the PhD program will develop a recruitment plan, including but not limited to: modernization of program website, utilization of alumni connection, targeting the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Western Region Graduate Program (WRGP) states. For student retention, we will continue to build and develop a continuum of student support, from the informational sessions for prospective students, new student orientation, annual student review and mentoring, student advancement in research and teaching, to job seeking and professional development. We will continue to seek and utilize various funding sources to provide financial support for students.