





May 15, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Michael Bruno, Provost
Krystyna Aune, Dean of Graduate Division

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

Subject: One Year Report - PhD in Social Welfare (SWEL), Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

This one year report on the PhD in Social Welfare (SWEL) Program will address the progress made on the recommendations of the Review Committee Report (April 2, 2019), and the Response Memo from the Provost and the Dean of Graduate Division (June 6, 2019).

The Program Review Committee's recommendations included the following:

- Seek increased support for extramural grant preparation from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research at UHM
- Social work faculty are highly encouraged to seek financial support for GA positions through increased extramural grant application activity
- Explore external partnerships for increased exposure and possible funding sources
- Provide mentorship for junior faculty and course release in employment years 2 and 3
- At a minimum, continue with the current policy of two-year Chair terms (unlimited) for the PhD Program Director
- Increase and expand efforts for student recruitment and retention and implement a smoother transition of first year students into the Program

The Response Memo from the Provost and the Dean of Graduate Division further summarized the above recommendations into two main themes - Faculty Support and Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention

Faculty Support

The School continues to provide support for faculty members to secure extramural funding and build their research portfolios as success in these areas would naturally benefit the PhD students and program. The current and next several years will yield one of the highest levels of extramural funding support for social work in its 80+ year history.

Several activities denoting progress are:

- In Fall 2019, the Department Chair Dr. Colette Browne developed an updated Social Work Faculty Research profile (<https://www.hawaii.edu/sswork/wp->

[content/uploads/Research-Profile-final-web.pdf](#)) , and coordinated a series of training sessions with guest speakers who shared their expertise in areas such as the NIH grant application process, research on culturally anchored programming with Native Hawaiians, and work of the Takasaki Endowment in gender inequality over the life course.

- In Fall 2019, PhD Committee initiated the Social Work Graduate Faculty Research Salon, a monthly meeting of graduate faculty that aims to foster research collaborations on grant applications, writing group support, and research project presentations.
- Junior faculty members have been encouraged to attend research trainings and are supported with professional development opportunities. For example, Dr. Cliff Bersamira, Assistant Professor, was awarded a DSW Professional Development Opportunity (PDO) which allowed him to prepare a grant proposal that led to a contract with Hawai'i State Department of Health. Under the contract, the Hawai'i CAREs project aims to develop innovative behavioral health services for the State. The contract provides multiple Graduate Assistantship opportunities for students, including SWEL doctoral students.
- In AY2019-20, all faculty (including junior faculty), engaged in grant applications and several were successful with large awards from federal, state, and non-profit sources. High levels awards include: Dr. Bersamira with a \$3M contract with the State of Hawai'i Department of Health ADAD/AMHD; Dr. Seunghye Hong with a \$500,000 contract with the State of Hawai'i Department of Health AMHD/CDC; and large anticipated funding in the amount of \$1M for Dr. Kathryn Braun from the US Administration on Aging ACL. In addition, Dr. Rachel Burrage was awarded Ola HAWAII, NIMHD pilot project funding for \$50,000; and Dr. Francie Julien-Chinn was awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar award. In total, we anticipate a growth in extramural funding from \$1.1M in 2018 to over \$7M in 2020-2021.
- In AY 2019-20, among the ten total doctoral students in our program, four students received Graduate Assistantship positions, three of which were in the Department of Social Work. We know that the increased extramural funding will yield benefits for doctoral students, and we will be working with the newly funded principal investigators as well as senior investigators with continued funding.

Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention

The program has made the following progress in strengthening student recruitment activities:

- The MBTSSW website was updated <https://www.hawaii.edu/sswork/dsw/> . The PhD Committee focused on the PhD program-related content and created pages with updated information on SWEL graduate faculty research, current doctoral student profiles, and graduates' dissertation research.
- As part of the Graduate Division's Initiative on Program Maps, the PhD Committee developed a SWEL program map to be listed on the Graduate Division website.
- The program moved towards an online application process. In Fall 2019, the PhD Chair consulted with Graduate Division staff regarding the online application process with the intent to transition to an online application process beginning AY 2020-2021.
- In Fall 2019, PhD Committee members and support staff attended the Graduate Fair as well as other program and career fairs at UH Mānoa, and offered four PhD in SWEL

program information sessions (both in-person and online) to communicate with prospective students.

- The PhD in SWEL program received an increased number of applications, and will welcome a cohort of five students in Fall 2020, which is the largest cohort since Fall 2012. Four students in the new cohort identified as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and one student is an international student from the Asia-Pacific Region, which demonstrates the program's priority and value in providing PhD in social welfare education in Hawaii and Asia-Pacific basin.

The program has also made progress in evaluating and enhancing a foundation for student retention activities:

- Since Fall 2019, the program connected with PhD in SWEL alumni in various ways. The first PhD Alumni Survey was conducted in Spring 2020, which received 23 responses (56% response rate). The survey results helped identify program strengths, update the profile of our graduates in the social work workforce, and provide suggestions for program development.
- The PhD Committee continued to strengthen the PhD in SWEL curriculum by 1) offering core PhD in SWEL course in-house while collaborating with other units, such as Public Health and Educational Psychology, to cover selected research methods courses; 2) providing early advising for incoming students to take a statistic course during Summer 2019 to ease their transition into the program, particularly on the subject of quantitative research methods.
- The program emphasized mentoring by 1) engaging increased number of graduate faculty in teaching PhD courses, mentoring one-on-one independent research, teaching and research practica; and 2) sponsoring monthly PhD Student Hui meetings to foster peer support, and to offer guest speaker events and trainings on topics such as developing the research agenda, attending professional conferences, and building a strong CV.
- The AY2019-20 passing rate for students who took the qualifying exam was 100%. In addition, two students expect to graduate in Summer 2020. All students are performing at a satisfactory level.

The progress indicated in this report reflects the work of many people in the MBTSSW, in partnership with the Graduate Division and other units on campus. We look forward to working with you, and continually addressing and achieving the recommendations of the PhD Review Committee and the Provost and the Dean of the Graduate Division.