May 31, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Bruno
    Provost

VIA: Laura E. Lyons
     Interim Vice Provost for Academic Excellence

VIA: Krystyna Aune
     Dean, Graduate Division

FROM: Tetine Sentell, Interim Dean
       Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health

Jing Guo, Chair
    PhD in Social Welfare program

SUBJECT: MID-CYCLE REPORT REPORT --PHD IN SOCIAL WELFARE (SWEL), THOMPSON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This mid-cycle report on the PhD program in Social Welfare (SWEL) addresses our progress since the submission of the PhD Program Review One-Year follow-up Report (May 15, 2020), and Response Memo from the Provost and the Dean of Graduate Division (June 8, 2020). The Response Memo directed the program to provide updates regarding enrollment trends and outcomes of our continued efforts (August 2020-Spring 2022).

1. Student recruitment, admission, and enrollment

We have developed a student recruitment and retention plan for the program’s growth and improvement since Fall 2017. The following Table shows the total enrolled, new incoming students, and graduating students within the last five years.
## Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Awarded*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Enrollment data in Fall semester; **Fiscal Year. Data source: Manoa Institutional Research Office (MIRO)

Since the Fall 2021 admission cycle, the program has moved to an online admission system to increase its efficiency and usability.

As a result of the program’s efforts regarding recruitment, and improvements of related procedures, the application and admission numbers have increased since Fall 2017, with the largest cohort of seven students in Fall 2017. The program currently enrolls 20 students, and anticipates an incoming cohort of three students in Fall 2022. The total enrollment has passed the UHM Small Program threshold since Fall 2019.

Meanwhile, the program pursues multiple avenues of financial support for PhD students. The department has been able to award scholarship assistance to all first year and continuing students who applied for funding (2017-2021). The program works with students to seek financial assistance through other University opportunities (e.g., Graduate Division’s Mānoa Achievement scholarships, East West Center fellowships, etc.), graduate assistant (GA) and student assistant positions (with the Thompson School and other departments on campus), as well as, external funding sources. In AY2021-2022, the program counted 9 students with GAs in DSW, other units in the Thompson School (Center on Aging, Public Health), and other units across campus, such as Psychology, and Medicine. In addition, three students accepted teaching opportunities as DSW lecturers.

2. Student retention, mentorship and professional development

Student retention remains strong, with no withdrawals since Fall 2016. The number of degrees awarded has been approaching the UHM Small Program threshold in recent years. Among 20 current students, the majority of them are first-year (7) and second-year (5) students, who are on track to complete coursework and prepare for the qualifying Exam. The remaining eight students, one graduated in Spring 22, two are conducting dissertation research, and five preparing for the Comprehensive Exam. The average time to complete the degree is 6.5 years including part-time students. Of note, for recent cohorts since Fall 2017, students have been making timely progress towards degree. For instance, a student from the cohort of Fall 2017 graduated in Spring 2020,
with a 3-year time to completion, and a student from the Fall 2018 cohort graduated this Spring semester, with a 4-year time to completion.

During the AY2021-22, the PhD program conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Survey among social work faculty, and identified our strategic priority. With the success of student recruitment and enrollment, the PhD program has focused our strategic priority on student retention and quality of the program. We reconfirmed our purpose of the program, which is “The PhD in Social Welfare program prepares students for leadership in the advancement of social welfare education, practice, policy development, and research. The program promotes social justice and global understanding through scholarly inquiry using indigenous and mixed method approaches. Emphasis is placed on knowledge development which enhances the wellbeing of Native Hawaiians and the diverse people and communities of Hawai‘i and the Asian-Pacific Region”. We recognized our role as the only university in Hawai‘i with three levels of social work academic programs (BSW, MSW and PhD), and we are proud to provide PhD educations to students from Hawai‘i and the Asian-Pacific Region. Of the current PhD students, 25% are international (representing Bangladesh, Mongolia, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea), while 75% are residents of Hawai‘i representing a diverse mixture of ethnicities (Native Hawaiian, Tongan, Samoan, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Caucasian, and Latino/Hispanic).

The PhD program also reached out to students and sought feedback on their needs and career plans. In response to student feedback, in Spring 2021, the PhD program committee in collaboration with the PhD Student Hui, developed a series of professional development workshops for students on the topics such as How to develop your specialization plan, Understanding the publication process, and Understanding the academic job market. The program aims to continue strengthening mentorship and professional development opportunities for PhD students.

The PhD program continues to encourage and emphasize faculty mentorship and engagement with PhD students. The DSW has 11 graduate faculty who can serve as PhD committee members, among them, four are level 3 graduate faculty. Between Fall 2020 and Spring 2022, among 11 graduate faculty, seven have taught PhD core courses, and nine have mentored students in teaching and research practica. With the significant growth in enrollment, our faculty capacity, in terms of faculty who can serve as dissertation chairs, is strained as only four out of 11 social work faculty are level 3 graduate faculty. We could certainly use more faculty positions to support the social work department, including the PhD program.

The progress indicated in this report reflects the work of many people in the Thompson School and Department of Social Work, 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.