

WELCOME

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Margaretta Sackville
Tangemann, founder
of the Social Work
Department

Social work is defined by the US Department of Labor as “a profession of individuals with a strong desire to improve people’s lives.” Social workers seek to help individuals, families, organizations, groups, and communities engage resources that will alleviate human problems. Social work is also concerned with enabling clients to develop capacities and strengths that will enhance social functioning (Ambrosino, et al, 2001).

The scope of social work is national and international. There are over half a million highly trained social work professionals in the United States that are committed to values of social and economic justice, empowerment, and advocating for vulnerable and disenfranchised groups (National Association of Social workers).

The bachelor in social work, BSW, at VU is a specialized degree from a long standing accredited program that prepares graduates for generalist practice in direct human service positions. This professional program is built on a strong liberal arts base and a solid social work curriculum that provides students with core foundational knowledge, values, and skills that are transferable to different settings, populations, and social issues.

Students are engaged in learning both in and out of the classroom. The social work major consists of 40 credits plus general education requirements and 18 credits of required interdisciplinary courses (of which most are interchangeable in the general education requirements for the BA). Students also are involved in learning activities that allow them to apply classroom knowledge such as volunteering at a social service agency as part of the introductory course, visiting the state legislature, and presenting at undergraduate research conferences.



LouJeanne Walton,
Student, Professor,
Chair, Emeritus,
Mentor to many

Social work majors can broaden their learning by pursuing co-curricular plans of a double major or minor that combines their interest in disciplines such as psychology, theology, international service, political science, sociology, foreign language, etc. In addition students are encouraged to engage in off campus learning experiences such as Urban Studies, as well as semesters in Namibia, Mexico, China, Cambridge, and Rutlingen.

Internships at VU “set our graduates apart” as this experience fosters the integration of empirical and practice based knowledge and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated according to stringent criteria established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This educationally directed internship program offers students opportunities for practice in a variety of settings in the community. Students complete a 100 hour internship in the spring semester of their junior year and a 450 hour internship in the fall and spring semesters of their senior year.

Graduates from our program are highly marketable and are employed in child welfare, mental health, schools, hospitals, elder care, churches, shelters, corrections, and other social service settings. Alumni typically enter graduate school to pursue a MSW within five years of graduation and are eligible to apply with advanced standing which gives them credit on courses taken within the BSW curriculum and reduces graduate school to two to three semesters. Graduates

Department of Social Work - Valparaiso University
often pursue post graduate experiences in the Peace Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and Americorps.

Faculty are active in the community and have well defined areas of interest and expertise. The faculty to student ratio of 1:13 enables a rich learning environment that focuses on student development and collegiality.

The social work department has a well established Student Social Work Organization, SSWO, involved in community projects and also has established a chapter of the Phi Alpha National social work honor society. The Iota Lambda chapter recognizes students who have achieved a 3.25 GPA in social work and a 3.0 GPA in all required coursework for the BSW degree. Potential members are identified who exemplify the characteristics of consummate social work professionals involved in the community and university.

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