

## DEPARTMENT MISSION

### SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Valparaiso University Social Work Department, a liberal arts based professional undergraduate social work program within the context of a church-related institution of higher education, prepares generalist social work practitioners for service in the world.

Valparaiso University's mission as a community of learning dedicated to excellence and grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith, prepares students to lead and serve in both church and society (VU Mission). Our Social Work Department mission grows out of this university mission in that we provide a rigorous and stimulating educational environment characterized by a dynamic interchange between faculty and students that promotes critical thinking, conscious use of self, and active engagement in the learning process. Our vision is to foster the creation of coherent and integrated educational learning experiences that utilize an active learner model, valuing different ways of knowing, aimed at preparing students for generalist social work practice that will:

- address the whole person in the context of their environment
- be informed by an ecological/systems and strengths perspective
- be actively involved in advocacy, empowerment, and social change
- serve vulnerable and oppressed people
- implement culturally sensitive practice strategies
- contribute meaningfully to society by valuing service, social and economic justice, the dignity and worth of each person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in all areas of generalist practice.

### CSWE CURRICULUM POLICY LINK/ PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

#### Program Goal

The curriculum is designed and organized around one primary goal, namely to educate and prepare students for ethical, effective, and culturally competent generalist social work practice for service in the world.

Program Objectives Program objectives, mainly adopted from CSWE foundational goals, are covered in the courses central to the foundation curriculum. (EPS 3.0) These fourteen objectives guide faculty as they prepare students to engage in the necessary knowledge, values, and skill development for ethical, effective and culturally competent entry-level generalist practice.

#### Students will:

- apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
- understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, be able to apply them to fictional and real situations, weigh competing values, and make ethical decisions in practice accordingly.
- practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
- understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
- apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.
- use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
- evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, conduct original research, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
- use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.
- use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
- function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.
- demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with active, adult learning.
- demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with self-awareness, personal growth, and development.

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