

This document is intended as a supplement to the VUDSW Annual Program Review (APR) 2019-2020 report for the Valparaiso University Department of Social Work. Included in this document are the following:

1. A description of how the Annual Program Review has been/will be disseminated, and
2. The departmental changes/action plan decided upon based on the Annual Program Review.

The following actions will be taken to disseminate the Annual Program Review & corresponding Action Plan:

1. Present Annual Program Review to the Advisory Board by the end of August of 2021
2. Post to Social Work Community Blackboard site.
3. Email social work majors informing them of the Blackboard posting.
4. Post to the department website at: <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/about/guiding-documents/>.
5. Email final copy to Provost, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

## I. Outcome Measures and Signature Assignment (SA) Action Plan

The following scores fell below the 80% benchmark pass rate. We identified them and developed an action plan accordingly which was initiated at the Annual Program Review (APR) Meeting, June 11, 2020.

<b>Problem Course Location</b>	<b>Identified Problem</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Action Planned</b>
<b>1. SOCW 356 SA</b>	Late work submissions skewed the data on competence	CSWE Assessment 4.0.2	Ethical Scenario Critical Thinking Questions and use of NASW Code of Ethics. (text Ch 11.)	For the purposes of reporting on competence, late penalty deductions will be removed.
<b>2. SOCW 456 SA</b>	Late work submissions skewed the data on competence.  Professor changed assignment so that it was graded as a whole (Legislative Advocacy Paper and Advocacy Preparation combined), and therefore the grade on the full assignment was a less meaningful indicator for assessment.	CSWE Assessment 4.0.2	Legislative Advocacy Paper	For the purposes of reporting on competence, late penalty deductions will be removed.  For future, only the grades from these components of the assignment will count: Paper with Part A (Human Rights Issue/Problem Statement), Part B (History/Bill Research/Allies/Opponents) and Part C (Advocacy Strategy)
<b>3. SOCW 210 SA</b>	Late work submissions skewed the data on competence.	CSWE Assessment 4.0.2	Policy Position Paper	For the purposes of reporting on competence, late penalty deductions will be removed.
<b>4. SOCW 456 SA</b>	Late work submissions skewed the data on competence.	CSWE Assessment 4.0.2	Advocacy Preparation, Implementation and Follow up	For the purposes of reporting on competence, late penalty deductions will be removed.

	Professor changed assignment so that it was graded as a whole (Legislative Advocacy Paper and Advocacy Preparation combined), and therefore the grade on the full assignment was a less meaningful indicator for assessment.			For future, only the grades from these components of the assignment will count: Advocacy Preparation (In Class Triad Mock Meeting) Implementation (Legislator meeting at LEAD) and Follow up (Thank you email to legislator).
5. SOCW 356 SA	Some students did this only superficially		Feedback Informed Treatment Graph, Outcome Rating Scale and Session Rating Scale Scores, based on work by Dr. Scott Miller.	This assignment needs to be revised and clarified to get students to think more critically. In order to show competence, students should not only be able to organize and report on data and observations appropriately, but also, graph data in a table, which shows trends and important cut-offs, to denote where scores may require additional attention.

**ACTION PLAN FOR OTHER AREAS EVALUATED**

**II. Town Hall**

This past year, as part of SOCW 456 on macro Social Work, senior students gathered data and led a department-wide Town Hall meeting on a topic to improve the department. Students covered a variety of smaller topics related to curriculum this year that centered on addressing changes with the department. Topics included offering new, 1-credit courses, limiting class instruction on Fridays for seniors, and suggestions to revise the sequence, timing, and approved options for taking research methods by partnering with other departments.

As a result of the conversation, a group of four seniors met after Town Hall with faculty to discuss the changes and ideas for creating possible one-credit courses. While current policy only allows for a 2-credit course to be taught as an elective, the department has explored new compressed options for students, such as offering a seven-week, 2 credit course in the fall of 2021 on Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention. The program also is submitting changes through the education policy committee to allow students to count sociology and psychology research methods. The department was unable to discuss a thoughtful change to class schedules, due to having gone through a Discontinuance Review Process

during the summer and fall of 2020. The Social Work Program was NOT discontinued after that process and this could be a topic for future department meetings as the program moves forward. The VUDSW will continue to discuss and re-evaluate these changes. The faculty also has kept in communication with students this summer about changes to the department, during times of uncertainty.

## II. Overall Departmental Functioning

During the June 11, 2020 APR meeting, current faculty Matt Ringenberg- Chair/Program Director, Barb Crumpacker Niedner- Director of Field, Caroline Ban, Rachel Murray (adjunct—moving to full time), administrative assistant Theresa Augle and Patty Jarosz- Professional Academic Advisor reviewed our formative assessment data and discussed changes to improve classes. The team also discussed changes facing the social work department and budget cuts facing the university and how that would affect the department.

### Challenges

Colleges and universities around the country are facing budget cuts due to COVID-19. Recent employment in public and private colleges and universities has dropped significantly. According to a recent article by Inside Higher Ed, the private education sector lost more than 350,000 jobs between last February and October (Whitford, 2020).

The major changes that would unfold shortly after the meeting included- most notably the loss of our current chair to another program (and while that was planned, it still required new shifts), the loss of our professional academic advisor due to budget cuts, and learning in late June that Social Work would be part of a university Discontinuance Review for the practical reason that at the moment we had no tenured faculty (an anomaly since the 1970s). The inopportune timing of staffing changes resulted in putting VUDSW, a strong program with a five-year average of 50 majors and accredited since 1973, into a Discontinuance Review Process with several other university programs.

Our focus immediately shifted to the tasks immediately ahead, saving our competent VUDSW program for students and offering high quality (mostly online) instruction to students in the fall during a pandemic. Preparing a lengthy and thoughtful response to the university's discontinuance proposal was a heavy task that became extremely time-consuming.

### Strengths

VUDSW has a success story to tell about its advocacy effort that helped save its program. In July, 2020, the VUDSW Program and Field Directors, asked a competent alumna to create and lead an Executive Alumni Advocacy Group (EAAG) as a part of a multi-pronged intervention approach. The team envisioned that the group would be able to inform alumni of the swiftly moving Discontinuance Review Process and ask them to advocate. The team engaged a leadership team of roughly 20 alumni over the course of a few months.

In addition to the VUDSW showcasing student achievements and campus contributions to decision-makers, engaging alumni was a major contributing factor why social work was the only program to successfully make it out of the Discontinuance Review Process. The EAAG led a robust Save VU Social Work Instagram Account which organized supporters into action. Alumni targeted key decision-makers and flooded their inboxes with letters of significance. The team worked with current social work students to create a "Stick your Neck out for Social Work" fundraiser, which involved a student dressing up like a giraffe to create a media buzz. Energized by active alumni, social work students showcased their competency skills and created a successful petition, collecting nearly 1,400 signatures in one week.

Using alumni and current students as advocates can be a model for other programs both preventatively and during economic crises. Alumni were effective advocates because of their commitment to the university, deep networks, and ability to fundraise. Furthermore, alumni voices supported data and evidence from faculty to save the program.

Finally, it should be noted that throughout the discontinuance process, faculty, including our acting Chair, Lissa Yogan stood together and continued to maintain a positive attitude and continued to support students. Barb Crumpacker Niedner remained as the Director of Field and the internal leader of the group. Caroline Ban became the new Program Director. Rachel Murray moved to full-time status. All full time professors attended university training and took on professional advising roles. Christina Hearne, adjunct, began attending regular department meetings. While more work lies ahead, the VUDSW is a cohesive and competent team, strengthened by a formative process of saving its department.

### III. **CoursEval Report**

See action plans listed below

## COURSEVAL PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED with ACTION PLANS by COURSE NUMBER

### A. 2020 VUDSW APR Individual Changes in Teaching

#### Suggestions for 2020-2021 School Year

#### **INSTRUCTOR: Barb Crumpacker Niedner**

##### **Idea #1 for Field 1.**

Revise and expand the Field Remote Learning Idea List 2. Enhance and then share the Field Remote Learning Idea List with both students and Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) so both entities have a back-up plan in case there is a surge in COVID-19 cases and another shelter-in-place order. This list will also be useful in case students are ill. They can still “work on field” if they are confined to home. 3. My Observational Feedback: This need became evident as I tried to place senior students for future field assignments, starting on May 6th, 2020. Some AFIs were nervous/hesitant about taking on interns for fear that they couldn’t plan for remote learning for student interns if another crisis arose. This listing will be my attempt to support students and AFIs in an enhanced, overt manner. It can be used at both the senior and junior level of field education.

##### **Idea #2 for Field 1.**

Make the Learning Plan overtly include Field Remote Learning Idea List 2. While the Learning Plan is effective in giving improved shape to student interns in the form of a “learning agenda,” it should include a requirement of X# of items from the Field Remote Learning Idea List for added “teeth” in the student learning process. 3. My Observational Feedback: The informal data I collected from reading the month of April’s Weekly Summaries made it clear that some students embraced the field Remote Learning Idea List and others sort of fizzled out because there was no overt negative consequence/accountability system for “required” items from the Remote Learning Idea List.

**Idea #3 for Field 1.**

Make the Learning Plan/Evaluation of Senior Field two separate documents 2. The Learning Plan/Evaluation is currently one document. It requires careful reading and following of directions in order to be done accurately. 1 3. My Observational Feedback: I'd say 4 of the 17 students in SR Field were challenged by the combined SR LP/Evaluation instrument. Breaking it into two documents would make it simpler to follow. Idea for Integrative Seminars 1. Increase ways for students to share about Field Education Experiences 2. Students want more time sharing about their time in the field. This may include "requiring" posting about it regularly in some type of confidential-cohort-sharing manner. 3. Course Evaluations: Of the areas for improvement noted on the course evaluations, 4/31 students requested more time to share about field. I \*feel\* like there is a lot of written processing and peer sharing related to field and this past semester Peer Supervision Accountability Groups that were asked to meet 2 x a week to share/process their spring 2020 experiences, thoughts, and feelings. I am not sure if students kept to the required PSAGs or not. I think a needs assessment of the class in the fall is in order. I can also offer "open office hours/group processing time outside of class, that can "count" towards field hours.

**CORE COMPETENCY Aggregated Data Results**

Holistically viewed, the aggregated data revealed that all benchmarks met the 4 score on the 5 point Likert scale. The CC4b practice behavior aggregated fell below a 4 score, coming in at 3.9. Note: CC4b: Engage in critical analysis of quantitative research methods and research findings. There was one Integrative Activity in the spring semester required of seniors where they needed to do a 3-item literature review for a problem pertinent to their field placement. I can make the connection between CC4b and the assignment more overt. I can enhance the requirements of the assignment so it is more memorable.

**B. 2020 VUDSW APR Individual Changes in Teaching****Suggestions for 2020-2021 School Year****Instructor: Matthew Ringenberg****Idea #1 for SOCW 220**

1. Reconsidering course goals and methods.
2. Clarify what depth and/or breadth of knowledge is ideal for SOCW 220. The content to potentially be covered in class is large. A choice should be made about whether a cursory level knowledge across all the content is preferred to knowledge of greater depth about the content that is of greatest importance. The current text takes the former approach. Lectures and activities could parallel (cursory focus) the text or compliment the text (going into greater depth).
3. Student open-ended feedback indicated that the course was not well-organized. My personal observations were the same. This was due to several factors. The decision for me to teach SOCW 220 was made just a week or so before the semester began. The former prof had focused on breadth in her lectures and closely paralleled the text in what she presented. My approach years before had been the opposite. Attempted to make her content my own was moderately successful at best. Doing that after the Covid-19 restrictions

were implemented did not go well at all. I was not able to successfully convey the direction of the course to the students.

#### Idea #2 for SOCW 220

1. Configure the points in SOCW 220 so that most are based on individual grades. A complimentary action could be to track involvement of the students in group projects and adjust grades accordingly.
2. Keep assignments that require group effort. But shift more points toward assignments that are done individually. Unlike upper level courses in which most students are highly committed, 200-level courses include a greater mix of student commitment. There are limits to how much students who are working hard can prompt or compensate for other students.
3. Student open-ended feedback on evaluations and unsolicited suggestions from some students was to make student grades less dependent on group activities. Their main concern that was expressed was that students who did not contribute could derail or delay the project or receive credit for doing little to no work.

#### Idea #3 for SOCW 365

1. Review all statistics quizzes for clarity and complete information.
2. Review each statistics quiz, including attempting to answer all the questions. After that review, edit or replace inadequate questions.
3. Student open-ended feedback on evaluations and discussion in class revealed that some of the statistics questions on the quizzes did not provide adequate information or description for students to answer them accurately. Prof review of the questions confirmed this.

#### Core Competency Results

1. CC 7 Assess SOCW 220. Family Analysis Paper. Over 95% of Social Work majors met the benchmark.
2. CC 4 Research SOCW 366 Research Proposal II. Over 91% of Social Work majors met the benchmark.
3. CC9 Evaluate SOCW 365 Questionnaire II Over 93% of Social Work majors met the benchmark.
4. CC 4 Research SOCW 366 Research Paper. Over 96% of Social Work majors met the benchmark.

## C. 2020 VUDSW APR Individual Changes in Teaching

### Suggestions for 2020-2021 School Year

#### Instructor: Caroline Ban

#### Idea #1 for SOCW 210

4. Focus on transitioning the course completely online for Fall 2020.
5. Description. Clarify what content and format would be used to teach SOCW 210 in the fall. Since the course transitioned online mid-semester due to the COVID-19 crisis and will be taught again online in the fall, the instructor will focus on how to deliver the content completely online. This will include determining

which interactive activities to modify or cut for the fall. It seems that a combination of 1-2 synchronous lectures per week, one weekly online module that students can complete at their own pace and small peer review groups will be the best model for the class.

6. Source. Open-ended feedback from course evals and in-class discussion indicated that students liked synchronous online lecture/discussions (most wished we had more than 1 per week) and that they liked small peer review groups and would prefer to have a partner always assigned from their peer review group. Students reported by eval and in class that liked their one on one writing workshop conference call. Students also really liked the interactive activities and liked being able to see online work module ahead of time so they could work at their own pace. For the most part, students liked that a weekly schedule was posted on Blackboard in a folder for that week and some had a few suggestions for including the online module for the week in the weekly folder as well (as opposed to a separate one) to avoid confusion. My personal observations were similar. Students also reported that they liked that peer review assignments were turned into their google folder because it made it easier for a peer to look at their assignment.

#### Idea #2 for SOCW 356

4. Create better systems for providing feedback on the bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment (BPSSA) in a timely manner.
5. Description. Create a checklist template for each student to provide concrete feedback to student on their BPSSA shortly after they turn in a draft assignment. A template would allow the instructor to make a quick checklist of what items seemed to be of concern and write a few written comments. I attempted to use peer review as a source of feedback by asking students to use ID #s rather than names, but the nature of the information was sensitive and some students could recognize other students' work which quickly caused me to stop this. Additionally, asking students to mark up their own copies and do peer review within their BPSSA team would work as an alternative.
6. Sources. Student quantitative and open-ended feedback on evaluations showed that students wanted more specific feedback quicker from me. Additionally, while this was not the only contributing factor, my observations were that COVID-19 contributed to the problem because much of Spring Break was spent preparing for the shift to online classes, rather than grading all elements of the BPSSA as planned. While I did offer students the opportunity to resubmit work to make up lost points in an effort to course-correct, it seemed to me that students felt too overwhelmed by the pandemic to take this option, as only two students chose this option. Finally, I erroneously assumed that providing more general feedback to the class about trends and challenges that I saw in assignments would be helpful, but instead I observed that students with more concrete thinking skills had difficulty seeing their own paper in the context of the trend feedback.

#### Idea #3 for SOCW 356

4. Break out the FIT graph score separately from the overall bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment (BPSSA) score.
5. Description. Make the FIT graph and accompanying qualitative data a separate assignment, as opposed to part of the larger BPSSA assignment. This change will ensure students know that this is worth a significant amount of points. A handful of students missed/did not provide enough information in the qualitative portion of the FIT graph and as a result, scored significantly lower on this portion of the assignment, which resulted in a lower grade.

6. Sources. The Core Competency Results showed that just over 66% of students met the benchmark. My observation is that the significant contributing factor was that the graph and data were attached to a larger assignment and so students focused on other parts of the assignment more, since the FIT graph was not worth as many points. Students also provided feedback in the formal course evaluations that they would like more specific, early feedback on the FIT graph, a correction needed for the future. Finally, my observation was that given that this portion of the assignment was due after COVID-19 moved classes online, it was more difficult to correct and only two students made the decision to resubmit their assignment for extra points.

#### Idea #4 for SOCW 456

1. Break up the grading for the Legislative Advocacy Paper and the Advocacy Implementation/Follow Assignments into two pieces in order to provide a more accurate picture of Core Competency Results for CC3 and CC5.
2. Description. Making the Legislative Advocacy Paper (Paper with Parts A (Human Rights Issue/Problem Statement), B (History/Bill Research/Allies/Opponents) and Part C (Advocacy Strategy) a separate graded assignment from the Advocacy Preparation (In Class Triad Mock Meeting) Implementation (Legislator meeting at LEAD) and Follow up (Thank you email to legislator) will provide a more accurate representation of student learning. Because the assignments were graded as one, late scores for the state advocacy paper skewed the results for how students implemented advocacy work during their legislator meetings and follow up. Had this assignment been separated, my observation is that 100% of students would have met the benchmark.
3. Source. The Core Competency Results showed that just over 66% of students met the benchmark. This was due to primarily lumping the assignment together with the preliminary legislative advocacy paper. The formal course evaluation and informal conversations with students pointed to the value of the assignment, and how the confidence level of students increased as a result of their advocacy assignments, which leads me to believe that only the method of grading of the assignment needs to change, rather than the assignment itself.

#### Idea #5 for SOCW 456

1. Reduce the volume of legislative content for SOCW 456 by shifting some of that content into SOCW 410 in the fall.
2. Description. SOCW 456 essentially acts as a macro senior capstone experience for students and covers a great deal of policy and advocacy work to prepare students for the annual February Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) trip to the state capitol in Indianapolis. The result is that the pacing of the first half of SOCW 456 is fast and furious and as a result, the volume of policy content is immense and outweighs some Community Toolbox readings to give context for macro work and leadership. Shifting some of this policy information into SOCW 410 would be appropriate and make the pace of the beginning of SOCW 456 more manageable and allow for more time on macro context and leadership.
3. Source. Student feedback in course evaluations and during the last day of class supported my own observations that the pace of the class needed to change and that SOCW 410 would be an appropriate place to shift content from the class. This also could give students more time to perform well on the CC3 Legislative Advocacy Paper and CC5 Advocacy Preparation, Implementation and Follow Up, which both scored below benchmark this year (Just over 76% of students met the benchmark).

**Core Competency Results**

5. CC1 Ethics/Professionalism SOCW 356. Ethical Scenario Questions (Chapter 11). Over 93% of Social Work majors met the benchmark.
6. CC3 Human Rights & Justice SOCW 456. Legislative Advocacy Paper. Over 76% of Social Work majors met the benchmark. While this is lower than the benchmark, this is as a result of students turning in their assignment very late, which resulted in lower grades. If the late penalties had been removed, then the vast majority of students would have met the benchmark. For future CC calculations, it would make sense to use the original score prior to the late penalty to avoid skewing next year's data.
7. CC4 Evaluate SOCW 356. FIT Graph. Over 66% of Social Work majors met benchmark. (See Idea #3 for suggested course correction.)
8. CC5 Policy SOCW 210. Policy Position Paper. 100% of students met benchmark.
9. CC5 Policy SOCW 456. Advocacy Preparation, Implementation and Follow Up. Over 76% of Social Work majors met benchmark. (See Idea #4 for suggested course correction.)

## **D. 2020 VUDSW APR Individual Changes in Teaching Suggestions for 2020-2021 School Year Adjunct Instructor: Rachel Murray**

**Idea #1: SOCW 151**

1- Be more engaging when presenting textbook material through in-class PowerPoint presentations. I got in the habit of sitting in the chair near the tech cart during lectures. This was due to beginning instructor insecurity. I would like to get up and walk around the front of the room now that I am more comfortable with the material. There are many thought-provoking discussion questions embedded in the PowerPoint presentations and I would like to specifically engage more with students when discussing their personal connections.

Source of feedback- Instructor observation (Barb)

**Idea #2: SOCW 151**

Provide graded rubrics for every assignment. I utilized rubrics to grade almost every assignment, but for journal entries I did not provide those graded rubrics when returning work. I feel that providing rubrics with returned work will allow students to adjust more quickly to the way I grade repetitive assignments like journal entries. This will also allow students to gain a better understanding of the grade they received and may prevent confusion.

Source of feedback- Course evaluations

### **Idea #3: SOCW 151**

Find updated articles to make current and more relevant connections to class material. There are several assigned readings/assignments that are based on articles that I need to update. For example, it would be more valuable to use an updated article about the Flint Water Crisis so that students are aware of what actions have or have not been taken recently and how community change must be continually evaluated. This will allow for a deeper understanding of macro social work.

Source of feedback- Informal student feedback

**Works Cited**

Whitford, E. (2020, October 7). *New round of budget cuts hitting personnel: Financial fallout from the pandemic will continue to hit colleges for years, experts say*. Inside Higher Ed.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/10/07/colleges-running-out-budget-areas-trim-besides-personnel>