

---

# VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

2021-2022 School Year



Prepared by:  
Caroline Ban, Program Director, Assistant Professor, Dept. Co-Chair,  
with contributions by Barb Crumpacker Niedner, Director of Field, Clinical Associate Professor  
and Rachel Murrary, Clinical Assistant Professor

## Executive Summary

Valparaiso University Social Work (VUSW) prides itself on living out a culture of continuous improvement. Each year, VUSW faculty hold an Annual Program Review (APR) meeting to reflect on the entirety of the program's curriculum, teaching from the past year, successes, and areas for improvement. As an accredited program, this APR meeting serves as a way to review our mandated data collection outcomes and consider areas where the program has not met self-imposed benchmarks. It helps us identify where we excel as a program and where we need to make changes. As an academic program within the College of Arts and Sciences, the APR facilitates group conversation about course teaching evaluations, priorities for the next school year, and all aspects of program delivery from admissions, retention, explicit curriculum, to implicit curriculum, or the culture and feel of our program. The APR is a unique evaluation process that goes well beyond Faculty Activity Reports, or what is required by other A&S programs and departments.

Below are some of the highlights from our APR meeting:

- 1) In line with CSWE accreditation requirements, faculty reviewed explicit and implicit curriculum assessment data, which comes from three sources which involves field evaluation data, a content exam for graduating seniors, and a qualitative survey designed by students addressing climate and culture of the program.
- 2) Faculty shared their own perceptions and CourseEval data for each course in the curriculum, along with suggested plans for course improvements.
- 3) The Director of Field Education reported data about the program's field education placements. 25 NW Indiana professionals served as Agency Field Instructors (AFI) or Task Supervisors, spanning 23 different agencies from Porter, Lake, and LaPorte, counties in Indiana. Students contributed roughly 5,500 hours of service to the region in 2021-2022. Students continue to report appreciating the hands-on experiences of the internship, valuable mentoring from their AFI, and the quality of supervision provided. All AFI respondents reported that they were *\*very satisfied\** with the Director of Field.
- 4) The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultant, Christina Hearne led the program through discussion of a resource from Indiana University on diversifying the curriculum and the group selected a book, *Stamped from the Beginning*, by Ibram X. Kendi to read over the summer to promote additional learning of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This book will be a touchpoint for faculty over the next year.
- 5) Finally, the faculty identified themes to prioritize work for the 2022-2023 school year which will improve overall functioning. This APR Action Plan will direct attention for the next school year and beyond.

## **Overall Program Strengths, Changes/Challenges, and Priorities**

### **Program Strengths**

- 1) Our faculty goes above and beyond. Accreditation imposes many other requirements related to admissions, mentoring, and attention to an integrated and coherent whole related to implicit and explicit curriculum that goes beyond normal faculty duties.
- 2) We did not have any citations on our accreditation self- study. We will get official word in Nov. 2022.
- 3) We are doing a better job attracting new student. Our new boutique minors (Policy Practice, Direct Practice, Foundations). The program welcomed ten new incoming students in the 2022-23, which is one of the largest incoming classes in the program’s recent history (social work is a degree that most students “find” at Valpo). We had a high yield from prospective student visits.
- 4) Our internships are exceptional and we are renowned in the region for our students.
- 5) We prepare students for hands-on advocacy in the statehouse and at all levels of practice. This year our Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) was bigger and more inclusive than it has ever been. We partnered with BSO, Education, Values-Based Leadership and others to reach more students and have greater impact. 50 students attended.
- 6) Our graduates continue to go on to graduate school at high rates, including the best MSW programs in the country. Our graduates are engaging in transformative change across the country, and in some cases, globally. Our alumni are engaged and supportive and we look forward to an engaging Homecoming event in September 2022.

### **Changes/Challenges**

- 1) Advising takes significant time and faculty don’t always feel prepared—hopeful about being able to load a 4-year plan into self-service on the horizon.
- 2) Fewer staff and resources than in the past, have to determine how to continue to evolve and not compromise quality. We went from 4 FT faculty, 1 full-embedded administrative assistance and 1 academic advisor to 3 FT faculty and a part time- administrative assistant. With our assigned administrative assistant retiring this summer, we will need to share and train a new administrative assistant this school year. We are still figuring out how to manage teaching, advising, CSWE accreditation required admissions process and implicit curriculum, etc.
- 3) A hopeful move to Wesemann Hall will help with busting at the seams, and this will be our 4<sup>th</sup> move in 3 years, so we will need support to do this.

### **Top three Program Priorities of 2022-2023:**

1. Streamline and focus on improving internal systems
  - a. Figure out new options and strategies for advising and admissions
  - b. Train new administrative assistant and focus on educating person about internal systems and priorities.
2. Create marketing plan and begin implementing by the end of the 2023 school year.
3. Focus on ways to diversify curriculum through conversation, idea-sharing, and education.