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# VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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2022-2023 School Year



*Sen. Ed Charbonneau worked with senior social work majors in the Fall of 2023 to provide critiques on their pitches for new legislation in Indiana. Our unique policy/advocacy program stands out among other BSW programs.*

Prepared by:

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*Thank you to, Brett Calland, our professional advisor, for making the graphics.*

## Executive Summary

Valparaiso University Social Work (VUSW) prides itself on developing professional and compassionate servant leaders. To shape our students, we model a culture of continuous improvement through an Annual Program Review (APR) meeting to reflect on the entirety of the program's curriculum, teaching, 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 (the culture and feel of our program). The APR is a unique evaluation process that goes well beyond what is required by other A&S programs and departments. At our APR, we lifted up some of our program highlights from 2022-2023:

### 1) We are the hands and feet of exemplary student leadership and service at Valpo.

- Joy Kassel, '23, VUAA Distinguished Student Award Recipient
- Lesley Padilla, '23 Outstanding Leadership and Service Award Recipient
- Sally Hagen, '23 Outstanding Leadership and Service Award Recipient
- Lesley Padilla, '23 Baccalaureate Student Speaker
- In 2022-2023, SOCW students contributed nearly 5,000 hours of service. Over 20 NW Indiana professionals donated their professional expertise to serve as Agency Field Instructors (AFI) or Task Supervisors, spanning 20 different agencies from Porter, Lake, and LaPorte, counties in Indiana. Students receive quality hands-on experiences at internship, and valuable mentoring from their AFI and faculty.
- Students engaged in community projects working on a Jobs Reentry Program for the Community Change Center, creating sustainability for the Community Partners Network for Valparaiso City Police Department, and building a Wellness Hub and Social Justice library for Wesemann Hall.

### 2) Our alumni continue to standout regionally and beyond:

- Clo Perkins, '22 Ways and Means Committee Intern, Democratic Caucus and scholarship recipient. Was selected because of her experience through the VUSW.
- Sam Burgett, '20 Hired as the first Police Social Worker for Porter County.
- Natalie Kasberger, '21, Replaced Sam Burgett as the next Police Social Worker for the City of Valparaiso Police Department.

### 3) Our program continues its efforts to diversify the curriculum. This summer faculty will read, *How to be an Anti-Racist*, by Ibram X. Kendi to promote learning of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This book will be a touchpoint for faculty over the next year. Anti-Racism is an explicit part of the new 2022 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- 4) **We take assessment and program improvement seriously.** In line with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation requirements, faculty annually reviewed explicit and implicit curriculum assessment data, from three sources: a) an evaluation of student’s skills in practicum, b) a knowledge exam for graduating seniors, and c) a qualitative survey designed by students to assess the climate and culture of the program. Faculty shared their own perceptions, peer feedback, and CoursEval data for each course in the curriculum, along with suggested plans for course improvements.

Finally, the Program Director identified themes to prioritize work for the 2022-2023 school year which will improve overall functioning and involve an upcoming move to Wesemann Hall for 2023.

## By the Numbers Self-Reported Demographics



<u>By Gender Identity</u>		
	2022-2023	
female	86%	almost 9 in 10
male	8%	
nonbinary	6%	
<u>By Other Declared Identities</u>		
	2022-2023	
AARC Supported	19%	1 in 5
BIPOC	33%	1 in 3
White	67%	



**31 majors**  
July 2022



**41 majors**  
Fall 2022



**50 majors**  
Spring 2023



**High of 52 enrolled**  
2022-2023

## Overall Program Strengths + Changes/Challenges

### Program Strengths

- 1) **We received reaffirmation of our accreditation for our BSW program without ANY citations from CSWE!**
- 2) **We created a 2+2 Program with Ivy Tech through a new Articulation Agreement that is currently in process, and admitted our first Ivy Tech 2+2 student for Fall 2023.** We also have developed new, stronger relationship with Ivy Tech's Human Services Department.
- 3) **Our faculty and staff go above and beyond.** Accreditation imposes requirements related to admissions, mentoring, and attention to an integrated and coherent whole related to implicit and explicit curriculum that goes beyond normal faculty and staff duties.
- 4) **We are growing and becoming more flexible and efficient.**
  - We partnered with the Education Department to offer a 40+person class, our largest class size on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will continue this partnership into the future.
  - We have opened our upper-level classes usually just reserved to majors (and thus smaller class sizes) to students in our new boutique minors (Policy Practice and Direct Practice). These new minors are also attracting new students interested in tangible skills in any discipline, even computer science!
  - We are doing a better job attracting new students. The program welcomed ten new incoming students in the 2022-23, which for the second year in a row 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.
- 5) **Our internships are exceptional.** We are renowned in the region for our students because of their preparation related to training in the classroom, and faculty mentorship. Sandy Carlson, VP for Porter Starke Clinical Services, said during our CSWE site visit that she would rather have a BSW intern from Valpo than an MSW intern from any other program.
- 6) **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. 40 students attended.
- 7) **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 2023, including an alumni panel for the first time on Friday evening.

## Changes/Challenges

- 1) Our long-time Director of Field retired, leaving big shoes to fill. We are excited our Director of Field will remain on campus to provide some training for our new hire, alumna, Nicole Moy. Nicole is a first-generation, non-traditional college student who brings a trauma-informed background as well as her savvy technology skills.
- 2) Advising takes significant time and faculty don't always feel prepared on top of the accreditation requirements we must complete, including intentional admissions and mentoring. We were fortunate to have a professional advisor assist us over the 2022-2023 school year and hope to continue this next year.
- 3) 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 assistant and 1 academic advisor before COVID 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.
- 4) Our new move will be a lot of work to Wesemann Hall in the Fall of 2023 with a limited timeline, but it will help with busting at the seams. This will be our 4<sup>th</sup> move in 4 years, so we are looking for this to be a long-term, permanent home that is big enough for us to grow.
- 5) Retention. We need to improve retention of incoming students. While we had at one time 52 majors, only 43 persisted through the program.

## **Top Program Priorities for 2023-2024:**

1. **Retention.** This fall, we will offer a 1 credit, 8 week cross-cohort skill-based class for the first time focused on improving retention and belonging with students before junior year. This class was created based on student feedback at our annual Town Hall meeting.
2. **Faculty Mentorship.** Given that most faculty are early in their career and we will also have newer adjunct professors, the Program Director and Professor Emeritus, Barb Crumpacker Niedner, will be focusing on faculty mentorship and orientation.
3. **Marketing.** Improve our social media marketing. Create and implement a new plan for this with our new Acting Director of Practicum Education, Nicole Moy.
4. **Expansion.** Explore an MSW Program with a realistic model for scaling up.



*Pictured above giving student pitches for new legislation to Sen. Ed Charbonneau: Celeste Bauman, Kamran Aftab, Lesley Padilla, Brianna Wallace, Tania Popoca, Makenzie Ward, Sally Hagen.*