Graduate Program Goals Statements  
School of Social Work  
College of Education and Human Development  

December 12, 2014

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Preamble

Dr. James Reinardy, Director of the School of Social Work, instructed the Youth Development Leadership, Master of Social Work, and Doctorate in Social Work program directors to prepare Graduate Program Goals Statements as required by the Graduate School and Office of the Provost. These goal statements were developed using an iterative process whereby multiple stakeholders provided feedback to enhance the quality, accuracy, and focus of these statements. The graduate faculty in the School of Social Work reviewed each of the statements presented below and approved them unanimously on December 10, 2014.
Youth Development Leadership Program Goals Statement  
(MEd Degree)

Procedures for Learning Goals Project
The Youth Development Leadership (YDL) Committee in the School of Social Work drafted these goals in consultation with students and alumni. A graduate research assistant in Youth Development Leadership was hired to interview alumni and survey current students during Fall 2014. These activities were in addition to the interviews and surveys conducted last year for the Graduate Review & Improvement Process evaluation project, which also asked students and alumni questions to clarify their understanding of program goals. Initial draft of goal statement was completed and sent out for review to the entire YDL committee, which included a YDL student, who came back together to discuss and redraft statements based on input. A final copy of the goal statements was then completed and approved by the YDL committee in the School of Social Work.

Global and Interdisciplinary Understanding of Young People and Youth Work
Intermediate mastery of global and interdisciplinary understandings of the everyday lives of young people from diverse communities in the US, internationally, and historically; and of the social/cultural contexts, and institutional and communal responses to these, including the work of non-governmental organization, international non-governmental organizations and other local, national, and international organizations. Find, understand, and assess related research; know basic lay and professional models of working directly with young people and indirectly on their behalf. Know how to undertake critical, analytic, and imaginative explorations of young people’s everyday lives, including the social and communal structures in which they find themselves and within which we work.

Students will also demonstrate the ability to understand current issues in the field and assess research on the young people and communal responses to them. Students will know the meanings of youth within and across nations and societies, advocating in professional ways for the inclusion of young people in local civil society. They will master local context and the place of youth as active citizens, and advocate for this locally and beyond, including all diverse young people as citizens during youthhood and beyond. Students will also use the Program structure (core courses, electives, seminars, field work, portfolio) to develop scholarly and informal knowledge of young people and their lives and to express these in professional and scholarly terms and forums.

Communication Skills
Students will achieve intermediate mastery of scholarly, professional, and lay modes of written and oral communication about young people, their needs and wants, and community responses to these across diverse populations for diverse audiences.

Faculty members are role models for students, setting expectations of how to work and communicate with young people in programs and communities. This means that faculty and students work at co-creating respectful, safe spaces for experiential learning in which they
can individually and collectively analyze and reflect on their vocation and practice. Students develop the ability to communicate effectively with scholars, policy makers, youth, colleagues, and the many diverse publics. We focus on understanding and awareness of social media and its roles in the everyday lives of youth. We expect graduates to be able to communicate, using multiple forms and forums to multiple, diverse audiences, their scholarly understanding, and their reflective practice and leadership in the service of young people in the boarder community.

**Leadership Skills for Group, Community, and Individual Practice**

Students will achieve intermediate mastery of modes of leadership appropriate to youth groups and adult lay and professional groups about the everyday needs and wants of young people, youth policy, and programs and services for and with them.

Students are exposed to many models of leadership that are found in youth, adult, and professional groups across a variety of youth service settings. They will develop mastery in framing current community, national, and international youth issues and problems. They will learn to work at building and sustaining community assessments and evaluations to meet the everyday needs and wants of young people through policy, programs, and services for and with them, and produce public events to inform about these needs, wants, and responses. They will develop an understanding of experiential learning and how this frames and supports a unique and effective youth development response.

**Development of Professional Responsibility and Ethics**

Identification with one of the youth development professions basic to research and practice with diverse populations of young people; active participation with such professional organizations and commitment to ethical codes promulgated by the youth development professions.

Students will develop a personal ethos of work in youth development and youth services that joins research to practice. This ethos will include identification with one or more of the youth development professions basic to research and practice with diverse populations of young people. Students will become active participants with such professional organizations, thus committing to practicing by the ethical codes promulgated by such youth development professions.

**Ongoing Personal and Professional Growth**

Development of professional identity and appropriate and related skills, which includes the adoption and adaptation of current research about the young people for policy, program, and practices.

Students will commit to ongoing personal and professional development including achieving expertise in working directly with and for young people and indirectly on their behalf. Students will master at the intermediate level the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills basic to personal and professional growth and development, as found in the ethos, code of ethics, social norms, and other locations of their chosen youth development and youth
service profession(s). Ongoing enhancement of one’s reflective practice is a moral and practical imperative in the youth development field.

**Professional and Community-based Learning**

Practical, everyday approaches to, and methods for simple, practical, usable, low-cost, and relevant research with, for, and on behalf of young people is necessary student knowledge, value, attitudes, and skills to master at the intermediate level, as are relevant ethical codes and practices of one’s profession, and the employing funding organizations.

Emphasis is on experiential learning theory and how this supports a wide range of strategies and methods including community-based education and learning methods, and community-based participatory research and evaluation strategies.

**Assessment**

- Students will, at the intermediate level, demonstrate skills in accessing, understanding, and applying interdisciplinary scholarships on the everyday lives of youth; on the sociopolitical, economic and related institutions implicated in their condition, and on public and other responses to their condition using policy, programs, and services through: class presentations, field and textual studies and reports, student publications in relevant scholarly, professional, and lay outlets, and their graduation portfolios.
- Participation in relevant classroom presentations and reports, successful field internships, and continued evaluation of learning, growth, and development in their current job in the field of youth development supports and nurtures ongoing professional development among current students. Professional development, including leadership and ethical practice will be regularly assessed in classroom, internship, and on-the-job setting using oral and written presentations, reports and scholarly professional papers, work performance, and by the use of a synthesizing individual document, the portfolio.
- Diversity – local, national, and global will be addressed by the familiarity with scholarly, professional, and lay literature and popular media about diverse populations of young people, including work by these youth, and/or internship with these youth or with programs and services designed with/by/for them; and by the demonstration in the student’s individual portfolio.
Master of Social Work Program Goals Statement  
(MSW Degree)

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. As part of the accreditation process, the MSW program has developed four goals to guide the implementation of this graduate program. These goals, which ensure a high quality educational experience in the classroom and through internship training, are derived from the MSW Program’s mission statement.

**Goal 1:** The MSW Program will prepare graduate students for advanced social work practice at the local, state, national and international levels, and for leadership in the social work profession.

This goal is attained primarily through the MSW Program’s explicit and implicit curricula. The *explicit* curriculum is organized in accord with social work practice behaviors that operationalize core practice competencies as identified in the Council on Social Work Education’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) document. The explicit curriculum includes three major components: a grounding in the liberal arts, a foundation curriculum that prepares students for generalist social work practice, and four areas of concentration that allow the student to develop knowledge and skills in a particular area of social work practice. The four areas of concentration are Clinical Mental Health, Community Practice, Families and Children, and Health, Disability and Aging. The concentration component of the MSW curriculum requires students to develop (a) depth in a particular area of practice, through completion of the concentration core; and (b) breadth in practice, through completion of a secondary concentration that prepares students for diverse social work practice situations. Recognizing the specific needs of vulnerable populations and the importance of global perspectives, the explicit curriculum offers students an opportunity to develop areas of specialization, e.g., child welfare or gerontology. In addition, it incorporates content on international issues, policy, services, and events that affect client populations served by social workers. Interested students have the opportunity to pursue an international specialization and complete field work (internships) that includes an international component.

The *implicit* curriculum consists of the educational environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It includes the MSW Program’s commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention and termination policies; student participation in governance; and resources. As noted in EPAS, the implicit and explicit curricula are equally important in shaping the professional character and competence of the MSW Program’s graduates.

**Goal 2:** The MSW program will prepare professionals who are able to evaluate social work practice and programs critically and empirically, and who are able to apply best practices that are based on evidence-based knowledge and skills with diverse populations in a range of practice settings.
This goal situates the MSW Program directly within the research context of the University by emphasizing the importance of empirical research and knowledge to professional practice. This goal specifically addresses the application of rigorous and evidence-based knowledge in practice, while also recognizing that competent practice demands that such application is responsive to diverse clients in a range of settings. The social work faculty members regard Goal 2 as essential to the development of competent and ethical practitioners.

Goal 2 is attained throughout the explicit curricula, but two classes in particular lend themselves to students’ attainment of this goal. The first class is SW 8841 – Social Work Research Methods, offered in the foundation curriculum. The second class is SW 8842 – Advance Social Work Evaluation, an advanced level class that guides students in employing quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate the effectiveness of their practice. Students in SW 8842 design and implement an original evaluation project of either their social work practice or a community-based organization that provides social services. These evaluation projects are executed under the supervision of a social work faculty member, and findings are presented in a School-wide symposium that includes members of the social work practice community.

Components of the implicit curriculum are also central to the achievement of Goal 2. Specifically, students achieve this goal by attending research colloquia offered by faculty members and other scholars, and through participation in presentations by practicing social workers who work in agencies that target services to diverse client groups.

**Goal 3: The MSW program will support and promote the public good by expanding access to graduate social work education throughout the state, and by forming partnerships at the community, national and international levels, with an emphasis on practice in the public-sector social services and policy arenas.**

This goal refers directly to the School’s critical role in offering a professional program within a land-grant university. As a university that is partially funded by the State of Minnesota, the School is committed to promoting the public good and improving access to publically funded services for all Minnesotans. The MSW Program’s mission statement specifies: “The curriculum rests on the principle that a just society is one the provides for the basic human needs of all citizens and that all persons should have equal opportunities to share in societies’ social, political and economic goods.” Goal 3 links directly to this part of our mission statement because the MSW Program pays particular attention to service delivery in the public sector and to policies that shape such service delivery.

Goal 3 also focuses on the primacy of engaged scholarship, research, teaching and service that guides and inspires the School’s curricular and scholarly activities. Faculty research and scholarship emerge from partnerships and coalitions in the local, national, and international communities. This research informs teaching in the classroom and helps prepare students for effective practice with vulnerable populations. Furthermore, students apply this learning
through internships in social service agencies throughout the Twin Cities, the surrounding metropolitan region, and in national and international field placements.

The explicit and implicit curricula both contribute to the attainment of this goal. For example, the explicit curriculum teaches students how policies and social service delivery systems influence social work practice. In addition, the School has been successful in attracting publicly funded training grants to prepare students for practice in two specialized areas: (1) public child welfare, through a Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Grant; and (2) integrated behavioral health, through a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration workforce training and education initiative.

**Goal 4: The MSW program will continue to increase opportunities for graduate social work education among groups underrepresented in the social work profession.**

This goal is derived directly from the MSW Program’s mission statement: “... we strive to create a learning environment that is diverse in all aspects. Further, we use this environment to help all students develop the sensitivity and skills necessary to work effectively in diverse communities.” The School is dedicated to promoting and increasing access to the MSW Program among persons who are underrepresented in the profession. Our range of program offerings reflects this commitment, with courses offered in a variety of formats and at varying times during the week. We also achieve this goal by forming strategic partnerships within the University and community in order to attract diverse students, staff, and faculty. For example, the MSW Program works with the University’s Office of Community and Economic Development to offer ten scholarships annually through the Community Health Initiative sponsored by Medica. These scholarships target students who are doing field internships in agencies that provide services to underserved populations. We also partner with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Adult Mental Health Division to offer the Diversity Social Work Advancement Program grant. The purposes of the aforementioned grants are to increase the number of licensed mental health professionals from immigrant, refugee and minority communities, to expand the accessibility of culturally competent mental health services to members of diverse communities, and to train and develop supervisors who have a deepened understanding of diverse cultures within the community.

**Evaluation**

The MSW Program monitors students’ attainment of program goals through an annual program assessment that includes a variety of empirical measures, and that focuses on attainment of the core competencies of social work practice. Inputs in the assessment include the following: cardinal program measures (e.g., field instructor surveys of students’ practice behaviors, student self-report of practice behaviors); course surveys; student focus groups; license exam outcome data; biannual alumni survey; and targeted assessments, such as the child welfare knowledge assessment, the diversity assessment, and the integrated behavioral health clinical case simulations assessment. Program assessment findings are summarized and reported in accord with the Council on Social Work Education’s accreditation requirements.
Doctorate in Social Work Program Goals Statement  
(PhD Degree)

The Director of the PhD Program, in collaboration with the School of Social Work’s Director of Graduate Studies, developed an initial draft of the program goals statement for presentation to the PhD Committee. The Committee, consisting of faculty members and one student representative, reviewed the initial draft statement and suggested changes to enhance its clarity and focus. The seven goals listed below undergird the implementation of the PhD program in social work.

**Goal 1: Teach Advanced Research**

The PhD Program in Social Work is a research-oriented program that prepares students to provide the intellectual leadership for the social work profession through advanced levels of research, theory development and policy analysis, with a focus on developing advanced knowledge and skills in research, as well as emphasizing research ethics. The PhD program stresses its research core both in its curriculum and in student-determined objectives. Students take three research methods courses in the core curriculum. These include Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, and a year-long Research Practicum in which they work with a faculty member on a research project while attending biweekly research seminars. In addition, students take a Theory and Model Development course that provides them with a grounding in the use of theory in research. Students also demonstrate a mastery of statistics for the social sciences by completing a graduate level statistics sequence, usually in Educational Psychology or Public Health. Nearly all doctoral students work as research assistants on funded research projects at some point while they are students; these assistantships provide them with hands-on experience in research. Students attend a monthly research colloquium where social work faculty, visiting scholars, and experts in the field present their research. Finally, students complete research-based dissertations.

**Goal 2: Enhance Written and Oral Scholarly Communication**

The development of students’ academic writing and presentation skills is a key goal of the PhD program. While all of our core social work courses emphasize scholarly writing, three of these courses have student assignments that focus on writing for publication in peer reviewed journals (i.e., Policy Analysis, Historical Methods, and Research Practicum). Students are expected to write course papers in these classes geared toward a journal of their choice, and are given critical written feedback on drafts of these papers. For a number of students, these course papers become their first scholarly publication. Students also have opportunities to develop their academic writing skills in their research assistant positions. The median number of student peer-reviewed publications upon graduation is currently two, though some students have significantly more publications—in some cases up to fifteen publications—at graduation. Students also have a number of opportunities to develop their oral presentation skills. The same three classes listed above also require students to present
their final projects to a broad audience. The Policy Analysis and Historical Methods classes have semi-annual public conferences where students deliver their oral presentations, and the Research Practicum provides an opportunity for students to do poster presentations. Students also are encouraged to present their work at national and international conferences, such as the Society for Social Work and Research Annual Conference or the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. The School of Social Work has generously funded students to attend these conferences. Finally, all students in the profession of social work are encouraged to develop effective communication skills that are respectful of and congruent with the norms of the particular communities in which they work. This may involve developing skills in translating scholarly findings for use by community stakeholders, using social media, or communicating and framing community needs, issues and desires to the academic community.

**Goal 3: Foster a Scholarly and Critical Understanding of Social Work**

The PhD Program fosters a scholarly and critical understanding of the field of social welfare and the profession of social work, which in turn inspires students to examine important questions that ultimately will have a practical impact in the field or society as a whole. The Master of Social Work is considered the advanced terminal practice degree, while the PhD is the degree in which the practice of social work, social policy and social issues are studied. A bedrock component of the social work discipline is the holistic understanding of people acting and interacting within their social environment, and our PhD program reflects this through our emphasis not only in the study of social work practice theory, but also in the study of social welfare history and social welfare policy in a global setting.

**Goal 4: Develop Capacity for Teaching and Educational Leadership**

PhD students in the School of Social Work have a number of opportunities to develop their teaching skills and increase their capacity for educational leadership. Students are required to take the first course of the Preparing Future Faculty sequence taught by the Graduate School, “Teaching in Higher Education.” In addition, students have an opportunity to complete a Teaching Mentorship in which doctoral students assist social work faculty members in teaching (e.g., lecturing, facilitating exercises) in at least part of two class sessions per course, and may also assist with the evaluation of students' coursework. The specific nature of the Teaching Mentorship can be negotiated between the instructor and the doctoral student, and can involve much more extensive class participation than two class sessions. After completing a Teaching Mentorship, students are eligible to serve as adjunct instructors in undergraduate or master’s level courses in the School. The PhD program also has relationships with other social work programs in the Twin Cities region, and many PhD students teach as adjunct faculty in local teaching colleges. Upon completion of the PhD Program, the majority of students have independently taught at least two sections of graduate level courses either at the University of Minnesota or other teaching institutions. Students have opportunities to develop educational leadership skills through participating in monthly professional development colloquia that cover topics such as educational policies and standards for social work education or licensure requirements, and through
participating on the School’s standing committees (e.g., doctoral committee, research committee, School of Social Work Council).

Goal 5: Draw on Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Collaborations

Social work is an applied academic discipline that draws on and intersects with many other academic disciplines. Our PhD program encourages students to utilize an interdisciplinary perspective when examining their area of interest and forge interdisciplinary collaborations. All students complete a supporting program of 12 units primarily outside the School of Social Work, and a number of students complete minors or certificate programs as part of their PhD program, such as the Minor in Human Rights, the Certificate in Disability Policy and Services, or the Minor in Program Evaluation. Students are encouraged to form collaborations with faculty and scholars outside of the School, and a number of students have held research assistantships in cross-disciplinary units, such as the Institute for Community Integration, or the Center for Applied Research in Education, and other academic departments, such as sociology, public health, or pediatrics.

Goal 6: Promote Community-Engaged Scholarship

The School of Social Work has a long history of working closely with community partners in both education and research, and these community partners represent the diversity found in the Twin Cities region and Greater Minnesota. The PhD program encourages students to engage with local to global communities in meaningful, ethical, and productive ways, and closely examine their own interactions with community stakeholders in relation to research, teaching, or scholarship. The PhD program has incorporated an engaged research module into the Research Practicum course to further expose students to engaged research approaches such as community-based participatory research or participatory action research. Because most of the social work faculty members are community-engaged researchers, PhD students have many opportunities to gain practical experience in community-engaged scholarship. They are also encouraged to participate in university-wide seminars in engaged scholarship, such as the programs developed by the Office for Public Engagement. The School also has created an annual community-engaged scholarship award that is given to a PhD student who most successfully engages in meaningful scholarship in partnership with a community group.

Goal 7: Prepare for Academic and Research Careers

The PhD program’s ultimate goal is to prepare students for academic, research, or other related careers that draw on their advanced research skills and capacity for theoretical and critical thinking. Professional and career development activities begin during the first year of the PhD program and continue throughout their enrollment in the program to complement the research training they receive. Professional development colloquia are held every month and are required for the first two years in the program. These colloquia cover a wide variety of career development topics, such as an overview of the academic job market, funding opportunities, balancing life and work, international research career opportunities,
life as an assistant professor, time management, and postdoctoral scholar opportunities. Students are provided extensive assistance on the academic job market. Each year a CV booklet is created to showcase every student on the academic job market, and this booklet is distributed broadly at the national and international levels. Students are able to participate in a “job club,” and are assisted with the preparation of academic job talks and interviews. Students have been highly successful on the academic job market. In the past ten years, every student who applied for a tenure-track faculty position secured one.

Evaluation of Goals

The PhD Program in Social Work evaluates the scholastic progress of our PhD students in a variety of ways throughout the program. A key component of this evaluation is the process of annual reviews that occurs each Spring semester for all students in the PhD Program. In preparation for the annual review, students complete a five-page Annual Review Form in which they document courses completed, progress towards degree, and a self-assessment with regard to their progress in developing research, teaching, and other academic skills. Students also develop a set of goals for the next academic year. Students then have an annual review meeting with their advisor and the director of the PhD program. The annual review is an important component of the program because it assesses students’ success in achieving individual and programmatic goals and potential enhancements needed in the program. Students also take a series of preliminary examinations during the third year of their program. Specifically, every student completes a two-week take-home comprehensive knowledge examination that is graded by an appointed committee and a specialized examination that is designed and evaluated by the committee constituted by the student. These two examinations are followed by an oral examination. Students who pass all three examinations are then able to commence their dissertation research once their dissertation proposal is approved.

The PhD Program is governed by a Program Committee consisting of faculty members and doctoral students. This committee is charged with oversight of the PhD program, and continuously evaluates the program through monitoring admissions, annual reviews, examination results, and student progress. The PhD Program Committee implements changes as needed to PhD Program policies to ensure that the Program is meeting its educational goals, such as updating program policies, changing curriculum, or adding professional development activities.