

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL WORK  
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report from the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in Social Work in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa.

**Executive Summary:** The Bachelor of Arts in Social Work program has approximately 200 majors; it has been accredited since 1976. The Master of Social Work program has approximately 42 students; it graduated its first class in 2002 and received retroactive accreditation in 2003. Each program (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The programs were accredited for the maximum period of eight years. There were three concerns identified by the visiting team but an interim report was not required. This report addresses the Board's Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to "offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students."

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description.** The undergraduate social work program prepares students for beginning level professional social work practice. The graduate program in social work prepares students for advanced micro practice<sup>2</sup> or social administration.
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation. In order to qualify for licensure, individuals must have graduated from an accredited program.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-studies prepared by the Social Work Programs contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body – program mission, goals, and objectives; curriculum; program governance, administrative structure, and resources; faculty; student professional development; nondiscrimination and human diversity; program renewal; and program assessment and continuous improvement.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Report.** In September 2006, the visiting team determined that the Social Work Programs met the requirements for accredited status.

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<sup>2</sup> Emphasis on small-systems (individuals, families, and small social networks) perspectives.

◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.

- ☑ “Clearly articulated goals derived from mission for both programs.”
- ☑ “Consistent integration of foundation content, skill building, and integration. Advanced application of strengths perspective and critical thinking very clear.”
- ☑ “A notable strength in the summer bridge course, Injustice and Oppression, includes strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic development.”
- ☑ “Chief administrator is an accomplished scholar and teacher. He has clearly provided excellence in the administrative leadership of the department.”
- ☑ “An excellently qualified and productive faculty.”
- ☑ “Strong support and commitment on the part of external constituencies for the department.”

◇ Concerns Identified by the Visiting Team.

- ☑ “Programs are encouraged to implement group field instructor orientation and training. However, field instructors report adequate individual orientation.” *The department is instituting group training and orientation for field instructors instead of individual training and orientation.*
- ☑ “Given the level of scholarship and engagement in the profession by the faculty, travel resources to communicate research findings and participate in professional organizations are limited.” *The department will continue to advocate for more funding for faculty travel to conferences in support of scholarship.*
- ☑ “It should be noted that students strongly articulated to team members the department’s efforts to provide a diverse learning context. It is clearly a faculty strength that they are aware of the importance of continuing to improve the programs’ ability to provide such a context and are committed to increasing diversity in the programs. Faculty also recognized the continuing existence of ethnic and racial exclusion. Implementation of a part-time program (strongly supported by students, the advisory council, and field instructors) would provide opportunities to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body.” *The department has appointed a faculty committee to identify the format of a part-time program that fits its resources, university, and region.*

- ◇ Accreditation Status. In January 2007, the Council on Social Work Education awarded accreditation to the Social Work Programs at UNI for the maximum period of eight years with no interim report or visit required.

Details about the accreditation report are available in the Board Office.