

**Department of Social Work**  
**Proposal for**  
**AEA Development Grant for the Assessment of Student Learning**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the proposed project is to design a social work program assessment protocol based on the Council on Social Work Education's (accrediting body) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and established assessment procedures. New standards promulgated in 2008 and implemented 2009-10, demands program assessment of educational outcomes and student learning founded on competencies and practice behaviors rather than on content/coverage. The revised/reconfigured social work curriculum architecture organized around the recent accreditation competency/practice behavior model is currently being implemented after thorough examination of the existing curriculum and realization of new accreditation standards. A systematic analysis of the Council on Social Work Education mandatory ten competencies and forty-two practice behaviors were undertaken concluding in a curriculum map. The result of the curriculum mapping process resulted in a conceptual framework linking University mission, social work program mission and goals, core competencies and practice behaviors effecting content selection, course sequencing and integration. This curriculum architecture informs the nature and scope of the educational outcomes assessment process. The next logical step is articulating an assessment that measures educational outcomes, essentially answering the question-- Do social work graduates achieve the requisite educational outcomes of the program? Rephrasing the question--- Are students competent to practice social work according to defined competencies and practice behaviors?

**Achievement of Department and University Goals**

As alluded to above, our social work accrediting body requires every social work program to adhere to and implement an assessment agenda established on an ongoing basis with the objective of measuring the direct impact of the social work program on student's learning. Requiring all social work programs to assess student learning is not a recent enterprise; social work programs implemented assessment procedures for the last thirty years. However, the new standards are a substantial departure from previous standards.

From the University standpoint, assessment is an indispensable part of its goals namely, *"Identify core learning outcomes for all undergraduate students"*, with the assumption that assessing these outcomes is foremost for a University and its graduates.

**Project Design**

To complete the project, the principal investigator will engage in the following:

1. Operationalize each competency established as essential by CSWE.
2. Design a measurement/instrumentation system for the ten competencies.
3. Construct a benchmarking system identifying a measure of success for each student.
4. Develop a methodology for implementing the assessment.

5. Develop a system for post assessment analysis and feedback including the affirmation, modification and/or improvement of the program.
6. Design and formalize a procedure for institutionalizing the assessment process.

### **Project Timeline**

Start date: January, 2011

Completion date: May, 2011 for instrument selection and methodology. Full implementation of the assessment protocol is planned for fall, 2011. Also planned are experimental tests/rubrics for measurement of specific competencies and practice behaviors in the spring, 2011 semester.

### **Expected Products**

The project, as proposed, allows the Department of Social Work to:

1. Design and implement an assessment protocol established on sound pedagogical and empirical practice principles.
2. Develop and/or obtain formative and summative instruments to measure student learning outcomes.
3. Establishment of an ongoing data collection procedure.
4. Institutionalization of the assessment program as a continuing practice.
5. Student learning/outcomes data generation providing a feedback mechanism for program enhancement and/or modification.

### **Sustainability**

As mentioned above, the social work program conducted student learning outcomes assessments for many years—about twenty years at Creighton University. It is part of what we do—which to say assessment is an inherent, formalized department endeavor. Also, Council on Social Work Education standards mandates an extensive assessment process.

### **Budget**

Principal Investigator: Herb Grandbois, Chair, Social Work Department

Amount requested: \$2000.00

Justification: The amount requested reflects a stipend for the principal investigator for the additional time for developing the assessment program for the department.

**Material and other budgeted Costs: None**