

DATE: July 28, 2011

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Establish a New Academic Degree Program (DSW) in Social Work

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The proposed post-MSW/MSSW Doctor of Social Work (DSW) is a clinical practice program designed for individuals interested in advancing their clinical knowledge and becoming leaders in professional practice. Other professional doctorates include those in pharmacy (PharmD), physical therapy (DPT), and nursing (DNP).

The DSW differs from the existing UTK Ph.D. in Social Work. The Ph.D. prepares graduates for research and academic careers; the DSW prepares graduates for advanced professional practice. The proposed DSW is not, therefore, expected to compete with the Ph.D. for applicants or resources. The UTK Ph.D. social work program is well established, and the proposed DSW should not affect its productivity. Geared toward working professionals, the proposed DSW is an intensive accelerated program that enables students to satisfy all degree requirements in three years through distance technologies. It is expected that at least 60 percent of the DSW graduates will practice in Tennessee and that half of those will practice in rural and underserved areas of the state.

Faculty to support the program have been repositioned from the UTK MSSW presence in Memphis. The University consolidated the UT College of Social Work Memphis program faculty and resources into the Nashville and Knoxville locations. The College of Social Work has retained all faculty lines through this consolidation, gaining sufficient faculty to staff the DSW. As the DSW is online, operating costs will be reduced from the resource level required for the Memphis presence, and no additional funds will be required to implement the proposed program. Memphis and west Tennessee continue to be served by the UTK online MSSW and the on-ground University of Memphis MSW, approved by THEC in 2010 with the agreement of both institutions that UoM would be the primary provider for master's preparation in the Memphis area. The UoM MSW was implemented Spring 2011.

PROPOSED START-UP DATE: January 2012

1.1.20A MISSION: The proposed program furthers the University of Tennessee mission to provide Tennesseans access to quality higher education, economic development, and enhanced quality-of-life opportunities. The School of Social Work's goal for the DSW is to prepare expert clinicians who will provide advanced social work care in a variety of settings and serve as leaders in improving social and health care systems.

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the two major national associations for social workers and social work educators, identify specific knowledge and skills needed to prepare social workers for present and future social work practice. The Commission on Educational Policy of CSWE provided guidance in developing the necessary curriculum to educate for effective social work practice. The curriculum of the proposed DSW was constructed using these guiding principles and content recommended by the two organizations. Sixteen new courses have been constructed to support the program.

The program will be a post-Master of Social Work program and will require completion of 48 credit hours and production of two DSW capstone publishable papers. Each student will select an area of specialization, which will likely be within the student’s current area of practice, such as mental health, public health, medical social work, gerontology, substance abuse, or child welfare.

The College of Social Work has offered a distance education master’s program in social work for the last four years. The proposed DSW will be delivered using similar distance technologies and proven teaching strategies to provide program access and flexibility for students distant from the campus.

1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Projected Program Enrollment and Productivity:

| Year | Fall Full-Time Headcount | Fall Part-Time Headcount | Total FTE Fall Enrollment | Graduates |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 0 | 15 | 7.5 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 30 | 15 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 45 | 22.5 | 15 |
| 4 | 0 | 45 | 22.5 | 15 |
| 5 | 0 | 45 | 22.5 | 15 |

The enrollment and completion projections recognize the productivity of the existing UTK bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D. in social work. Graduate totals for the last three years for each program are: BSSW, 81 graduates; MSSW, 581 graduates; Ph.D., 10 graduates. Other Tennessee master’s of social work programs are: the Mid-Tennessee Collaborative MSW (at Middle Tennessee State University, Austin Peay, and Tennessee State) and programs offered by East Tennessee State University and the University of Memphis. Master’s graduates from these programs may be considered a recruitment pool for the DSW advanced clinical practice degree. The ETSU program has produced 84 graduates in the last three years. The Mid-Tennessee Consortium should generate about 60 graduates per year with program maturity.

Applicants must hold a master's degree in social work, have two years of post MSW/MSSW clinical experience, and meet Graduate School admission standards. Students will be selected for the program based on extent of clinical practice experience, grade point average, Graduate Record Exam scores, and demonstration of information technology skills. Students will be admitted on a space available basis. Students eligible for admission but not admitted due to space constraints will be placed on a waiting list and will be eligible to apply for the program in subsequent years. Students will be admitted in cohorts. Should a student be unable to continue the sequence of courses with the admitted cohort, that student will be able to continue course work with the subsequent cohort. Students will attend a week of campus residency each summer devoted to intensive study and skills practice.

1.1.20D FACULTY: The external consultants judged existing faculty sufficient to support the program. College of Social Work faculty teach across program levels, with the necessary faculty FTE dedicated to DSW instruction drawn from existing positions and supported through the consolidation of the master's programs. Courses in practice skills will be taught by doctoral faculty holding clinical licenses.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: Library resources are sufficient to support the proposed DSW. These existing resources include extensive electronic database/indexes collections, Internet resources, full-text services, and electronic journals. A UT Libraries staff member is currently dedicated to support the research activity of the College. The College will continually assess students' library needs as the DSW program evolves.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION: The proposed program will be housed in the College of Social Work. The Director of the DSW program will have responsibility for oversight of the program including admissions, course scheduling, administration of comprehensive examinations, faculty evaluation, student recruitment, and program evaluation.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: Fifteen support staff members are employed by the College of Social Work. There are 12 clerical staff members, one business manager, one financial support staff, and one full-time technical support staff. No additional support personnel are required.

1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: The consultants found facilities and equipment to be adequate to support the essentially online program. The College receives support from the Innovative Technology Center in preparing and delivering online courses.

1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND: Social work related occupations are forecast to increase by 23 percent by 2016. This increase is anticipated because of the needs of the increasingly aging population, greater need for social services, changing needs of military personnel, and retirement of social workers now in the field.

The School of Social Work conducted two separate surveys to determine demand for the program. The first survey was conducted in 2009 by Eduventures to help gauge the demand from potential employers for graduates equipped with a practice-oriented

doctoral degree offered through distance learning. The resulting report presented insights from social work experts in the Southeast, relevant national and regional economic data, and national degree conferral trends used by the School in the development of the program. The second survey also validated demand. This internally developed survey solicited input from Licensed Master social workers and Licensed Clinical social workers in Tennessee regarding interest in the program and content desired.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: No other public Ph.D.-granting institution in the southeast offers a doctorate in clinical social work.

1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS: Contracts are in place with a large number of social service and healthcare providers for student placement for clinical practice. In partnership with the UT College of Law, the College of Social Work provides services in the area of poverty and domestic violence law, and a partnership with the Knox County Community Law Office provides social work students experience in social work practice in legal defense.

1.1.20L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS: The proposed program will extend access through online delivery and will recruit to attract a diverse student body. The long-term goal of the program is to contribute to a balance between the diversity of the population and the diversity of the social work workforce.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting body for social work education, accredits only bachelor's and master's programs. There is no accreditation at the doctoral level. The UTK College of Social Work has been continuously accredited by CSWE since 1945. Reaffirmation of the bachelor's and master's programs was awarded in 2010 for the full eight years of the accreditation cycle.

The program will be routinely evaluated through established School of Social Work and University program review processes and through the DSW Program Evaluation Plan. This plan is designed to provide outcome data on course effectiveness and student learning to assess the success of the program in meeting its program goals. Additionally, the College will conduct exit interviews with graduates and will annually survey completers to identify areas for program improvement. Data will be maintained on graduate employment.

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT: Two external consultants evaluated the program proposal and conducted a site visit. Dr. Catherine N. Dulmus, Associate Dean for Research and Director, Buffalo Center for Social Research, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, found that "The University of Tennessee, College of Social Work is uniquely positioned to begin a DSW program with minimal new start-up costs." Dr. Bruce A. Thyer, Professor of Social Work (and past dean), College of Social Work, Florida State University, was equally positive in his review, saying, "The proposed DSW degree in clinical social work is an exciting development for the University of Tennessee, and for social work education nationally."

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT: Expenditures will come from resources gained from the consolidation of master's programs. Existing faculty salaries and portions of existing faculty salaries derived from the consolidation are currently budgeted. Tuition and online fee revenue will accrue to the program. No additional start-up funds will be required.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance, and others set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. The Commission may choose to extend the period, if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.