

DATE: July 23, 2015

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Social Work, Master of Social Work (MSW)

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The proposed Master of Social Work will augment the current educational programs at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. The university has a strong Bachelor of Social Work program that was recently reaffirmed in its accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education. The proposed MSW program will complement the other existing MSW programs in the state by providing a niche program for working adults seeking advanced social work training to meet the needs of the aging adult. The focus on service to older adults is a regional priority need that was identified by the 2014 needs assessment conducted by Kronely and Associates. This needs assessment provided compelling evidence that the proposed MSW program contributes directly to institutional priorities and responds to documented needs in the Chattanooga area and surrounding regions.

The proposed program will be delivered as a hybrid evening program and can be completed in one to two years, depending on the level of prior education and experience of the student. The MSW program will emphasize advanced social work practice that will encompass knowledge and methods of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation used in various social service settings to promote the well-being of the targeted population, specifically aging adults.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Fall 2016

1.1.20A MISSION: The proposed MSW program with a concentration in service to older adults supports the UTC mission of an “engaged, metropolitan university committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service, and dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of the region through strategic partnerships and community involvement.” The focus on service to older adults is a regional priority identified in the needs assessment process.

The proposed Social Work MSW program is in alignment with the goals outlined in the THEC 2010-15 Public Agenda for Higher Education, specifically the focus on strengthening Tennessee’s Knowledge Economy and increasing the number of graduate degrees awarded to the state’s citizens.

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The proposed curriculum represents a solid foundation for building a MSW program that will be accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE offers two pathways for students to earn the MSW degree. Students with a Bachelor of Social Work degree from an undergraduate program accredited by CSWE are eligible to enter directly into the advanced year of the MSW program after completing two courses in the

summer prior to the beginning of the advanced year. The curriculum for students in this pathway consists of 36 credit hours.

Students with undergraduate degrees from other fields must complete a two-year program where the first year of courses provides a foundation for social work knowledge, values, and skills, followed by a second year for concentrating on advanced practice methods. The curriculum for students in the two-year program consists of 60 credit hours.

Irrespective of the pathway, all students will complete coursework in four primary areas: (1) theory and practice, (2) policy, (3) research and program evaluation and (4) field education. The CSWE designates Field Education as the signature pedagogy of social work education. Students must complete 900 hours of a field education internship (400 hours in the foundation year and 500 hours in the advanced year). At the end of their internships, students prepare a report and present findings to their assigned agency field instructors.

1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS: Applicants must meet university-wide admission and program requirements. Program admission requires a personal narrative, two professional letters of reference, and a criminal background check. Students seeking admission into the Advanced Standing pathway must have a Bachelor of Social Work degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA from a program accredited by CSWE and letter of reference to document successful completion of the 400 hour field internship.

Projected Program Enrollment and Productivity

The proposed MSW program will be a focused, personalized program designed to accommodate working adults. The proposed enrollment and productivity projections are based on market demand, access to field experiences, and CSWE requirements of accredited MSW programs to have a minimum of six dedicated faculty and a maximum 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio.

The enrollment projections are based on admissions of 20 students in fall 2016 and 25 students thereafter. Beginning in the fall 2018 term, the proposed program will admit 12 Advanced Standing students each summer.

Year	Headcount	Graduates
2016	20	--
2017	44	18
2018	49	22
2019	58	33
2020	58	33

1.1.20D FACULTY: Three of the six current faculty members in the Department of Social Work will staff the proposed MSW program in the first year of implementation. The department will add two full-time faculty members and a graduate assistant in year two and one more full-time faculty member in year three.

All faculty members are licensed social work practitioners with significant professional experience. All faculty in the Department of Social Work would qualify for graduate faculty status based on academic credentials.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: In January 2015, UTC opened a new library which will provide the needed research materials and resources for the proposed MSW program. The library also offers interlibrary loan service to students and faculty who need to acquire materials that are not owned by the library.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION: The proposed MSW degree will be offered through the Department of Social Work. The department is located in the UTC College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies. The department chair will serve as the graduate program coordinator.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: Students will have access to a wide range of support resources, including advising and mentoring support from faculty affiliated with the program.

1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: No additional facilities or equipment are needed for the proposed program. Office space for new faculty has been identified within the timeframe outlined.

1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND: UT Chattanooga conducted an independent needs assessment, done by Kronely and Associates, that indicated clear evidence of workforce need. In 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected the need for social work jobs would increase by 25 percent, from 650,000 to 812,000 jobs in 2020. In Tennessee, the need for social workers is also growing; more than 2,500 new positions will need to be filled by the close of the decade.

The need for advanced social work practitioners to address the social services needs of older adults living in the region demonstrates the necessity of the proposed MSW program. A recent study by the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee Knoxville projects that Hamilton County residents age 60 and above will increase from 21 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2030. The Chattanooga region, a community that attracts a growing number of older adults, will need additional professionals trained to help people with increasing needs for services as they age.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: Tennessee currently has six MSW programs – four public and two private. The public MSW programs are offered at East Tennessee State University, University of Memphis, UT Knoxville and the Mid-Tennessee Collaborative Program (comprised of Austin Peay State University, Middle Tennessee State University and Tennessee State University). In addition to public programs, Southern Adventist University and Union University are private universities offering the MSW program.

The proposed MSW degree at UT Chattanooga is different in curricular focus and course delivery method from the established MSW programs in Tennessee. The proposed program will focus solely on preparing students for advanced social practice for aging through the life course. The curriculum will be delivered in a cohort-based approach offered in the evening for working adult students. Finally, the MSW program will target a different geographic service area

1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS: N/A

1.120L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS: The Department of Social Work is committed to providing a learning environment in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity and difference is of utmost importance.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: This program is eligible for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education. The BSW program was recently reaffirmed by CSWE for eight years with their next site visit scheduled for 2022. The proposed MSW program will submit their application for candidacy in 2016.

The proposed MSW program will also be evaluated internally using student feedback on course evaluations and faculty evaluations to continually improve the program. Additionally, the department's Professional Advisory Board, which is comprised of professionals with diverse agency and industry backgrounds, will be used to assure that the program is meeting the demands and needs of employers.

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT: External review of the proposed program was carried out during an institution site visit on March 2-3, 2015 and conducted by Dr. David Sherwood who recently served a six-year term on the Commission on Accreditation for the Council on Social Work Education. Dr. Sherwood strongly recommended approval of the program and noted the following strengths:

“The university has a strong BSW program that has recently been reaffirmed in its accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education, the Social Work Department Director is a well-qualified social work educator who serves on the CSWE Commission on Education Policy, and the Department has already established strong connections with community and regional social work agencies. The review process required by the Tennessee Higher Education has served the Social Work Department well in laying a solid foundation at the university, university system, and state levels for moving forward.”

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT: The proposed Master's program will be funded through additional tuition revenues generated by the program and no institutional reallocation of funds is necessary for program implementation.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval and will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the 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, and other metrics set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.