Status of Action Items from Prior Review

The School of School of Social Work’s (SSW) 2007 Academic Program Review called for: (1) increased faculty productivity; (2) hiring of tenure track faculty only if they have completed their Ph.D.; (3) assigning additional teaching and service duties to faculty who are not research productive; (4) hire additional staff in the areas of IT and grants management; (5) increase the number of graduate assistants; (6) improve quality of the curriculum; (7) continue to collect data on learning outcomes to increase program quality; (8) focus resources on expansion, improvement, and further establishment of the MSW program; and (9) participate in the development of a joint Ph.D. program in Urban Health with other units of the College of Health and Human Sciences.

The status of these actions items are as follows: (1) Since 2007, the SSW faculty productivity has increased as documented in our APR Self Study; (2) Since 2007, the SSW has hired 4 assistant professors – all of whom had completed the Ph.D. prior to being hired; (3) Additional teaching or service duties have been assigned to not research productive faculty; (4) The SSW has the same number of staff as it did in 2007; (5) The number of graduate assistants in the SSW has increased from 1.5 in 2007 to 16 in 2017; (6-7) The BSW and MSW programs continue to collect and report on student learning outcomes and make changes to the curriculum as necessary to improve the programs; (8) Since 2007, we have formalized a Part-Time MSW program option and increased admissions from every other year, to every year; (9) A joint Ph.D. program in Urban Health was not developed. Since 2007 the SSW has moved from CHHS to AYSPS.

Major Findings in Current Review

The External Review Team provided the following Summary and Recommendations. The APRC team supported the recommendations, and provided additional comments as noted below.

The School of Social Work has a strong and dedicated faculty, a growing BSW program, and an MSW program that is unique among schools of social work nationwide. Students report feeling supported, both financially and professionally by faculty members. The work environment seems collegial, and faculty seem to share a passion for the Community Partnerships focus. The SSW should be complimented for their rise in the rankings among graduate schools of social work, graduating the largest number of BSW students in Georgia, and their increased research funding. It is in this spirit of support for the SSW’s identified goals that the review team offers the following observations and recommendations:

1. The SSW is dangerously under resourced in the area of field education. The review team was not aware of another social work program that operates with one person as the field director who also teaches, carries a liaison role, handles new field site approvals, and student challenges. Typically, field offices have a support staff member who manages field paperwork and databases. There is also a great need for succession planning for the field office. The current director has a planned retirement date. The APRC added to this comment the following: “A better balance of resources might be achieved by shifting a few faculty lines to field support. Even with slightly fewer faculty lines, it might be possible to enable higher enrollments.”

2. The SSW’s MSW focus is unique in that it is the only MSW program in the U.S. with a sole concentration in Community Partnerships. The review team sees this as a strength, but observed
some confusion among the various groups regarding the conceptualization and operationalization of Community Partnerships as a concentration. The MSW coordinator provided documents developed by the faculty in an effort to articulate the concentration that were very clear and concise. In the various meetings, the review team heard some desire to add direct practice as a concentration/option. After reviewing the provided documents, the review team feels the conceptualization of the Community Partnerships concentration encompasses micro, mezzo, and macro level practice, and that helping students understand the focus of the concentration is to provide content that will enable them to practice competently across system levels will offer clarity. The review team also noted that the Community Partnerships Concentration: Skill Sets document seems to reflect primarily macro practice behaviors, which may be contributing to the confusion.

3. We strongly support the School’s intentions to rise in the rankings among social work programs. To do this, we feel that a better articulation of the Community Partnerships concentration is necessary as well as some marketing materials that highlight the School of Social Work and the concentration. We feel it is important to both market the SSW and its programs independently and as part of the Andrew Young School.

4. In terms of enhancing the BSW program we offer the following. The recent acquisition of Georgia Perimeter College provides a great opportunity to increase the number of BSW students transferring to the SSW to complete their junior and senior years. There are numerous transfer models within schools of social work. Key to the success of these models is a clearly mapped program of study that affords the completion of an associate’s degree and a fully articulated curriculum plan for completion of the BSW. Recruitment and advising are key components to the success of these transfer programs.

5. The SSW has a large number of pre-social work majors, some of whom apply to the BSW program but are not accepted, and some who choose other degree programs. The review team recommends exploring the creation of a new undergraduate degree program that would be of interest to those students for whom social work is not a good fit. It is the opinion of the review team that such a degree could be developed easily using existing courses with the BSW program and other undergraduate courses within the Andrew Young School. This would not only provide an alternative to the BSW where field education is mandated, but it would allow for an interdisciplinary degree program. Similarly, the APRC recommended that the SSW design and implement a strategy for addressing retention/graduation rates for first-time fulltime Social Work pre-majors.

6. The review team sees the Center for Collaborative Social Work as a potential entity to pull together external funding, family and child welfare training, Title IV-E student stipend and oversight programs. Indirect support funds from funded research could be used to create a research infrastructure that could support faculty research activity, and provide a “shop” to market a comprehensive approach to community engagement, student research involvement, and knowledge development.

7. The review team felt there was some room for growth in the MSW program, however, it is important to note again that no growth is possible without added staff support for the field education office.

8. The review team sees a great opportunity for collaboration with other schools and programs to develop dual degree programs. Programs and degree combinations that seem like a natural fit are the MSW/MPA, the MSW/MPH, the MSW/JD, and the MPP. Two of these degree programs exist within the Andrew Young School, and the SSW Director reports interest in collaborating from the Dean of the School of Public Health. Adding dual degree programs would allow for growth in the graduate program as well as increased diversity among graduate students with interests in social work as well as other disciplines. The review team also sees adding dual degree
programs to be an initial step towards a Ph.D. program. The relationships developed across schools as well as the increased opportunities for cross-disciplinary research and teaching would provide the SSW the opportunity to explore a model interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. In addition, the APRC recommended that while collaborating with other units to offer joint master’s degrees, work with college and other units to ensure that Social Work has sufficient resources for new programs while addressing needs such as field education support.

9. In terms of adding a Ph.D. program, the review team sees this goal as more long-term. The review team recommends further exploration into the other Ph.D. programs within the Andrew Young School – some of which we understand to be quite small. Is there potential for collaboration? Mounting a full Ph.D. program would require additional resources, faculty and otherwise. In the SSW, although they have four full professors, there is only one full professor that does not have an administrative appointment.

**Action Steps for the Coming Cycle**

1. **Address resource issues and succession planning in the Field Education Office.**
   a. Following the external review team visit, the SSW hired a new Lecturer to fill a vacancy in the Field Education Office.
   b. Dean Walker approved funding for a fulltime administrative specialist for the Field Education Office. The application period for this position closed on September 30, and we are currently in the process of identifying candidates to interview. The Director of the SSW will fill this position prior to the end of Fall 2016.
   c. As of Fall 2016, Lecturer Debra Klausner was provided two course releases, funded by the Title IV-E Training Program, in order to assist the Field Education Office in the placement and supervision of BSW and MSW students in the Title IV-E training program.
   d. The Director of the SSW will develop a succession plan for the Field Education Office at such time as the Director of Field Education provides notification of intention to retire.
   e. In Fall 2016, the Director of Field Education will implement a Field Education meeting with SSW faculty to be held at least once per semester. One purpose of this meeting is to ensure faculty involvement in Field Education.

2&3. **Clarification and marketing of the MSW Program’s Community Partnerships specialization.**
   a. Following the External Review Team’s visit, the MSW Curriculum Committee met to clarify the purpose and description of the Community Partnerships specialization.
   b. During Spring and Summer 2016, the MSW Director worked with the Vice Provost for Graduate Programs’ office to develop a new brochure describing the Community Partnership concentration.

4. **Collaboration with Perimeter College in the recruitment of BSW students.**
   a. BSW Program Director has initiated contact with Vice Provost and Dean of Perimeter College with to discuss collaboration.
   b. By Spring 2016, in collaboration with Vice Provost and Dean of Perimeter College, BSW Director will develop a plan for recruitment of Perimeter College students.
c. By 2017-2018, the BSW Director will implement a recruitment strategy to facilitate a pathway to the BSW degree for Perimeter College students.

5. Development of a BIS degree appropriate for pre-social work majors who may not be a good fit for the BSW degree.
   a. BSW Program Director will work with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to conduct a needs assessment for a BIS during Spring 2017.
   b. If sufficient need is demonstrated, the BSW Program Curriculum Committee will develop and submit a proposal for a BIS degree during Fall 2017.
   c. Assuming passage of a proposal for a BIS degree housed in the SSW, implementation will occur in Fall 2018.

6. Center for Collaborative Social Work
   a. In Spring 2016, the Director of the Center for Collaborative Social Work convened an Advisory Committee for the Center for collaborative Social Work.
   b. In Spring 2017, the Committee for Collaborative Social Work will complete a strategic planning process, including development of a vision, mission, and goals and objectives.

7. Growth of the MSW Program
   a. Due to the actions that are currently underway in regard to additional support in the Office of Field Instruction, an opportunity exists to increase enrollment in the Part-Time MSW program beginning in Fall 2017. Director of MSW Admissions will increase enrollment in the first year cohort of the Part-Time MSW program by 20% in each of the next three academic years.
   b. In Fall 2016, the Director of SSW in collaboration with Dean Walker will conduct a market analysis to examine the possible expansion of the MSW Program through either a hybrid or fully online delivery model to allow expansion beyond the Atlanta area.
   c. In Fall 2016, The Director of the SSW will initiate a committee within the SSW to focus on online course delivery.
   d. If MSW expansion is supported by the market analysis, in Fall 2017 the MSW Director, in collaboration with the MSW Curriculum Committee, will develop a proposal for expansion.
   e. As noted by the External Review Team, significant growth of the MSW is inadvisable without additional resources devoted to the office of Field Education. Beginning in Spring 2017, the Director of the SSW will work with the Dean of AYSPS to identify resources to support expansion of the MSW Program, particularly in regard to Field Education.
   f. Director of the SSW along with the MSW Program Director will implement expansion of MSW Program beyond the Atlanta area through a hybrid or fully online format in Fall 2018.

8. Addition of Dual Degree programs, such as MSW/MPH, MSW/MPA, MSW/MPP.
   a. The Director of the SSW will meet with relevant program administrators to explore interest in collaborating with the SSW to develop dual degree programs during Spring 2017.
   b. In Spring 2017, the MSW Program Director in collaboration with the MSW Curriculum Committee and collaborating units, will identify one dual degree program for development.
   c. By Spring 2018, the MSW Director will submit a proposal for a dual degree program.

The external review team recommended that the development of a Ph.D. Program be more of a long-term goal, due to capacity and resources such as the number of senior faculty available to teach and mentor Ph.D. students. However, the SSW has been working toward addressing the issues identified. For example, since the external review team’s visit, one faculty member has been promoted to full professor and another is currently under review to be promoted to full professor. In addition, two talented assistant professors will be applying for promotion to associate professor within the next two years. We have already been examining the possibility of launching a Ph.D. program that leverages existing courses in other programs so as to require fewer resources from the SSW. Lastly, the SSW has significantly increased external funding over the past two years, which can be leveraged to support doctoral students through assistantships. As such, the SSW plans to move forward with the development of a Ph.D. Program, though action items above will receive priority.

a. In Academic Year 2016-2017, the Director of the SSW will conduct a market analysis to examine the need for a Ph.D. Program housed in the SSW.

b. If the market analysis shows a compelling need for a new Ph.D. Program in Social Work, the Director of SSW and the Dean of AYSPS will determine if the resources necessary to mount such a program are available within AYSPS and SSW.

c. Assuming resources within AYSPS and SSW are available to support a Ph.D. Program in Social Work, in Spring 2017, the Director of the SSW will charge a Ph.D. Program Committee to develop a proposal for a Ph.D. Program that leverages existing within AYSPS and other relevant GSU units and capitalizing on the strengths of the SSW.

d. In Fall of 2017, the Ph.D. Program Committee will submit a proposal for a Ph.D. Program in Social Work.

e. Assuming approval from SSW, AYSPS, GSU, and BOR, a Ph.D. Program in Social Work will admit its first cohort in Fall 2019

Signatures:

Brian E. Bride
Director, School of Social Work
Date: 11/1/2016

Mary Beth Walker
Dean, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.
Date: 11/2/2016

Risa Palm
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Date: 11-3-16