

# **FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT and IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

## **BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM (SWRK)**

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Approved by Algoma University Senate on December 5, 2014

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan provides a synthesis of the External Program Review and the internal responses of the Bachelor of Social Work Program. This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement. The report sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies (a) what bodies are responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report, (b) what bodies are responsible for providing any resources made necessary by the recommendations, (c) any changes in the organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, (d) what bodies are responsible for acting on those recommendation, and (e) the timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

### **Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Bachelor of Social Work Program**

The Self-Study Committee was comprised of H. Allen (Interim Director), R. Cameron, S. Straka, A. Vaillancourt, J. Petroni, L. Kisch, W. Osei, D. Richer (student) and R. Ethier (student). The Committee submitted the self-study to the Academic Dean in August 2014.

Two arm's length external reviewers (Dr. Christopher Walmsley, School of Social Work and Human Service, Thompson Rivers University; and Dr. Jackie Green, School of Social Work, Faculty of Human & Social Development, University of Victoria) were selected by the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee from a set of proposed reviewers, and were appointed by the Academic Dean. The reviewers examined and evaluated the self-study documentation, following which they conducted a site-visit to the University, on September 16 and 17, 2014. The site-visit included scheduled interviews with a number of parties that included the Academic Dean, the Director of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, members of the Self-Study Committee (including the Director of the Program), SWRK program faculty, University librarians, Student Support Services and Writing Lab staff, the Field and Admissions Coordinator (Sault and Timmins locations), External Field Educators, Indigenous Student Services staff, Program Advisory Committee members, program students and graduates, and the University Registrar. A teleconference was held on October 14, 2014 with President Richard Myers, following the site-visit.

The reviewers visited faculty offices, meeting areas, classrooms, the bookstore and the University library. Included within the visit was a tour of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and the opportunity to attend an outdoor learning circle of third-year BSW students (SWRK 3206A).

In their report (November 2014), the reviewers provided feedback that describes how the Social Work program meets the IQAP Evaluation Criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities.

The IQAP Evaluation Criteria included: (a) objectives, (b) admissions, (c) curriculum, (d) teaching and assessment, (e) resources, (f) quality Indicators, and (f) quality enhancement.

The following summarizes the program's strengths and weakness:

### Strengths

- Strong commitment by the current faculty and staff to deliver a program that is relevant to the region
- High quality academic and student support service (including Indigenous Student Services), notable given the size of the University
- Well-qualified full-time faculty with professional and academic credentials and experience
- Part-time / sessional faculty with masters'-level qualifications and active practitioners in the community
- A high amount of personal interest and attention provided by faculty and staff, to program students

### Weaknesses

- Under-representation of francophone content, relative to program identification
- Limited IT support for video-conferenced classes
- Limited student writing supports specific to writing within the discipline
- Limited field placement scheduling flexibility
- Full-Time faculty complement falls short of standard
- Inconsistent academic advising that calls for an integrated approach

Following consultation with program faculty and staff, the Interim SWRK Director (B. McKenzie) submitted the Program Response to the Review Committee's Report (*November 13, 2014*). Thereafter, the Dean submitted his Decanal Response to the Reviewer's Report together with the Program's Response to Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (AppCom), on November 17, 2014. AppCom, in consideration of the Review Committee's Report, Program and Decanal Responses, provide the following recommendations.

## Recommendations

- A. **Curriculum**: THAT with respect to Francophone course content, a re-alignment of program delivery with program learning outcomes (and foci). Considerations for doing so include regional relevance, accreditation standards that recognize national francophone realities (in Canada), and student profiles that the program seeks to serve. The Committee does not support the elimination of "Franco-Ontarian communities" from the program's mission, but does support the minimizing of its reference until it can be included.
- B. **Curriculum - Mode of Delivery**: THAT the BSW program consider reconfiguring SWRK 4004 [Field Education] into SWRK 4004 Part A and SWRK 4004 Part B, with separate registration. While the duration of the field practicum would be maintained (i.e., 700 hours), this alternative model of delivery would allow greater placement flexibility for the students, field faculty and coordinator; specifically, flexibility in the organization, administration, evaluation, and completion of the field component to the program. One element of this reconfiguration is aligning the frequency and timing of agency visits (e.g., from 5 to 3) with the necessity of doing so; for example, for those students doing well in placements, the number and time in-between agency visits might vary.
- C. **Curriculum - Communication Skills**: THAT in order to enhance writing proficiencies of BSW program students to a professional capacity, the BSW Program work with the English Department, to provide academic writing offerings from the ENGL program (e.g., ENGL 1501 & ENGL 1502).
- D. **Quality Indicators - Enrolment Management**: THAT Algoma University develop and implement a plan for the recruitment and retention of Indigenous BSW students, with the active participation of BSW program faculty and staff, Indigenous Student Services, the BSW Program Advisory Committee, the Registrar's Office, and other interested stakeholders. In addition, that the University develop an integrated advising and orientation strategy aimed at positioning SWRK students for program demands and successful progression.
- E. **Resources - Staffing**: THAT the University actively engage and secure a suitably qualified and permanent full-time academic and professional leader for the BSW program. Such assurance is consistent with the governance and structure standards for program accreditation of the CASWE Council on Accreditation.
- F. **Resources - Staffing**: THAT the two recent limited-term (9 month) contract positions be converted to two tenure-track positions for the 2015-2016 academic year, consistent with the CASWE Commission on Accreditation (COA) recommendation. Adequate full-time academic staffing is also necessary for program stability and growth.
- G. **Resources - Space**: THAT, where such is available, Algoma University consider the scheduling of SWRK classes that support Anishinaabe pedagogy (i.e., flexible classroom layouts), which may include the Shingwauk Auditorium.

## SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Curriculum - Francophone Content [Alignment of program delivery with program learning outcomes]	Consult with CASWE Accreditation Standards	Program Director and faculty	Summer 2016
Curriculum - Mode of Delivery [Field Placement Flexibility]	Consult with agency personnel	Program Director and faculty	Fall 2015
Curriculum - Communication Skills [Enhance Writing Proficiencies]	Consult with ENGL Dept	Program faculty	Fall 2015
Quality Indicators - Enrolment Management [recruitment & retention of indigenous students; integrated advising and orientation strategy]	Consult with Student Services	Program Faculty	Fall 2015
Resources - Staffing [Full-Time Director]		University to provide funding support	Summer 2015
Resources - Staffing [Two Full-Time Tenure-Track Faculty]		University to provide funding support	Summer 2015
Resources - Space [Classroom Flexibility to support Pedagogical Practices]	Consult with Registrar	University to accommodate scheduling	Fall 2015

The Committee recommends that, within one month, the Program prepare a work plan based on the aforementioned recommended actions for implementation. This work plan will be assessed by the Committee, and approved. The Program shall prepare a report of the status of the agreed-upon Implementation Plan 18-months following completion of the review. This report shall be submitted to the Committee for follow-up. The date of the next program review is 2020/21.

Respectfully submitted: *Arthur Perlini (Dean), Cheryl Reed-Elder (Chair - Sciences), Nicola Shaw (Chair - Social Sciences), Noni Boyle (Chair - Humanities), David Marasco (Registrar), Brandon-lee Mackinnon (student).*