**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT 5-25-10**

Review of Program Objectives #1, #2, #3, #4, & #5

The salient task of the Viterbo University Social Work Program is to prepare students for bachelor level generalist social work practice. A comprehensive assessment plan using multiple measures has been selected by the social work faculty to evaluate the accomplishment of our program objectives. The outcome measures take a variety of forms providing data that is both formative and summative. The measures are designed to provide feedback for curricular and program improvement. Each of the program’s thirteen program objectives is on a schedule for evaluation so that all program outcomes are reviewed over a 3-year cycle. In the 2009-2010 academic year Program Objectives #1, #2, #3, #4, & #5 were reviewed. The faculty met on 5/20 and 5/24 to discuss the assessment data for these objectives and to follow up on issues identified in last year’s assessment report. The following is a report of these assessment activities.

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<tr>
<th>Objective #1: Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that affect individual development and behavior, and use theoretical frameworks to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems (i.e. families, groups, organizations, and communities).</th>
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**Summary of 2005 Self Study Assessment Findings related to Program Objective #1:**

In summary, the findings in our last self study from three of the four mechanisms that our program used from 2001-2004 to measure outcomes related to Program Objective #1 indicated we were meeting our targeted benchmarks. Only on the BEAP Employer Survey did assessment data fall below identified benchmarks and these finding were thought to have limitations as the data was based on only two classes of graduates with a total population of nine. Curriculum modifications were made to address these assessment findings. In SOWK 331 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I, students now keep a theory notebook which summarizes the major features and implications for social work practice for each of the theories covered in this course. These theory notebooks are used again in SOWK 321 Practice I in an assignment where students identify the theoretical underpinnings for practice interventions demonstrated in case studies. These changes were implemented in the 2005-2005 academic year. It was recommended that assessment data be monitored in subsequent years to determine if these changes resulted in improvement in this program objective outcome.

**5-25-10 Review of PO #1 Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables and use theoretical frameworks to understand social systems.**

**Summary of measures used:** There are 6 independent measures used to assess this objective including two course embedded measures (benchmark: 80% of students will score 80% or better), field education student skill ratings by agency instructors (benchmark: mean rating of 4.0 or better), BEAP Exit Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), BEAP Alumni Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), and BEAP Employer Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms). Multiple years of data were examined.

**Assessment Analysis:**

1. **Course Embedded Assessment:** The Theory Notebook in SOWK 331 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I and the Integrative Paper in SOWK 431 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II are used as the course embedded measures for this program outcome. Three years of data for the Theory Notebook measure were analyzed. In 2007 (93.75%) and 2009 (90%) students met the benchmark but in 2008 students did not (53.3%). However when data was aggregated for all 3 years, 80.3% of students scored 80% or better on this assignment meeting the program benchmark. It appears that the addition of the Theory Notebook in 2004 seems to have improved student learning related to this objective. Benchmark met.

For the Integrative Paper embedded in SOWK 431, students met the benchmark in 2008 (88%) and 2009 (80%) however in 2010 only 70% did. Averaged over all 3 years, 78.8% of students met the benchmark, falling slightly below the program benchmark for this measure. Benchmark not met but within 0.02% so no curricular changes recommended at this time.

**Feedback Loop/Recommendation:** The faculty debated whether using the total score for the Theory Notebook and the Integrative Theory Paper was the best measure of the objective since it may reflect relative strength of weakness of student writing rather than knowledge of theory. Two changes will be made to refine this assessment measure. First, the Theory Notebook assignment will be changed to more specifically measure students actually
understanding of the theories. Additionally, the faculty decided to develop a rubric to break out a score for content on theoretical frameworks and application for both of these assignments to better isolate a measure of student knowledge and application of theoretical concepts for future assessment.

2. **Field Education Student Skill Ratings:** Agency field instructor’s ratings of student skill in utilizing knowledge of theory in practice met the program’s benchmark rating of 4.0 or better. Three years of field ratings were reviewed. In 2007 the mean rating was 4.57, in 2008 the mean rating was 4.5, and in 2009 the mean rating was 4.44; all three years exceeding the benchmark. Benchmark met.

3. **BEAP Exit Survey:** There were 6 classes (2004-2009) of exit survey data analyzed. All five classes rated their ability to apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables and use theoretical frameworks to understand social systems higher than the national averages. Students appear to feel confident of knowledge and application of theoretical concepts upon graduation. Benchmark met.

4. **BEAP Alumni Survey:** Four classes of alumni survey data (2004-2007) were available for review. Alumni in all four classes rated their skills in diversity practice at or higher than the national norms. Benchmark met.

5. **BEAP Employer Survey:** Employer survey data regarding student’s ability to practice with sensitivity to diversity was available for four classes of graduates. Employer ratings for two of four years exceeded national norms. Ratings by employers from the class of 2006 and 2005 fell below the national norms for this program objective however cumulative ratings for all three classes were still within national norms at the 95% confidence interval. Benchmark met.

**Summary of Assessment Review of PO #1 Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables and use theoretical frameworks to understand social systems:** In spring of 2004 the Theory Notebook assignment was added to SOWK 331 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I to help students synthesize and apply theoretical concepts to social systems and integrated in to an assignment in SOWK 321 Practice I as well. Both students and faculty report that this assignment has been a useful curricular modification. The faculty intends to isolate points on a grading rubric related directly to knowledge and use of theory for these course embedded assessments to provide a more accurate measure of this objective in the future. Benchmark met.

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<th>Program Objective #2: Exercise effective communication skills differentially with a variety of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community</th>
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<td><strong>Summary of 2005 Self Study Assessment Findings related to Program Objective #2:</strong> Assessment findings related to students’ ability to exercise communication skills with different populations and in different settings were found to be strength in 2005. All assessment measures indicate that we were meeting or exceeding program benchmarks for this program objective.</td>
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5.25-10 Review of PO #2: Exercise effective communication skills differentially.

**Summary of measures used:** There are 8 independent measures used by the faculty to assess this objective including four course embedded measure to measure four discrete types of communication (benchmark: 80% of students will score 80% or better), field education student skill ratings by agency instructors (benchmark: mean rating of 4.0 or better, BEAP Exit Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), BEAP Alumni Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), and BEAP Employer Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms). Multiple years of data were examined.

**Assessment Analysis:**

1. **Course Embedded Assessment:** Following the 2005 self study the faculty identified four different forms of communication related to this program objective including academic writing, oral presentation, interviewing and professional social work writing. Four course embedded measures have been identified to measure learning associated with each of these forms of communication.

   a. **Academic Writing:** In SOWK 341 Social Welfare Policy I, a literature review is the identified course embedded assignment. Three years of data for this measure were reviewed. In only one year did students meet the benchmark. Averaged over all three years only 68.75% of the students met achieved a score of 80% or better on this assignment. The faculty member for this course intends to focus more specifically on the structure and process of writing a literature review. Academic writing is a concern overall in our students. The faculty intends to focus more on writing as part of the student review process and place students who struggle with academic writing on conditions with the requirement that they work with a Writing Specialist to strengthen their writing. Benchmark not met. Review again in 2010-2011.
b. **Oral Presentation:** Benchmark met all three years on the oral presentation in SOWK 341 Social Welfare Policy I. Average over three years was 97.9% of students achieving a score of 80% or better. This appears to be an area of strength in our program. Benchmark met.

c. **Interviewing:** Benchmark met all three years on the SOWK 280 Practice I interview assignment. Three year average was 97.9%. This appears to be an area of strength in our program. Benchmark met.

d. **Professional Writing:** Professional writing is defined as the style of writing appropriate to social work practice documentation. In two out of three years of data reviewed, students met the program benchmark. Averaged over all three years, 85% of the students achieved a score of 80% or better on this measure. In 2010 a change was made in the assignment used to measure this objective and a rating by field instructors of professional writing in SOWK 480 Field Education was used. It was felt that this was a more reflective measure of professional writing since field instructors were actually reviewing student’s professional writing in field practicum. This appears to be an area of strength in our program. Benchmark met.

2. **Field Education Student Skill Ratings:** Ratings of student’s skill utilizing effective communication skills by agency instructors for Field Education met the program’s benchmark of 4.0 or better. Three years of field ratings were reviewed. In 2007 the mean rating was 4.7, in 2008 the mean rating was 4.5 and in 2009 the mean rating was 4.44; all three years exceeding the benchmark. Benchmark met.

3. **BEAP Exit Survey:** There were 6 classes (2004-2009) of exit survey data analyzed for the review of this outcome. All six classes rated their ability to utilize communication skills in practice higher than the national averages. Benchmark met.

4. **BEAP Alumni Survey:** Four classes of alumni survey data (2004-2007) were available for review. Alumni in two of four classes (2004 and 2007) rated their skills in communication at or higher than the national norms. The 2005 and 2006 classes fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

5. **BEAP Employer Survey:** Four classes of employer survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Employers in three of four classes (2004, 2005 and 2007) rated their skills in communication at or higher than the national norms. The 2006 class fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

**Summary of Assessment Review of PO #2:** Utilizing communications skills differentially with a variety of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community: The benchmarks for this program objective were met in seven of eight independent measures. The faculty discussed these findings and concurred that academic writing is an area in need of development in our curriculum. Two modifications are being planned. First, more attention to academic writing is occurring in SOWK 341 Social Welfare Policy I. In spring of 2010, students were asked to submit a draft and rewrite of the policy brief assignment. The final version of this assignment was noticeably stronger in most cases. However these improvements did not carry over to the literature review assignment. The following curricular modifications will be implemented. Drafts and rewrites will continue to be used for SOWK 341 Policy I writing assignments. Also, more specific instruction will be provided in the course relative to writing literature reviews and how to write a policy critique. The second planned modification will be to more carefully identify students in need of writing improvements both at admission and at the end of the junior year and place those students on conditions in the program with the stipulation that they work with a Writing Specialist to strengthen their writing skills.

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**Program Objective #3: Effectively use supervision to guide social work practice.**

**Summary of 2005 Self Study Assessment Findings related to Program Objective #3:**

Assessment data related to Program Objective #3 suggested that graduates have a clear understanding of the role and purpose of supervision and are able to utilize supervision effectively. This was viewed as a strength of our program.

**5-25-10 Review of PO #3: Effectively use supervision to guide social work practice.**

**Summary of measures used:** There are 4 independent measures used by the faculty to assess this objective including field education student skill ratings by agency instructors (benchmark: mean rating of 4.0 or better, BEAP Exit Survey
(benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), BEAP Alumni Survey 2 years (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), and BEAP Employer Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms). Multiple years of data were examined.

Assessment Analysis:

1. **Field Education Student Skill Ratings:** Ratings of student’s ability by agency instructors for Field Education to use effectively use supervision met the program’s benchmark rating of 4.0 or better. Three years of field ratings were reviewed. In 2007 the mean rating was 4.64, in 2008 the mean rating was 4.5 and in 2009 the mean rating was 4.44; all three years exceeding the benchmark. Benchmark met.

2. **BEAP Exit Survey:** There were 6 classes (2004-2009) of exit survey data analyzed for the review of this outcome. All six classes rated their ability to effectively use supervision to guide social work practice higher than the national averages. Benchmark met.

3. **BEAP Alumni Survey:** Four classes of alumni survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Viterbo social work alumni in three of four classes (2004, 2005, and 2007) rated their skills in using supervision at or higher than the national norms. The 2006 class fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

4. **BEAP Employer Survey:** Four classes of employer survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Employers in three of three classes (2004, 2005 and 2007) rated their skills in communication at or higher than the national norms. The 2006 class fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

**Summary of 2005 Self Study Assessment Findings related to Program Objective #4:**

The findings from three of the four mechanisms that our program used to measure outcomes related to Program Objective #4 indicated that we were meeting our targeted benchmarks. Only on the BEAP Employer Survey did assessment data fall below identified benchmarks and these findings may have limitations due to small class sizes. The ability for our graduates to be able to use the knowledge and skills of generalist practice and apply the planned change process however was viewed by the faculty to be central to our program mission and goals and the following steps were put in place to strengthen this program outcome. A third faculty was hired in fall of 2004 to be the lead faculty teaching in the practice sequence. A fifth practice course was added (SOWK 275 The Social Work Profession through Service Learning) and social work majors now take interviewing in SOWK 280 Social Work Interviewing instead of through psychology. The faculty to identify and use consistent language regarding the planned change process to unify generalist practice concepts in the five social work practice courses. It was recommended that results of these curricular changes should be monitored in the future.

**5-25-10 Review of PO #4: Use knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice.**

**Summary of measures used:** There are 6 independent measures used to assess this objective including two course embedded measure (benchmark: 80% of students will score 80% or better), field education student skill ratings by agency instructors (benchmark: mean rating of 4.0 or better, BEAP Exit Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), BEAP Alumni Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), and BEAP Employer Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms). Multiple years of data were examined.

**Assessment Analysis:**

1. **Course Embedded Assessment:** Two course embedded measures are used to assess this program outcome- the Evidence Based Intervention assignment and the Case Plan assignment both which are part of SOWK 341 Practice I. Three years of data were available for analysis. For the Evidence Based Intervention assignment students fell below the 80% benchmark in 2008 (66.7%) and 2009 (62.5%) but in 2010 met the benchmark
(84.2%). The instructor’s experience in teaching this material as well as student’s familiarity with evidence based practice throughout the curriculum contributed to this improvement. Cumulative data over the three years (74.5%) indicates that we are falling below our benchmark on this measure although improvements in the past year are in a good direction. For the Case Plan measure, students fell below benchmark all three years (72% in 2008, 62% in 2009 and 47% in 2010) with a cumulative of only 60%.

2. **Field Education Student Skill Ratings:** Ratings of student’s ability by agency instructors for Field Education to use knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice met the program’s benchmark rating of 4.0 or better. Three years of field ratings were reviewed. In 2007 the mean rating was 4.64, in 2008 the mean rating was 4.5 and in 2009 the mean rating was 4.44; all three years exceeding the benchmark. Benchmark met.

3. **BEAP Exit Survey:** There were six classes (2004-2009) of exit survey data analyzed for the review of this outcome. All six classes rated their ability to use generalist social work practice knowledge and skills higher than the national averages. Benchmark met.

4. **BEAP Alumni Survey:** Four classes of alumni survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Viterbo social work alumni in all four of these classes rated their skills in generalist practice at or higher than the national norms. Benchmark met.

5. **BEAP Employer Survey:** Four classes of employer survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Employers in three of four classes (2004, 2005 and 2007) rated their skills in communication at or higher than the national norms. The 2006 class fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

**Summary of Assessment Review of PO #4:** Use knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice. Students met identified benchmarks for 4 out of 6 measures for this program objective. Students showing strong improvements in Evidence Based Intervention. Results will be monitored one more year to see if improvements are sustained. Students appear to be able to apply generalist practice concepts in Field Education and in practice following graduation however struggle more when they are first introduced in SOWK 321 Practice I as indicated by the assessment results for both course embedded assignments. The faculty raised concern that language for the planned change process still is not consistent across texts used in the five practice courses. Also while the language used for the planned change process in the Introduction to Social Work text and the Practice I text is consistent since they have the same authors (Dubois and Miley), the specific terms used for the planned change process seem abstract and troublesome for both students and faculty. Faculty will continue to work with students to help students achieve a clear understanding of the planned change process in spite of terminology used in textbooks. The assignments and teaching strategies will be revised based on assessment data and results for student evaluations. Overall the number and length of written assignments will be reduced so that more time can be spent to teach and practice case planning. This change will be monitored again next year.

**Program Objective 5: Understand and function within the structure of public or private organizations and service delivery systems, seeking necessary organizational change.**

**Summary of 2005 Self Study Assessment Findings related to Program Objective #5:**

Findings from three of four measures for this program objective met program benchmarks. Data from one of two classes on the BEAP Employer Survey fell below national norms but the difference was not statistically significant. A change in textbook was made in SOWK 482 Senior Capstone in spring 2004 with more specific content related to structure of organization settings, social service delivery and organizational change. Monitor effects of textbook change in SOWK 482.

5-25-10 Review of PO #5: Understand and function in organizational settings seeking change when necessary.

**Summary of measures used:** There are 6 independent measures used by the faculty to assess this objective including two course embedded measure (benchmark: 80% of students will score 80% or better), field education student skill ratings by agency instructors (benchmark: mean rating of 4.0 or better, senior BEAP Exit Survey (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), BEAP Alumni Survey 2 years following graduation (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms), and BEAP Employer Survey 2 years post-graduation (benchmark: meet or exceed national norms). Multiple years of data were examined.

**Assessment Analysis:**

1. **Course Embedded Assessment:** In SOWK 482 Senior Capstone the score for the organizational context section of the students final Organization Case Study is used as a course embedded measure for this objective. Benchmarks for this measure were met in 2 out of 3 years. The cumulative average over three years was 88% which exceeds the program benchmark.
2. **Field Education Student Skill Ratings:** Ratings of student’s ability by agency instructors for Field Education to use understand and function within organizations met the program’s benchmark rating of 4.0 or better. Three years of field ratings were reviewed. In 2007 the mean rating was 4.59, in 2008 the mean rating was 4.5 and in 2009 the mean rating was 4.44; all three years exceeding the benchmark. Benchmark met.

3. **BEAP Exit Survey:** There were 6 classes (2004-2009) of exit survey data analyzed for the review of this outcome. All six classes rated their ability to understand and function in organization settings higher than the national averages at the 95% confidence interval. Benchmark met.

4. **BEAP Alumni Survey:** Four classes of alumni survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Viterbo social work alumni in all four of these classes rated their ability to understand and function in organization settings at or higher than the national norms at the 95% confidence interval. Benchmark met.

5. **BEAP Employer Survey:** Four classes of employer survey data (2004-2007) were available to assess this program outcome. Employers in two of four classes (2004 and 2007) rated their ability to understand and function in organization settings at or higher than the national norms. The 2005 and 2006 classes fell below national norms. When cumulative data of all four years is analyzed, student ratings met national norms at the 95% confidence interval. With small class sizes, cumulative data is a more accurate reflection of our program overall. Benchmark met.

**Summary of Assessment Review of PO #5: Understand and function in organizational settings seeking change when necessary.** It would appear that this is an area of curricular strength in our program. Textbook change in 2004 in SOWK 482 Senior Capstone may have contributed to this improvement from the last self study. Benchmarks were met for all 6 outcome measures.

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**Follow up on 2009 Assessment Report**

In the 1-2-09 Annual Assessment Report the following concerns were identified for follow up:

- course embedded measures for PO #6 related to critical thinking fell below the program’s benchmark
- low ratings on the Employer’s Survey for the class of 2006 appeared to disproportionately pull the cumulative program ratings down for PO #6, #7, #8, and #10.

**Follow up on Program Objective #6 Demonstrate Critical Thinking Skills Course Embedded Assessment:** Data from the Policy Analysis course embedded measure in SOWK 441 Social Welfare Policy II have exceeded the program benchmark now for two years in a row. More time is being spent on the policy analysis process in both policy courses. This seems to have been an effective curricular change. No further follow up necessary until regularly schedule review for this measurement.

**Follow up on BEAP Employer Survey Results for PO’s #6, #7, #8, and #10:** Employer ratings for the class of 2006 were substantially below national norms for these program objectives and also pulled cumulative ratings below the program benchmark. Ratings for the class of 2007 pulled the cumulative ratings for all four of these program objectives to within national norms at the 95% confidence interval. Low employer ratings for the class of 2006 still appear to be an outlier. With small class sizes, cumulative data is felt to be a more accurate reflection of our program overall. No further follow up on these program objectives is deemed necessary until regularly scheduled review.