

Action Plan 2009-2014
Division of Social Work

Mission and Aspirations

The Division of Social Work envisions its role as educational leaders, researchers, and interprofessional collaborators for the social work profession among the private and public human service providers in the rural frontier of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. To reach this vision, the Department has joined in the University-wide strategic planning activity taking place over a two-year period begun in 2007-2008. This strategic planning process allows the Division to locate its central efforts in connection to the College of Health Sciences and the greater UW community. Further, the Division can locate its future central activities through an organized process, and in so doing, will create direction for the Division as well as agreement among its faculty and staff, and less directly among those who are students, alumni, and community members, for the major thrust of the work that will need to be accomplished during the next five-year planning cycle. The action plan lays out a list of action steps that are central to the Division's future development and are divided into four sections:

- a) Academic Programs: Undergraduate, Graduate, Post-Graduate
- b) Teaching and Research Excellence
- c) Students and Student Access
- d) Support for Excellence: Scholarship, Professional Collaboration, Service, & Administration

Relevant Institutional Issues

Social work is positioned within the College of Health Science goals and action plan and the wider University's *Creation of the Future 3*. Among the five motifs social work has moved to: Motif 1: build depth in its curriculum at the graduate level, having recently received approval for the concentrations and certificate programs in health/medical social work and rural behavioral mental health; Motif 2: social work is a profession critical to the state of Wyoming, and the workforce shortages in social work are in the areas of our new emphases (mental health and medical social work); Motif 3: the Division has new action items that further support student access to our program; Motif 4; the Division initiated the Wyoming Education and Social Research Institute (WyoE Family Institute, shortened) as an umbrella for a range of contract/grant work that builds positive change for children, families, aging adults, and youth. The Division will be building networks/collaborative relationships to further explore the pressing social issues facing families and their members; and Motif 5: the Division will foster and cultivate leadership avenues for its students, alumni, and faculty. The College will organize efforts to build a comprehensive clinical educational plan, locating avenues for the Division as well as the other units. The Division will retain its professional foci on human diversity in Wyoming, infusing content on diversity into its teaching, service activities, and research; the Division will continue to build its research emphasis on older populations, mental health, children/youth in institutional environments. The Division will foster stronger attention to globalism-abroad and in our own region. The Division will continue to examine how the context of the "Wyoming Western Frontier" influences the practice of social work with individuals, families, social networks, communities, and organizational environments.

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Academic Programs: Undergraduate, Graduate, and Post-Graduate

1. The Division will redesign its curriculum and curricular assessment approach for the graduate and undergraduate programs, to meet new accreditation standards by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), approved in April 2008, and bring these curricula in line with the new competency-based practice approach in preparation for reaffirmation by the Accreditation Commission of the Council on Social Work Education during 2010-2011.
2. As secondary concentrations, interdisciplinary minors and post-graduate certificate programs respond specifically to workforce needs in the State of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region, the Division must implement the Division's new range of special social work curricular areas, *e.g.* health and medical social work, rural behavioral/mental health practice, school social work, child and family welfare, international social work, early childhood development, and aging adult services that build upon the generalist and advanced generalist social work practice approach and specialization.
3. Develop a Portfolio Assessment Approach, refined with the new competency-based curriculum for the BSW and MSW programs.

Teaching and Research Excellence

4. Build teaching and learning experiences that address rural social work practice, designing teaching experiences that address issues that include: i) the potential professional isolation that rural social workers often experience, ii) the need to work extensively in interprofessional milieux, and iii) the importance of continued professional development during one's career.
5. Build teaching and learning experiences that help students be prepared to work a) with people of color and those persons marginalized by society, and b) with people in an international context both in Wyoming and in distant global communities. .
6. Build teaching/learning strategies that can strengthen a) the Outreach graduate students' experiences through infusion of needed resources and enhanced teaching/learning strategies b) strengthen the field practicum curricular components and the network of sites available to students, and where possible, collaborate with the College's efforts for shared clinical educational learning environments.
7. Expand the creative scholarship and formal, grant-funded research activities among the faculty in the Division. Such activities contribute to the advancement of social work as a central profession responding to the needs of families, individuals, communities and organizations, often responding to vulnerable and marginalized populations, and, provide avenues for student engagement in faculty research endeavors.

Students and Student Access

8. To increase the diversity of students, strengthen the quality of incoming students, and build student retention strategies, the Division will implement its newly formulated recruitment and retention plan and evaluate the plan in 2014.

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9. Identify and implement strategies that improve the Division's educational collaborations with the Outreach School (graduate program), UW/CC (undergraduate residence program), and the Wyoming community college programs (pre-majors) to operate effectively and develop external resources that increase student financial support.
10. To foster greater student access to quality university education faculty will improve the quality of technology-assisted learning by exploring the strengths and obstacles of varied high-tech, low-touch educational delivery approaches, and will incorporate technological teaching approaches that enhance the quality of course delivery as measured by greater student satisfaction with the learning environment(s).

Support for Excellence: Scholarship, Professional Collaboration, Service, and Administration

11. Build and sustain collaborative, reciprocal relationships with public and private social services sectors that provide opportunities for stronger social work practice in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region, and further learning environments that include student field placements, service learning activities, and practice research.
12. Increase faculty and student engagement and leadership experiences whether campus-based, regional, national, or internationally through social policy and research activities, and where possible, work with public officials and professional groups to identify ways to better address and potentially ameliorate social concerns.
13. Build programmatic stability for the Division in both the undergraduate and graduate programs, including stability in the scheduling of classes, in the curricular requirements at each programmatic level, and in expected performance outcomes for faculty and students.
14. Because the Division has a small number of senior faculty along with a mix of relatively new faculty and administrative professionals, the Division must strengthen its minority faculty mix, implement a range of academic and administrative supports to advance the Division's faculty to tenure and promotion, and re-examine and modify where needed the organizational and management processes that exist in the Division.
15. Build the Division's interprofessional, multidisciplinary work through vehicles such as the newly formed UW interdisciplinary mental health collaboration among a range of units, and with creative scholarship and research, and through service activities within the College of Health Sciences and in the wider UW community. The Division's aim is to bring greater access, excellence, and leadership into the strategic planning "Creation of the Future 2" vision.
16. Explore avenues and strategies for social work alumni to support and serve the Division's activities for students and the overall Division mission and functions and create a plan to enlist alumni support.

Implementation of Action Plan: Action Plan Time Line, 2009-2014 (on next page)