

# Preparing to Launch an Online MSW from Scratch

CSWE-SWDE 2015 Conference

# Objectives of the day

- History
- Process
- Lessons Learned
- Q&A

# Early Distance Education (DE)

- 1998, Corning hub opened
- 1999, Jamestown & Rochester hubs opened
- Fall 2001, First online course launched
- 2008, Corning closed
- 2011, Jamestown & Rochester closed, focus groups conducted
- 2011, Faculty Council discussions about Online MSW



Buffalo

Rochester

Jamestown

Corning

# Response

- In response to focus group feedback and to address accessibility, social justice and the social work educational needs of prospective students in the WNY regions, the school decided to launch a formal Online MSW program.

# Transition from DE to Online

- Dec. 2011, application for approval sent to UB Graduate School; submitted by Assoc. Dean for Academic Affairs
- Feb. 2012, application for approval to SUNY; submitted by UB Vice Provost for Graduate Education
- Feb. 2012, application for approval to NY State Department of Education (SED); submitted by SUNY Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
- Discussions held with CSWE about our Online MSW; no specific accreditation requirements

# Preparing for Online MSW

- Spring 1998, Instructional Designer position filled in collaboration with other schools
- Jan. 2012, Director of Online Programs, new position, posted
- May 2012, Director position filled
- Jan. 2013, SED approval received
- Feb. 2013, Online MSW applications opened
- March 2013, Student Services Advisor (SSA) position posted
- August 2013, SSA position filled



# Launching the MSW

- Fall 2013, Online MSW program, inaugural cohort of 19 part-time students
- Fall 2014, second cohort of 25 part-time students
- Spring 2015, accepted into Open SUNY+
- Spring 2015, PTAS Online MSW program, inaugural cohort of 7 part-time advanced standing students
- Fall 2016, looking to start two cohorts of 20-25 students each



# Process

- The overall process can vary from institution to institution as well as from state to state but in general you will need:
  - Faculty buy-in
  - Institutional support & approval
  - State approval
  - Time & financial commitment for development

# UBSSW Program Demographics

## Professional programs:

- BA/MSW
- MSW
- Joint degrees  
(JD/MSW, MBA/MSW, MPH/MSW)
- MSW/PhD
- PhD

## Enrollment: 487

- Full-time: 61%
- Part-time: 39%
  - Online Students comprise 28% of all part-time students

## Degree requirement:

- Traditional MSW = 60 credits
- Advanced Standing = 35 credits
- PhD = 72 credits

## Age demographics

	<u>Full-Time:</u>	<u>Part-Time:</u>
Under 25:	65%	21%
25-34:	28%	43%
35+:	7%	36%

# Key players for launch

- Dean
- MSW Program Director
- Director of Student Services
- Assoc. Dean for Academic Affairs
- Asst. Dean for Admissions & Recruitment
- Faculty, full-time & part-time, local & remote
- Director of Field Education & Field Department
- Director of Technology Services
- Director of Online Programs
- Student Services Advisor
- Instructional Designer

# Director of Online Programs

- Oversee all aspects of online education at the School of Social Work, not only for the Online MSW but for our other programs as well. These aspects include, but are not limited to, marketing/advertising, online course development, faculty recruitment/training, video classrooms and technology. Liaison with the university and SUNY regarding all online learning efforts.

# Student Services Advisor

- Responsibilities include, but not limited to, advising graduate students enrolled in the Online MSW program regarding program information, school and university procedures, academic requirements, and NY State licensure/certificate requirements; developing virtual student support services such as new student orientation programs, workshops to enhance the whole student learning experience, and provide navigation assistance to both SSW & UB student support services; monitor and analyze academic progress and potential student needs or problem areas (i.e. writing skills, tutoring); assist with recruitment of prospective students and retention of current online learners.

# Instructional Designer

- The primary responsibility is to provide Educational Technology support to the faculty, staff and researchers of the school. This responsibility focuses on training, supporting and facilitating faculty use of technology in the teaching, research and community outreach activities the school is involved in. This position will also help develop the school's social media plan and provide support to staff on using social media tools. This position will also develop media for the school's administrative units and web site.

# Gearing up for the launch

- Seeking faculty champions
- Collaborating with institutional colleagues
- Enhancing technology & securing virtual classroom space
- Online advertising & recruiting students
- Student outreach & orientation



# Faculty Champions

- The forerunners in distance education and online for our school are Barbara Rittner and Denise Krause. Barbara teaches a very asynchronous Psychopathology course while Denise teaches in our interventions sequence and an elective on solution focused practice in hybrid and streaming formats.

# Online Learning Collaborative

- A few university colleagues were brought together by our Dean back in 2012 and we decided to create a group focused on online learning and invited for membership from every unit at the university. We meet monthly to work on common issues and goals for online education at UB.

# Technology

- Video Lecture Capable Classrooms
- Webcam deployment
- Microsoft Lync
- Adobe Connect
- Bb Collaborate
- Technology enhanced conference rooms

# Recruitment

- Google Ads
- Facebook Ads
- Radio Ads
- Online application
- Traditional recruiting strategies
- Open SUNY

# Outreach & Orientation

- Contacted accepted students prior to first semester
- First cohort, virtual orientation, conducted over 1 synchronous session
- Second cohort, conducted over 3 synchronous sessions
- Third cohort, online orientation short-course and then 2 synchronous sessions

# Online Student Demographics

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	12%
Female	88%

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
22-29	43%
30-39	37%
Over 39	20%

# More Demographics

<b>Distance from Campus</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-25 miles	28%
26-75 miles	28%
Greater than 75 miles	43%

<b>Years since completing BA</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-5 years	51%
6-10 years	27%
Greater than 10 years	22%



# Lessons Learned - Faculty

- Training needs for faculty
- Additional video lecture resources
- Transition from seated to online
- Online learning myths
- Majority of foundation courses offered online taught by full-time faculty

# Lessons Learned - Students

- Constant communication is vital
- Building community among online learners
- Managing expectations

# Lessons Learned - Technology

- Technology will fail
- Have backups
- Cost
- Support
- Changes
- ADA Compliance
- R1 University, Academic Freedom, OER, etc.
- Hybrid, Online

# Future

- State Authorization
- Additional cohorts
- Open SUNY
- Expanding our student outreach
- Growing our faculty family

# Thank you

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# Q&A

- Any questions?