IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER

Presenters

- Beth Barol, MSS, PhD – Interim Associate Dean and Director of the Center for Social Work Education
- Patricia Fletcher, MSW, LCSW – Director of Field Education
- Jenifer Norton, MSW – Online MSW Program Director
- Michelle Brandt, MSW, LSW – Assistant Director of Online Field Education
Disclaimer

This seminar will discuss a process that includes:
- Our team approach to dealing with student challenges as well as recognizing student strengths
- Our commitment to establishing and building community
- Our strong focus on the importance of professionalism

Seminar Overview
Our Program

- Started in Fall, 2014 with a “soft” start…
- Grew from a cohort of 55 at our start to now accepting ~120 students every spring, summer, and fall
- Asynchronous, trauma-oriented, social justice-focused clinical social work program

Our First Course

**SW 503 Interpersonal Processes**

This course welcomes the new MSW student to the profession of social work. It addresses both the educational needs of the students while providing a vehicle for community building to support the Center’s learning environment. Students will develop the interpersonal and communication skills necessary to communicate comfortably with clients, in classrooms, on teams, with work groups and in client groups. The course will focus on the skills for building collegial relationships, increasing comfort with diversity, handling challenging conversations, and managing conflicts. This course will provide the core competencies and associated practice behaviors to support field internships, beginning work with individuals and small groups, and navigating agency cultures.
Our ‘Village’

Policy Changes

- Rethinking policy manual language
- Rethinking policy processes
- Maintaining consistency across programs but with realistic expectations for online students
- “Dead Fish” Policies
Monitoring

- Student Monitoring - concern form
- Faculty Monitoring - to ensure quality of content delivery and ensure positive, rich experience for students
- Student Services Coordinator position

Responsiveness

- Feedback from students and faculty
- Administrative checks and balances
- “Tweaking” course design and content
- Responding to technology issues
- Revamped New Student Orientation
- Created MSW Resource Center
Iterative Process

Policy Changes

Responsiveness  Monitoring

Situational Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Situation</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Outcome/Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Seeking Community          | -Student from oldest cohort looking for opportunities to connect to campus and program | -Academic Affairs Student Rep  
-Visiting campus  
-Phi Alpha Honor Society  
-MSW Student Resource Center |
| Anxious, Underprepared Student | -Beth’s 503 student in 1st semester               | -Weekly phone call meetings  
-Student Services Coordinator  
-Early intervention  
-Enhanced new student orientation |
## Situational Outcomes

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<tr>
<th>Type of Situation</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism in Communication</td>
<td>- Email etiquette (&quot;Hey&quot;; &quot;Gotta go&quot;)&lt;br&gt;- Off-color Skype names...</td>
<td>- modeling&lt;br&gt;- directly addressing professional communication in field orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The “Pajama Effect”</td>
<td>- angry emails to instructor&lt;br&gt;- off-color discussion forum posts</td>
<td>- clear netiquette guidelines&lt;br&gt;- professional development opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>- student asks Student Services Coordinator to contact instructor on their behalf</td>
<td>- clear roles and boundaries between roles&lt;br&gt;- weekly SSC phone calls with Program Director</td>
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<td>Adverse Life Events</td>
<td>- Student hospitalized for period of time</td>
<td>- thoughtful collaboration around options&lt;br&gt;- balancing student-centered approach with learning outcome needs</td>
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<td>Misinformation/ not enough information given to students at admission</td>
<td>-Student using computer at public library for coursework -Students promised they could count work hours towards field</td>
<td>-&quot;Detective work&quot; -Enhanced new student orientation -Training admissions team</td>
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<td>Challenging student behavior/ complex student issue</td>
<td>-Began as field issue; student “didn’t want to get in pissing contest” with instructor</td>
<td>-Instructor-student conversation first -Instructor reaches out to administration -Instructor-student-third party conversation</td>
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Takeaways

- Changes put into online program can generate positive changes in on-campus program
- We learn from our students as much as they learn from us
- An underlying thread is our role in coaching students, in terms of professional development or towards other career options
- Our goal is to remain student-centered
Presenters’ Contact Information

- Beth Barol, MSS, PhD – Interim Associate Dean and Director of the Center for Social Work Education
  - bibarol@widener.edu
- Patricia Fletcher, MSW, LCSW – Director of Field Education
  - pafletcher@widener.edu
- Jenifer Norton, MSW – Online MSW Program Director
  - janorton@widener.edu
- Michelle Brandt, MSW, LSW – Assistant Director of Online Field Education
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