

**“The Best of Both Worlds” -  
Students’ Views on  
Hybrid MSW Programs**

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*Current Students: Crystal Hughes, Melissa Misner,  
Dana Pendergrass, Marc Smith*

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**Program Overview**

- Offer 2 hybrid programs:
  - Statewide Blended (80:20)
    - F2F – Summer Institute, monthly ITV sessions
  - Weekend (70:30)
    - F2F – Kick-Off, monthly weekend sessions
- Both programs are part-time, year-round
  - Regular and Advanced-Standing options
- Typical student:
  - Nontraditional, many life demands, work FT/PT in the field, cannot attend traditional campus-based program

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**Cohort Model**

- Programs are lock-step
- Students must complete coursework according to schedule - each required course only offered 1x during the program
- Complete all required coursework together

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**Team Building**

- Main focus during 1st F2F meeting
  - Ice-breakers
  - Getting to know classmates
  - Group contracts
  - Discuss goals for the program & hopes for the future
  - Points of connection
  - Empathic learning

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**How the “Blend” Helps Create  
“The Best of Both Worlds”**

- Chose these programs for the “blend”
  - Not fully online – F2F decreases isolation
  - F2F provides overview of what’s to come
  - Promotes more communication
  - Online “study group” for students to discuss material

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## Relationships Matter... in Hybrid Programs

MSU has determined the following in 10+ years:

- Face-to-face component adds a richness, unavailable in strictly online programs
- Teaching through relationships is a key value
- As programs grow, building relationships is critical

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## Marc Smith - Weekend Program

### THE FOUR "R"s:

- **Relationships**  
*"It's important to not forget about the benefits of personal relationships when it comes to the success of all students, especially those of us in the social work field."*
- **Responsibility**
- **Respect**  
*"True experience with cultural diversity."*
- **Rewards**

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## Dana Pendergrass - Statewide Blended Program

**Online coursework:**

- Flexibility
- Feasibility

**Monthly Classes:**

- Increases Accountability
- Skills practice

**Cohort Structure:**

- Supportive to students
- Instills importance of teamwork
- Teaches group dynamics

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## Melissa Misner - Weekend Program

### Synergy

- *"The interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements, contributions, etc" Dictionary.com*

### Synchronization

- *"When people talk to one another in person, up close and face-to-face, their brains synchronize, especially in the left inferior frontal cortex, an area associated with empathy and social cognition" Colvin, 2015.*

### Unconscious Elements

- *non verbal cues, body language, tone of voice/inflection*

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## Crystal Hughes - Statewide Blended Program

- **Connectedness**
  - *Feel connected to one another*
- **Support**
  - *Someone who share in your struggles, fears, accomplishments, achievements, motivation, support and encouragement*
- **Real People**
  - *Face to face contact, not just words on a discussion forum*

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## Final Comments... Any Questions???

MARC SMITH -

- No MSW without the "Blend"
- The 2013 Cohort - friends for life
- Excellent personal/professional resources

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