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**Making the Most of Face-To-Face Time in Blended and Online Programs:
The Annual Summer Institute**

**Michigan State University
School of Social Work**

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Introductions

- **Paul Freddolino**, PhD: Director of Distance Education and Technology; Professor
- **Tina Blaschke-Thompson**, LMSW: Coordinator, Statewide Blended Program; Clinical Instructor
- **Glenn Stutzky**, LMSW: Senior Clinical Instructor and Program Mascot
- **Kelly Fornwalt**, LLMSW: Academic Advisor, Statewide Blended Program; Clinical Instructor

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Background


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Needs & Opportunities – circa 2004-6

- Challenges to recruiting adequate student numbers to any one distant off-campus location
- Faculty resistance to travel
- Strong commitment to a statewide mission
- Emerging technology tools for instruction
- Increased availability of student technology
- Statewide networks of social work agencies and technology providers

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Campus-Based MSW Programs in 2006



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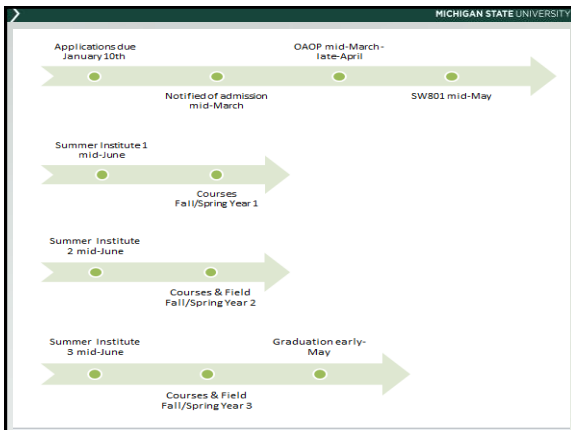
Core Values in Program Development

- **Quality** social work education
- Importance of **relationships**
- **Interactions** within and across groups
- Central role of **teams** and **peer learning**
- Core role of **mentoring**
- Importance of **modeling**
- Technology as a **tool**

Importance of

COMMUNITY and RELATIONSHIPS

Implementation

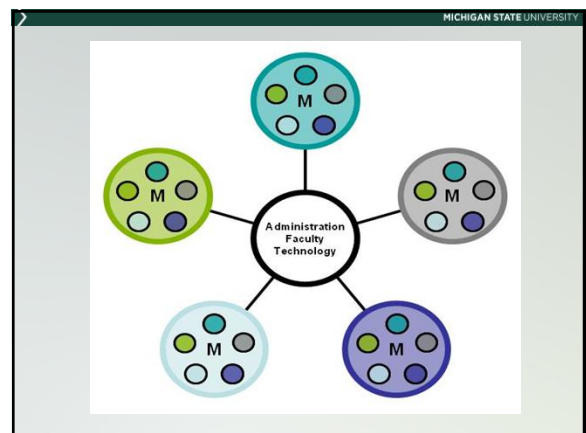


First Activities

- Students connect with each other after admitted but even before summer courses begin mid-May
 - This is new since 2015; previously no contact until summer courses began
- First course includes some 'getting to know you' activities, pointing to the Summer Institute (SI) which is **REQUIRED ANNUALLY** for 3 years
- SI is described to students as the place where **their** face-to-face community will begin

1st Summer Institute Goals

- Formation of new Learning Communities
- Each group of students and their faculty mentors:
 - Chose a name
 - Create a slogan
 - Select a theme song (for the first year)
 - Design and enter into a Group Contract



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Learning Communities



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Team Development

- Team building by purposeful design
- Evolution of team building activities:
 - First by professional team builder
 - Then by graduates of the program



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General Features – all three years

- Everyone starting in a given year works together
- Mentors/advisors are available for two days
- Students get to interact in person with students in all three contemporaneous cohorts
- Students interact with other students from their region of the state in different cohorts
- Michigan State University as a place and an institution becomes a reality


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The Whole Gang



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Dimensions



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Academic

- Course work – one or two courses each summer which are 80% online, with the 20% F2F at SI
- Advising – always available online, by phone, and through videoconference, but during SI students meet the advisor live and in person
- Faculty contact – in addition to meeting summer course faculty, those teaching in Fall and Spring courses meet with students

Field

Varies by the year in the program

- SI 1 – a brief introduction to what will come in Year 2 of the program
- SI 2 – the complete orientation to field
- SI 3 – checking in with students and mentors

Practical

This area has shown the most change since 2006:

- Technology – desktops to laptops, tablets, cells
- Software – from LMS to Google and Youtube...
- A campus tour with a stop for ID cards
- Financial aid
- Sessions on resume-writing and licensure

Social (and FUN)

- Team building exercises to build relationships among cohorts and small learning communities
- Video and other creative “assignments”
- Many meals together, in varying configurations
- A ‘fun night’ activity different each year – bowling, bingo, boondoggle
- Horizontal and vertical integration to reinforce connectedness

Role of Shared Special Events



- The family that plays together stays together
 - Blended Boondoggle
 - Blended Cowboy Bowl-A-Rama
 - Blended Bingo (celebrity “Callers” - Bob & Betty)

Special Events



Final Ceremony

- Importance of tradition
- Learning Community projects
- Presented with 1/3 of a “diploma”



Student Evaluations

- Completed each summer for CQI
- Includes program, content, schedule, facilities
- Allows us to test new ideas
 - E.g., community programs
- Drives changes over time
- Part of our assessment plan for CSWE

Examples of Changes

- Staggered arrival and departure to reflect actual time needed for required activities
- More unscheduled time to work on group projects
- Session on self-care all three summers
- More access to summer course instructors
- More coffee....

By Comparison – how others use F2F components

If there is a face to face component it tends to be only once in a program, and generally single-purposed for:

- General orientation to the program
- Field orientation
- Skills assessment

Looking Ahead

- SI will continue to be a vital part of the program
- Tweaks and adjustments will be made based on feedback, experience, etc.
- Some features are being replicated in our other blended/hybrid programs
- FUN will always be an important aspect of SI
 - For students and administration!
 - Teamwork makes the dream work!

Questions?

Contact Information & Websites

- Tina Blaschke-Thompson, Coordinator
 - 800-306-2249; blaschke@msu.edu
- Kelly Fornwalt, Advisor
 - 517-432-5509; fornwalt@msu.edu
- Regular Program: http://www.socialwork.msu.edu/msw/regular_program.php?spottabs=2
- Advanced Standing Program: http://www.socialwork.msu.edu/msw/AS_program.php?spottabs=3