


Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
Seton Hall University

From: Karen E. Boroff, Ph.D. 
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: Approval of the MA Concentration in Forensic Social Work
2019-FS-10

Date: July 23, 2019

The Office of the Provost is in receipt of the Faculty Senate's approval of the MA Concentration in Forensic Social Work, passed at the May 10, 2019 meeting.

The Council on Social Work Education identifies nine core competencies for its accredited programs. In the definition of what constitutes a concentration or specialization, CSWE also requires that a concentration demonstrates how "specialized practice is operationalized in social work education." As a result, this proposal articulates well the various goals and objectives as well as the pathway through the curriculum to attain this degree. This forensic concentration consists of 4 courses which build on more general practices. Each course has specific goals as well as objectives regarding how students will display that they have attained some level of mastery.

Dean Shoemaker notes that the Behavioral Concentration in the MS in Social Work program has grown to be the largest and most profitable graduate program in the College. He also speaks to the need for a concentration for social workers whose clients may be incarcerated and need to navigate the criminal justice system, as well as family and civil courts. While there is much crossover between the behavioral and the forensic concentrations, the forensic track will require some new courses and different clinical practice settings. The new concentration does not appear to impact the accreditation of the program by CSWE and the instructional component appears to be handled by a trade-off of three sections of courses in the behavioral concentration for two in the behavioral concentration and one in the forensic concentration. Therefore, this concentration does not appear to require any new faculty resources at inception.

There are some appealing aspects of this program. We are told that while many programs in New Jersey have multi-concentrations, the creation of the forensic concentration would be unique in terms of program offerings. The job market for a forensic social worker is growing at a faster than average rate, and the pay scale is slightly higher as well. In terms of our internal audience for this

program, a survey of current first year students in the behavioral concentration of the MS of Social Work program showed that about 60% indicated some interest in the forensic concentration. In addition, this may be a program that would appeal to some of our criminal justice majors.

The business proposal submitted indicates that the total enrollment in the MSW combined tracks is not likely to change immediately. In accordance with CSWE guidelines, the program expects to keep the 72:6 student faculty ratio. What is expected is that 6-7 of the second-year students may have an interest in the forensic track. During the 2019-2020 cycle, recruitment of criminal justice and other majors, who are not eligible for advanced standing will take place and give a better idea of the commitment to the forensic track in year 2. Depending on the success of the recruitment and interest in the program, AY 2021-2022 might be the first year where an additional faculty member may be required to satisfy the accreditation standards. At the end of AY 2021-2022, it is expected that at least an additional 12 students will be in the forensic track and the total enrollment in the MSW will be 84 students. These additional students should result in new revenue over \$350,000 annually. Should the expected enrollments and/or revenues fall short of expectations, the forensic track will sunset at the end of AY2021-2022.

I accept this plan and agree to the creation of the forensic track in the MSW.