

September 27, 2017

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees  
FROM: Jeremy Teitelbaum, Interim Provost  
RE: Bachelor's Degree in Social Work



RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the Bachelor's Degree in Social Work

BACKGROUND:

The UConn School of Social Work, with its new location within the downtown Hartford campus, is well positioned to expand our educational and community reach through the development of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. The BSW is a professional practice degree that prepares graduates for entry-level employment in a wide range of community and social service agencies. With the addition of the BSW, we would be offering accredited professional degrees at all levels, including the MSW and the PhD. The creation of the BSW program will: 1) serve as a signature major for the Hartford Campus; 2) expand the School's reach in recruiting a larger, diverse student body; 3) increase opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other undergraduate units, faculty and students; 4) expand our footprint and contributions in the capitol region; 5) create a career pathway for undergraduate students; and 6) develop a pipeline for our MSW program.

The BSW is established following the standards for accreditation of the national accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education. Students apply to join the BSW program in their sophomore year to begin their program of study in the beginning of their junior year. Students complete a common social work curriculum and one approved elective course in social work or related department/school, for forty-four credits. BSW students will complete their required coursework as well as 450 hours in field-based practice over their senior year (spring and fall semesters).

Initially, the program is available only on the Hartford Campus. However, with the start of bus services between Storrs and the Hartford campus, the ease of traveling between campuses might make it more favorable for Storrs campus students to enroll in the program. Additionally, it may be possible to mount some additional introductory and/or online courses on the Storrs campus. The University already offers an undergraduate Introduction to Social Work course.

## PROPOSED BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK

**CIP-Code:** 44.0701, Social Work

### **Background and Description/Reasons for the Program**

The University of Connecticut School of Social Work, with its new location within the downtown Hartford campus, is well positioned to expand our educational and community reach through the development of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. The bachelor in social work is a professional practice degree that prepares graduates for entry-level employment in a wide range of community and social service agencies. With the addition of the BSW, we would be offering accredited professional degrees at all levels, including the MSW and the PhD, as many top ranked public institutions do. We would also be the only university in Connecticut to do so. The creation of the BSW program will: 1) serve as a signature major for the Hartford Campus; 2) expand the School's reach in recruiting a larger, diverse student body; 3) increase opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other undergraduate units, faculty and students; 4) expand our footprint and contributions in the capitol region; 5) create a career pathway for undergraduate students; and 6) develop a pipeline for our masters in social work program.

*The Hartford Campus.* The addition of this major to our long established school of social work will increase the visibility and reputation of the Hartford campus by building important inter-professional collaborations and through the enhancement of our many urban partnerships. The program will provide workforce preparation through the development of innovative internships (possible field units with our neighbors, the Hartford Public Library and Charter Oak Cultural Center, both of whom have expressed interest, to name a few). A BSW program is also consistent with other Hartford Campus and UConn foci such as interprofessional collaborations. The university's commitment to public engagement will be reinforced by collaborations among social work faculty, undergraduate faculty and community organizations, who share a commitment to the Greater Hartford community. Having a BSW as a signature program of the Hartford Campus affords the constituents of our state and city many opportunities as well, through internships and employment. Students will become acquainted with the various community led programs and outreach efforts, some of which may lead to employment post-graduation. Additionally, there will be the opportunity to develop partnerships with local community colleges through articulation agreements, which facilitate the completion of the BSW by students who might otherwise not continue their education. The BSW Program will also be one of a few majors, which can be completed at the Hartford Campus.

*Diversity.* Diversity is a critical value and goal within both the university and the SSW. Ranked in the top 20% of schools of social work nationally, one-third of the SSW's 400 students and 9 of our 27 full time faculty members belong to groups underrepresented in higher education. A central aim of the School of Social Work is to be a recognized leader in advancing human well-being, human rights, and social justice through innovative social work education, knowledge generation and dissemination, and public engagement. Central to this mission is the active recruitment of underrepresented students and faculty who can bring diverse perspectives to the classroom, to scholarship, and ultimately, to the profession. The SSW, like our national counterparts, tends to attract and retain a diverse student body.

*Interdisciplinary Collaboration.* The School of Social Work is involved in a growing number of faculty interdisciplinary collaborations across the University, including with the School of Law, UConn Health, and the human rights programs. Some of our students participate in the Urban Services Track with other health profession students and with the Interdisciplinary Education Program. With the addition of the intercampus bus system, both graduate and bachelor students will now have the benefit of easier access to courses and activities on all campuses. While the BSW program would be offered exclusively on the Hartford Campus and students will be able to complete their entire program here, students will also have access to elective courses and educational opportunities on other campuses.

## **Bachelor's Degree in Social Work**

*The Capitol Region.* The SSW has an extensive collaboration network with public and private human service agencies throughout the state with a high concentration of activity in the capitol region. Through mandatory credit bearing field internships alone, SSW masters students provided 33,040 hours of service in the city of Hartford during academic year 2016-2017. The addition of the BSW program will increase that footprint and engagement as students will be required to complete a minimum of 450 supervised hours in community agencies. Bachelor's students will complete this requirement in healthcare settings, schools, libraries, community agencies, non-profit, municipal and state agencies.

*Career Pathway.* The BSW major is unique among social service related undergraduate offerings. With its required internships supervised by trained MSW field instructors in social work and related settings, the major prepares graduates for professional practice and employment. In many states, the degree leads directly to professional licensure. According to the Department of Labor, there is increasing demand for entry-level social workers (projected at 14 -19% increase by 2024). BSW graduates can add to the much-needed work force in the state, particularly in the areas of child, family and school settings and healthcare. The ability to embark on a career pathway leading directly to social work employment may also encourage graduates to stay in the state, advocate for important local and state issues, and increase the UConn alumni base.

*MSW Pipeline.* Finally, the creation of the BSW major creates a larger pool of students for application to our MSW program. Currently, the School of Social Work already accepts UConn graduates from Human Development and Family Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Urban Studies, and Psychology into the MSW Social Work program. In addition, however, through our existing Advanced Standing Program, BSW graduates from other institutions can apply to complete our MSW program with an accelerated one-month summer session in addition to one academic year. This would allow highly motivated and qualified UConn students to complete their bachelors and master's degrees in 5 years. (In contrast, students without an accredited BSW degree complete a full two-year, 60 credit graduate program. This BSW option has obvious financial advantages for our students.) As a Research I university, with well-prepared first and second year students, we would be able to develop a selective BSW program, with potential collaboration with other departments through elective courses and shared learning sites. Additionally, adding a BSW program could enable the UConn SSW to bolster opportunities for doctoral students through graduate assistantships that would provide them access to both funding, teaching and other important academic experiences. Once the program is established, we may consider options such as accredited articulation agreements with local community colleges for transfer and completion of the BSW degree.

### **Curriculum & Program Outline & Learning Outcomes**

The Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW) Program and social work major are established following the standards for accreditation of the national accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education. Students apply to join the BSW program in their sophomore year to begin their program of study in the beginning of their junior year. Students complete a common social work curriculum and one approved elective course in social work or related department/school, for forty-four credits. BSW students will complete their required coursework as well as 450 hours in field-based practice over their senior year (spring and fall semesters).

#### ***Program Outline***

The proposed curriculum includes two courses in human behavior and the social environment (micro, mezzo and macro dimensions), two policy-related courses, a course on social justice and diversity, research methods, two social work practice seminars, two field internships and two field seminars, and an elective in social work.

## Bachelor's Degree in Social Work

Dept.	Course	Course Title	Credits
SOWK	TBD	The Social Work Profession & Practice	3
SOWK	TBD	HBSE Micro	3
SOWK	TBD	HBSE Macro	3
SOWK	TBD	Social Welfare Policy I	3
SOWK	TBD	Social Welfare Policy II	4
SOWK	TBD	Social Justice and Diversity	3
SOWK	TBD	Fundamentals of Social Work Research	3
SOWK	TBD	Social Work Practice I: Micro	3
SOWK	TBD	Social Work Practice II: Mezzo	3
SOWK	TBD	Social Work Practice III: Macro	3
SOWK	TBD	Field Seminar I	2
SOWK	TBD	Field Seminar II	2
SOWK	TBD	Field	3
SOWK	TBD	Field	3
SOWK	TBD	Elective	3
		Total Credit Hours:	44

### ***Learning Outcomes***

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
8. Intervene individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

### **Enrollment Projections**

We expect to build the program to its capacity of 25 per cohort over the first few years. Students will apply in the spring of their sophomore year. Beginning in the fall of 2018, 20-25 students would be enrolled as juniors and another 20-25 student cohort in the fall 2019. Enrollment targets will be reviewed in AY 2019-2020, based upon demand for the major and existing resources.

Initially, the program is available only on the Hartford Campus. However, with the start of bus services between Storrs and the Hartford campus, the ease of traveling between campuses might make it more favorable for Storrs campus students to enroll in the program. Additionally, it may be possible to mount some additional introductory and/or online courses on the Storrs campus. The university already offers an undergraduate introduction to social work course.

### **Financial Resources**

Resources have tentatively been put aside for the hiring of two faculty, including funds for the director.

### **Facilities/Equipment/Library/Special Resources**

No new facilities or equipment is required. The BSW program will be housed in the School of Social and classroom facilities and equipment will be available on the Hartford Campus. The School of Social Work

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currently has library and other resources available for its Master's and PhD programs; it will add similar materials for the BSW program.

### **Program Administration**

Administrative and faculty staffing for the proposed BSW program is in accordance with the accreditation requirements of the Council on Social Work Education for dedicated program personnel. The BSW program will be administered by a newly appointed director and overall oversight provided by the existing Office of Academic Affairs and the Dean.

### **Faculty**

Two new faculty positions will be required for the program; in addition, existing faculty will assume some teaching and advising responsibilities. The existing Field Education Department will manage the development and oversight of field internships.

### **Similar Programs in Connecticut or Region**

Public Universities in Connecticut with BSW programs include Connecticut State University, Southern State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Western Connecticut University. The following private institutions offer the degree: the University of Saint Joseph and the newly developed programs at Sacred Heart and Quinnipiac.