

Annual Assessment Report
Social Work Program

Luther College

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With gratitude for the leadership of
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Annual Assessment Report – Social Work Program

This annual report is prepared to assess student outcomes in the social work program at Luther College toward the end of continuously improving the quality of instruction and the level of student performance. The social work program's accreditation was reaffirmed for another full eight-year period by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in June 2013. This decision was taken after an eighteen-month reaffirmation process that included an exhaustive self-study (submitted as the Annual Assessment Report to Luther in August 2012) and a site visit in December 2012. This reaccreditation affirmed that the Luther Social Work Program met the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of CSWE.

This report summarizes data on the performance of Luther College social work majors, who were seniors during the academic year 2016-2017 for the purpose of evaluating the program so that improvements can be made to strengthen the education students receive. There were thirteen social work seniors in 2016-2017. All thirteen students were female. Eight students did their senior practicum in Chicago and five did it locally.

The field evaluation instrument was completed by field instructors both locally and in Chicago. This instrument provides relatively valid data because the instructors are professional, relatively objective raters, who observed the students' behaviors in daily practice over a fifteen-week period. The instrument asked the instructor to rate how competent the student was on each item using a five point Likert scale from one "not at all competent" to five "highly competent".

The 2016-2017 academic year was a year of faculty transition in the program; two of the three faculty in the program retired in the spring of 2016. In the fall 2015 the program anticipated one these retirements and requested a tenure track position be approved. It wasn't until the second faculty member retired in spring that one tenure line position was approved. As a result, the one remaining faculty member was working to stabilize the program faculty during 2016-17 academic year. The program was staffed in 2016-17 by a one-year full time replacement in the position of field director and two qualified adjunct faculty members. At the start of the 2017 academic year the program will be staffed by two tenure track faculty members and one faculty member in a three year 5/7 appointment.

As a result of the staffing changes, the program did not administer the SWEAP inventories in the 2016-2017 but has a consistent plan to administer the inventories in the 2017-18 academic year and beyond (Table 2).

Social Work Program Mission and Goals

The Luther College social work program's *mission reflects the purposes and values of the social work profession* and the program's context within the college and its surrounding community and society. The program's mission and goals have remained relatively stable over the past decade; recent revisions reflect new areas of emphasis within the program and developments in social work education and practice.

The social work program fits well at Luther College given the college's history and long-standing mission to serve the community and the common good. The preparation of students for beginning level generalist social work practice is consistent with the college's preparation of other human service professionals, such as teachers, nurses and pastors.

Mission of the Luther College Social Work Program

The social work program at Luther College is grounded in the history, purposes, and philosophy of the social work profession including the concept of person-in-environment. It operates within the context of a small church-affiliated liberal arts college in a vibrant small town in the American upper Midwest. The program aims to assist students in developing nine professional core competencies and the knowledge, values, skills, and professional identity they need to practice as competent professional entry level generalist social workers promoting human and community well-being in a diverse, complex, and changing global context; the elimination of poverty; social and economic justice; and quality of life for all.

The core values of the social work profession that shape the Luther social work program are: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry.

Graduates are prepared to be culturally competent life long learners, active citizens, and advocates for social and economic justice who can think critically, use scientific research-based interventions, make sound ethical judgments, respect human diversity, and serve as leaders in strengthening the service delivery system, as they strive to empower people in their environments. The program and its faculty also contribute to knowledge in the field, provide leadership and expertise to strengthen the social service system, and work for the common good in an ever-changing society.

Purposes of the Social Work Profession

Consistent with the purposes of the social work profession, the mission of the Luther social work program includes commitments to:

- Promoting human and community well-being and the common good
- Working within a diverse, complex, and changing global context
- Working within the person-in-environment context
- Respecting human diversity in its many forms
- Utilizing scientific, research-based interventions
- Promoting social and economic justice, the elimination of poverty, and quality of life for all

Values of the profession

The social work program is shaped by the core values of the social work profession including: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry. The program curriculum is based on these values, expecting that students will learn to practice with respect for all people and work for social and economic justice as professional social workers.

Program context

Luther College was founded in 1861 to educate pastors for Norwegian immigrant congregations. A strong commitment to the liberal arts has endured and remains the foundation for an expanding range of pre-professional and professional programs. Social work courses were first offered in the early 1970's, and the social work program was first accredited by CSWE in 1976. The addition of social work as a major was a logical extension of the long-standing commitment of the college to serve the common good. The college's

emphasis on connecting freedom with responsibility, faith with learning and life's work with service directly influence, and are shaped by, the social work program at the college.

Throughout its history Luther College has provided a liberal arts curriculum that gives students a solid grounding in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences so that they will have the broad liberal education necessary to successful careers and effective citizenship. In particular, students learn about the economic, social, political, technological, cultural, and environmental contexts in which we all live. In *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, Parker Palmer summarizes well the importance of the liberal arts context for the Luther social work program, "Knowledge of this sort is liberating not only because it steepens us in the wisdom of the past; it also accustoms us to ambiguity and paradox, preparing us to find our way into an unpredictable future. A liberal education helps us embrace diverse ideas without becoming paralyzed in thought or action" (Palmer 2011, p. 84).

The following elements from the Luther College Mission and Goals provide a supportive context for the social work program mission and goals:

- The commitment to serve the common good and connecting life's work with service
- Luther's academic structure of "knowledge, abilities, and values," mirrors social work's focus on knowledge, values, and skills.
- Diversity and ethics show up repeatedly in the Luther statements
- Life long learning is referred to as continuing growth throughout their lives
- Critical thinking is referenced several times as "acquire, evaluate, and apply knowledge; analyze sources critically; and ability to reason"
- Scientific research is referred to with the words, "investigate a problem, analyze information, and communicate results"
- A focus on issues related to justice, peace, and the environment

The program is firmly rooted in the liberal arts, which is evidenced by reference to the following items as found in the college catalog: Goals for Student Learning, Requirements for the Degree, and Summary of All-College Requirements.

Social Work Requirements:

To qualify for the Bachelor of Arts degree, social work students must complete 128 semester hours of credit with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) or higher. The 128 hours must include the following:

- One January Term First Year Seminar: The social work program has offered two first year seminars (*Growing Old in America* and *Crisis Intervention: Interpersonal Violence*) which are open to all first year students at Luther College.
- A second January term course that includes one of the following experiences: study away, directed readings, student-initiated project. Social Work majors complete Social Work 102: Field Experience, which meets this requirement.
- At least 20 course equivalents (80 credits) outside the student's major discipline.
- 64 credit hours completed in residence.

The college is located in Decorah, a town of 8,000 in northeast Iowa. Luther is a small, private, liberal arts college, offering only the bachelors degree, which draws students from all states and 50 countries. The

majority of Luther students come from four states: Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Most students come from urban or small city environments like Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Rochester, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Rockford. Therefore, the social work program prepares students for truly generalist practice settings and does not, in spite of its location, emphasize rural social work. College enrollment a little under 2500 with the largest majors being music, biology, and psychology. The social work program averages about 15 graduates a year.

Goals Of The Social Work Program

Goal 1: Prepare students for competent and effective entry-level generalist professional social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through mastery of the knowledge, values, and skills that inform the nine core competencies (EPAS 2015). Competencies: 1 – 9

Goal 2: Prepare students to think critically, using the values, codes of ethics, and research base of the profession. Competencies: 1, 4, 9.

Goal 3: Prepare students to use prevention and intervention methods to work effectively in changing contexts with diverse populations, drawing on people’s strengths and resilience. Competencies: 2, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Table 1 EPAS Competencies and Social Work Program Goals

Competency	E.P. 2.1.1	E.P. 2.1.2	E.P. 2.1.3	E.P. 2.1.4	E.P. 2.1.5	E.P. 2.1.6	E.P. 2.1.7	E.P. 2.1.8	E.P. 2.1.9
Goal 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 2	X			X					X
Goal 3		X				X	X	X	X

The first broad primary goal of the Luther social work program, as stated above, is to prepare graduates for generalist practice with the full range of populations by helping them learn the knowledge, values, and skills that inform the nine core competencies (CSWE, EPAS 2015). Graduates who have mastered all nine competencies will be prepared for generalist practice. Table 1 shows that Goal 1 involves all nine competencies.

Goal two focuses on the development of a solid grounding in the skills of critical thinking based on social work ethical principles and scientifically-based research knowledge so graduates can empower people and work for social and economic justice from a sound base of ethical principles and scientifically validated interventions.

The third goal is to prepare students to intervene directly and seek to prevent social problems—within their particular contexts—in order to enhance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. This work involves understanding of the systemic nature of social problems, how policy affects people’s lives, the resources to be found in peoples’ strengths and resilience and the strength that diversity brings to communities and societies.

The program goals implement the general statements of the program mission and the mission is firmly grounded in the context of the college mission and goals, which support working for the common good and a life of service; a structure of knowledge, values, and service; life-long learning; ethics and critical thinking, scientific research based actions; and a commitment to justice and peace. Current assessment efforts are focused on these goals, which have remained relatively stable over recent years except for occasional updating of language.

Assessment of Luther College Social Work Program Outcomes

Social Work Competencies—Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2015

The nine Social Work Competencies are listed below. Programs may add competencies that are consistent with their mission and goals and respond to their context. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors (bullets) that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors (CSWE, 2015, p. 6).

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;

- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
(CSWE, 2015, pp. 7-9)

Competencies (summary)

- 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 Competency
- 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Field Instructor’s Ratings on Learning Outcomes (practice behaviors)

Table 1 shows the mean of the field instructors’ rating scores on each learning outcome for the thirteen students. Also included is the mode to highlight the most common score(s) on each item for the 13 students.

These data indicate that the mean of the field instructors’ ratings for all thirteen students was high at 4.85 with a range of 3.62 to 4.85 on the five-point Likert scale.

High Field Instructor Ratings

The mean ratings in Table 1 are identified as low ($L \leq 4.0$), medium ($M = 4.0 - 4.4$), and high ($H \geq 4.4$). The four high ratings (≥ 4.4) from Table 1 were on the following items. (Numbering to match program objectives in Table 1 has been retained in the two lists below.)

List high items

The field instructors rated students highest (4.85) on using professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes. Also high were “uses empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies” (4.69), “Uses reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations” (4.42) and “Critically

analyzes, monitors, and evaluates intervention and program processes and outcomes” (4.46). These are all skills that are central to competent social work practice.

Low Field Instructor Ratings

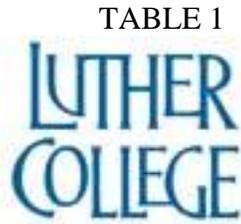
The six lowest scores (≤ 4.0) fell under three competencies: Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; Engage in practice informed research and research informed practice; and engage in policy practice. All six of these practice behaviors are in the areas of theory, research, and policy – ones that are not as likely to be emphasized in most practicum placements so students don’t get as much experience with them and supervisors may be less likely to notice them. It is of concern that students are not doing better on advocating for social and economic justice although this is, also, an area that many practicum sites probably do not emphasize. Of the six areas where the mean was below 4.0, only two of these had a mode of 3 (On the other four the most frequent score was a 4). The two areas where students were most frequently rated at a 3 were: “Engages in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice” and “applies critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.

Students were rated as least competent in the areas of critical thinking, social change, research, and social policy. These are areas where the program can strengthen it’s work with students. Part of the challenge in addressing these areas is that students are often not very interested in social policy, social change, and research. As noted, they are also less likely to have high exposure to these areas in many practicum placements. In general, students are most interested in direct practice with individuals and most placements provide this experience.

Luther College social work program Assessment Plan 2017-2018

The Luther College social work program *Assessment Plan* for 2017-2018 (Table 2) to evaluate the attainment of the nine student competencies (shown in column one), will use the following measures. The program will also utilize college wide course evaluations for formative assessment of both EPAS competencies, course objectives, and course specific goals for student learning.

- 1) The SWEAP FCAI (pre and post test) instrument is a 45 item multiple-choice knowledge test that seniors complete just before graduation.
- 2) The SWEAP ENTRANCE and EXIT Survey gathers demographic data, student ratings on their level of preparation for social work practice, and student ratings on the implicit curriculum. There are 34 items on the EXIT Survey because SWEAP broke down some of the competencies.
- 3) The SWEAP FPPAI instrument, which field instructors complete to rate the performance of the students they supervise in senior practicum—for each of the thirty-one behaviors that operationalize the nine competencies.
- 4) Intercultural Development Inventory: Administer when a student enters the program (SW 201) and at the conclusion (SW 402/403) to assess growth in intercultural development.



**LEARNING CONTRACT &
AGENCY EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

5	The intern has excelled in this area.
4	The intern is functioning above expectations for interns in this area.
3	The intern has met the expectations for interns in this area.
2	The intern has not as yet met the expectations in this area, but there is hope that the intern will meet the expectations in the near future.
1	The intern has not met the expectations in this area, and does not give indication s/he will do so in the near future.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Mean	Mode
Makes ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context	4	5 & 4
Uses reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations	4.42	5
Demonstrates professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication	4.15	4
Uses technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes	4.27	4
Uses supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior	4.31	5

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	Mean	Mode
Applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels	4	5 & 3
Presents her/himself as a learner and engages clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences	4.19	5 & 4
Applies self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies	4.08	5

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Mean	Mode
Applies her/his understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels	3.88	4
Engages in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice	3.62	3

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	Mean	Mode
Uses practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research	3.92	4
Applies critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings	4.12	4
Uses and translates research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery	3.92	4

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice		Mode
Identifies social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services	3.77	4
Assesses how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services	4.0	4
Applies critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice	3.96	3

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Mean	Mode
Applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies.	4.2	4
Uses empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies	4.69	5

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Mean	Mode
Collects and organizes data, and applies critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies	4.19	4 & 5
Applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies	4.27	4
Develops mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies	4.08	5
Selects appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies	4.08	5

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Mean	Mode
Critically chooses and implements interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies	4.35	5
Applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies	4.35	5
Uses inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes	4.85	4
Negotiates, mediates, and advocates with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies	4.15	4 & 5
Facilitates effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals	4.15	5

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Mean	Mode
Selects and uses appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes	4.0	5 & 3
Applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes	4.15	4 & 5
Critically analyzes, monitors, and evaluates intervention and program processes and outcomes	4.46	5
Applies evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels	4.23	5

Adapted from: Petracchi, H.E. & Zastrow, C. (2010). Suggestions for utilizing 2008 EPAS in CWE-accredited social work baccalaureate and masters curriculum: Reflections from the field, part one – the explicit curriculum. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 30 (2).

Table 2

Assessment plan 2017-2018

Instrument	Fall	January	Spring	Summer
SWEAP: Entrance	SW 201 SW 301*		SW 201	
SWEAP: FCAI Pretest	SW 201 SW 301*		SW 201	
SWEAP: Exit	SW 402/403		SW 402/403	
SWEAP: FCAI Post Test			SW 402/ 403 (by students)	
SWEAP: FPPAI			SW 402/ 403 (by supervisors)	
SWEAP: Employer Survey				
SWEAP: Alumni				
Additional Questions on Course Evaluations	SW 101 SW 201 SW 301 SW 401 SW 303 SW 490 SW 402/403	SW 102	SW 101 SW 201 SW 204 SW 304 SW 305 SW 401/ 402	SW 102
Intercultural Development Inventory	SW 201 SW 402/403		SW 201 SW 402/403	