

Department of Social Work Mission, Goals and Objectives

The mission of the Sisters of Mercy, sponsors of Salve Regina University, includes a direct call to “magnify mercy and justice while promoting systemic change.” The University responds to that call by “encouraging students to work for a world that is harmonious, just and merciful.” This focus of education on service and social justice is the context in which the Department of Social Work defines its mission.

In keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the mission of the University, the Department of Social Work promotes economic and social justice through the inculcation of values, the expansion of knowledge and the development of professional skills. In response to the call of the Sisters of Mercy, the Department of Social Work strives to work toward the alleviation of oppression, especially that which impacts poor women and poor children. It does so by preparing students both personally and professionally for entry-level generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities while providing them with a solid foundation for graduate study.

Department faculty fulfill this mission by providing an integrated course of study consistent with the purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession. While the primary focus of the department is the preparation of its majors, the goals of the department include a clear commitment of service that fosters the purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession throughout the larger University and civic communities of which it is a part. The stated goals of the department are as follows:

Goal 1: To develop and maintain a curriculum that responds to the needs of students and reflects the dynamic nature of the social work profession.

Objectives:

- Ensuring that each graduate with a major in social work demonstrates competency in each of the Council on Social Work Education’s 10 core competencies and their associated 41 practice behaviors.
- Challenging students to reach a level of understanding that demands not only mastery of individual competencies, but the ability to synthesize information gleaned from various sources as they work toward the development of an integrated knowledge base through ongoing assessment.
- Providing social work majors a comprehensive generalist curriculum, emphasizing the need for ongoing self-assessment and the integration of social work knowledge, skills and values for problem solving in a systems framework from an empowerment based perspective.

Goal 2: To provide opportunities for all students in the University to learn more about the values and knowledge base of the social work profession and its commitment to alleviate oppression in all of its forms.

Objectives:

- Offering courses, workshops and activities that are open to all students at the University and through which students can learn more about the values and knowledge base of the social work profession, especially its respect for the contributions made through diversity in a pluralistic society.
- Serving as resource persons and agents of change on campus by promoting activities to educate around issues of oppression.

Goal 3: To establish and to strengthen a mutual and visible relationship between the Department of Social Work and the civic community, especially social service agencies.

Objectives:

- Working with agencies and individuals in the civic community to share resources of talent, time and energy toward the fulfillment of shared goals.
- Developing and sustaining working relationships with external colleagues that are enriching to both students and clients.
- Participating as professional social workers in various local, state and national conferences, workshops and initiatives, while encouraging students to do likewise.

Goals for Learning and Associated Practice Behaviors

The Council on Social Work Education has set forth in their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2008) a set of 10 competencies and 41 related practice behaviors which must be achieved by graduates of BSW accredited programs. The Department of Social Work has adopted those competencies as its specific learning goals.

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
 - Advocate for client access to the services of social work;
 - Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
 - Attend to professional roles and boundaries;
 - Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
 - Engage in career-long learning; and
 - Use supervision and consultation.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 - Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
 - Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles;
 - Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
 - Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform & communicate professional judgments.
 - Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, and practice wisdom
 - Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 - Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
 - Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
 - Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences;
 - View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
 - Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
 - Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
 - Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 - Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
 - Use research evidence to inform practice.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 - Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 - Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
 - Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
 - Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
 - Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - Engagement
 - ◇ Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
 - ◇ Use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
 - ◇ Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
 - Assessment
 - ◇ Collect, organize, and interpret client data;
 - ◇ Assess client strengths and limitations;
 - ◇ Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
 - ◇ Select appropriate intervention strategies.
 - Intervention
 - ◇ Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
 - ◇ Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
 - ◇ Help clients resolve problems;
 - ◇ Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
 - ◇ Facilitate transitions and endings.
 - Evaluation
 - ◇ Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.