

**Aurora University School of Social Work**  
**Director's Report**  
**September, 2006**

**WELCOME !!!**

This will be the first in a monthly series of reports on the major events, information and happenings in the School of Social Work at Aurora University. In addition, we will be posting an online newsletter in the Fall (late October), and Spring (mid-March) semesters. Recipients will be able to click on the Aurora University website link contained in their email, and go directly to our online semester newsletters. These newsletters will have much more extensive and detailed information along with photos and graphics related to the School of Social Work. This is a first time effort by the school to reach out to its students, alumni, and field instructors through an online medium besides our AU web page. We hope you will find this information useful. In addition, we will be soliciting feedback from our constituents regarding curriculum, possible CEU events, and general impressions for improving our program. Please read through this very first director's report and feel free to send me any comments or suggestions you may have about the school. *Fred R. McKenzie, Ph.D., LCSW, Interim Director.*

**New Faculty**

There are several new additions to the School of Social Work this year. At our Lake Geneva Campus we have hired Dr. Chuck Zastrow as a new Full Professor and Assistant Director of Social Work for the Lake Geneva MSW Program. Dr. Zastrow comes to us from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where he has taught and been a leader in the School of Social Work for the last 35 years. We are extremely fortunate to have him on our faculty. Dr. Zastrow has written nearly 30 books, over 50 articles, and most importantly served as the Chair of the Commission on Educational Policy for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). His vast academic experience, prolific writing and immeasurable talents will be of tremendous help to the faculty and students of this school.

Ms. Christie Mason is joining us this year as a full-time visiting instructor. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Clinical Social Work from Loyola University in Chicago. Christie will be teaching exclusively in the BSW program this year. Dr. Tony Bell has taught for AU in the Human Services program for quite some time and has joined us as a Pro-Rata Assistant Professor this year. Both Christie and Tony are alumni of the MSW program.

We also have several new adjunct instructors on the faculty this year. Two are also alumni of the MSW program, Ms. Maria Santiago and Ms. Fay Jackson. Maria Santiago will be teaching two practice courses, Groupwork and Community Practice, in the MSW program on our Lake Geneva campus this Fall; as well as Family Violence in the Spring. Fay Jackson will be teaching HBSE II-Human Development in the MSW program on our Aurora campus. Andrea Goudy who has taught for us in the past is returning to teach SW Policy courses in the BSW and MSW

programs on the Aurora campus. Nikki Cain is joining us at the Lake Geneva campus this Fall, teaching MSW Social Work Practice IV in the new Community Practice Concentration. Finally, Jackie Anderson, a Ph.D. student from Loyola University's program in Clinical Social Work will be teaching Psychopathology in the MSW program at both the Lake Geneva and Aurora campuses.

Returning adjunct instructors include Barbara Hoferle and Susan Terronez in our Post-MSW Type 73 School Social Work program. Lora Windsor is continuing to teach in the BSW program. She will teach Substance Abuse and Drugs in American Society in the Fall, and Violence in America in the Spring.

### **Thank you & Best Wishes to Ken and Pat Millar**

As you probably know already, Dr. Ken Millar has left to become the Dean of the College of Professional Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University. His wife Pat, our School Social Work Coordinator for several years now will be joining him at the end of this semester. We are sorry to see both of them go, but wish them the very best and thank them both for their strong contributions to our program.

### **New School Social Work Coordinator**

We are very excited to announce that we have hired one of our former adjunct instructors, Randy Fisher, to assume Pat's role as the new School Social Work Coordinator. Randy comes with impeccable credentials, including many years as a school social worker, the editor of the School Social Work Journal, and most recently the Executive Director of the School Social Workers Association of America. He will spearhead the development of the new School Social Work track in our Lake Geneva Program, as well as continue to expand and refine the School Social Work track on the Aurora campus. Randy comes onboard October 1<sup>st</sup>!

### **The MSW Program**

The MSW Program had a combined goal this year of 128 new MSWs and Type 73 Post MSW students. I am very proud to say that we surpassed that number. The total number of incoming students this fall for the Aurora campus was around 140! The MSW Program at Lake Geneva has nearly doubled the size of the incoming class and admitted 25 new graduate students. Our Lake Geneva program is becoming more visible and will certainly continue to grow!

### **The New Clinical and Community Practice Concentrations**

This year the MSW programs on both campuses will offer our new Clinical and Community Practice Concentrations. Our Clinical Concentration includes the School Social Work Track and is geared toward those students who are interested in working in any setting which provides "counseling like" services. The definition of the Clinical Concentrations is as follows:

The Clinical Concentration is designed to educate graduate MSW students to practice in a variety of social work settings. The definition of "clinical" incorporates the wide range of theories and

skills necessary to understand, assess and practice in social work settings. Clinical social work can be provided in traditional agency settings such as mental health settings, family service agencies, schools, child welfare agencies, hospitals, substance abuse programs, and many other social service arenas. In addition, clinical social work as a concept is also utilized in so-called “non-traditional” settings such as youth agencies, YMCAs and YWCAs, community based agencies, and many other informal environments. Concepts such as prevention, outreach, and youth development work are considered part and parcel of the overall clinical arena.

The Clinical Concentration strives to educate MSW students about the wide range of theories and skills necessary to practice in all of these settings. The theories and skills emphasized reflect the core values of social work practice. The person-in-environment niche, a holistic approach as well as a strong focus on oppressed and vulnerable populations are the hallmarks of the Clinical Concentration. The Clinical Curriculum encompasses primary prevention, early intervention and remediation in the full range of social work settings.

The Community Practice Concentration is very much in keeping with the GWC tradition, which has embraced the ideology of the Group Work and Settlement House Movements. MSW students who are interested in Community Organization Work, as well as non-traditional types of Social Work Practice should choose this concentration. The concentration uses a competing values framework (a meta-theoretical model) to integrate management skills of boundary-spanning, human relations, coordinating, and directing; entrepreneurial leadership in human services. Students in the Community Practice Concentration will learn the basic and advanced theories and skills necessary to become competent administrators in the field of Social Work.

Both of these concentrations will be highlighted extensively in our online newsletter coming out in October.

## **The BSW Program**

The BSW program continues to grow under the strong leadership of BSW Program Director Dr. Don Phelps. The program currently has the largest number of students in its history. There are 35 seniors, 53 juniors and 33 freshmen and sophomores for a total of 121 BSW students. Along with our strong 2+2 transfer program, there are an increasing number of 4-year AU BSW students. While the BSW program prepares students for entry-level generalist social work practice, we are seeing the majority of our graduates go on immediately for their MSW degree. The school of social work is exploring the possibility of offering a part-time evening BSW program to better meet the needs of students that are working full-time.

The undergraduate student social work association has already planned several service projects for this year, including the Hike for Hosed House (a program for the homeless in Aurora), the Week Against Violence in Aurora, and a relief trip to New Orleans over spring break. Several BSW students were interviewed by CBS News on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, about their disaster relief work in New Orleans last spring.

For full-time students, BSW classes are offered on just 2 days per week to minimize the cost of gas and commuting time for students that come from as far away as Ottawa, Dixon, and

Rockford. All of the BSW courses now utilize “Moodle”, an educational software system that accommodates online discussion and project groups as well as access to other electronic resources such as scholarly journal articles and internet sources.

### **THE STUDENT IS...**

One of the unique features of our Social Work Program has been its emphasis on being “Student-Centered”. Private institutions across the country certainly cannot compete with public colleges and universities in terms of the cost of tuition. Private institutions are tuition drive. However, one of the unique offerings of our School of Social Work is the individual attention we give our student population in both the BSW and MSW program. Besides providing a quality professional program staffed by extremely talented faculty, our goal is to put the student first and do our best to meet their educational and professional needs. This is a two way street however. We will go that extra mile to meet our students’ needs in the best way we can; but also expect our students to demonstrate a strong professional commitment to their education. “The Student Is...” has become a slogan that is being displayed in all of our faculty offices and soon on campus as well.

Here it is...

## **Aurora University School of Social Work**

### **THE STUDENT IS . . .**

- ..... The most important person on the campus. Without students there would be no need for the institution.
- ..... Not a cold enrollment statistic, but a flesh and blood human being with feelings and emotions like our own.
- ..... Not someone to be tolerated so that we can do our thing. They are our thing.
- ..... Not dependent on us. Rather, we are dependent on them.
- ..... Not an interruption *of* our work, but the purpose *of* it. We are not doing them a favor by serving them. They are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

### **Group Work Association at AUSSW**

Dr. Ann Bergart, one of our faculty, would like to announce that we have developed a branch of the Group Work Association at the AUSSW. Please feel free to contact her at for more information at [abergart@aurora.edu](mailto:abergart@aurora.edu).

### **School of Social Work Open House – 9/25 & 9/26/06**

On Monday and Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, the faculty and staff of the School of Social Work will be hosting an Open House for both BSW and MSW students. Please stop by the four faculty houses on Gladstone – 427, 435, 439, & 443 for some refreshments and other surprises. The hours on both days will be between noon-2pm and 4-5pm. Please stop by!

### **BSW Orientation and MSW Community Day & Orientation**

On August 24<sup>th</sup> we held our MSW Orientation at LaSalle Manor in Plano IL. It was an all day event aimed at capturing the feel of our traditional Practicum Experience previously held at our Lake Geneva Campus. The day long event enabled new MSW students to develop strong networks with their new MSW student colleagues, as well as meet many of their professors.

This event was followed up by a more didactic orientation on the Aurora campus on Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. (There will be more detailed coverage of Community Day in our October Fall online newsletter).

Our BSW Program held its annual orientation on Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup> on the Aurora campus. Senior BSW mentors helped to orient their junior colleagues to the program, and BSW faculty and staff provided important information to the entire BSW student body.

### **Field Discussion Group offered by AU Counseling Services**

Field placements are wonderful opportunities; but what a change from the security and the predictability of the classroom! This semester, AU's Counseling Services is offering a "Field Discussion Group" for any BSW or MSW student who are in field placements. The goal of the group is to provide an opportunity for professional and personal growth to enhance the fieldwork experience. Are you wondering about your reactions to some of your clients? Is it awkward to open up to your supervisor? Are others sharing some of your same feelings or experiences? This informal discussion group will provide interested students a separate, confidential venue to process some of their experiences.

The group will be facilitated by AU's Director of Counseling Services, Marcia Hanlon, LCSW, who too has experienced the joys and challenges of field placements. Students have a choice of a Wednesday, noon, meeting time or Thursdays at 1:10 in a location on campus yet to be determined. For more information or to join the group, please email Marcia at [mhanlon@aurora.edu](mailto:mhanlon@aurora.edu).

## **MSW Community Meetings**

Beginning this Fall semester the School of Social Work will reinstate what was formerly called our MSW Town Meetings. Once or twice a semester Dr. Fred McKenzie, Interim Director of the School; Dr. Donette Considine, Academic Coordinator; Ms. Glenda Blakemore, Field Director, and various faculty members will be available to field students questions, concerns and comments about the MSW program. Dr. Jill Murray will be working with MSW students to form a “Student Support” Group aimed at facilitating this process.

In preparation for our first “Community Meeting” I would like all students to send me any comments, concerns, questions or feedback that you have about the School of Social Work. I will look over your responses and prepare information for the meeting. We have not set a formal time yet, but there will probably be two separate days to correspond to the foundation and concentration years, and two separate times for the day and evening cohorts. I will try to pick a time that cuts across two courses so that absence from class can be minimized; e.g., 6:30pm-7:30pm (1/2 hour from the 4:30 to 7pm class and 20 minutes from the 7:10 – 9:40pm class)  
*PLEASE SEND ME YOUR FEEDBACK – WE WANT TO RESPOND!!!*

## **FEEDBACK FROM ALUMNI & FIELD INSTRUCTORS TOO !!!**

All Alums and Field Instructors, please send me your feedback about the program. We want and NEED to be responsive to you. You are BOTH so much of the program and help to shape our ideology and curriculum.

One important topic that we need IMMEDIATE feedback on from all of you is our Spring CEU event. Please email me with your suggestions for a topic or speaker, so that we can offer what YOU need at this year’s significant event. Shortly I will be reinstating our Social Work Alumni Board as well. I may be calling upon some of you to help.

That’s it for this month’s Director’s Report! This is a very exciting time in the School of Social Work. Please look for our October Online Newsletter!

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