

18 Month Status Report (based on the Implementation and Work Plans)  
External Program Review- Step # 11

Department/Program: Bachelor of Social Work Responsibility: Program Director  
Date Submitted:

Programs offered at Algoma University are reviewed on a cyclical basis as part of the IQAP process. It is a 14-step process beginning with the program self-study undertaken by the department, and ends with the circulation and posting of this document on the Algoma University website. The 18-month status report is the public record of the department's response to the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations of the Final Assessment Report; it is step # 11 in the 14-step process. Once the report is complete, the department submits it to the Dean, who in turn submits to AppCom for review. AppCom then forwards the report to Senate for consideration, discussion and approval of recommendations. AppCom then forwards the status report through the office of the VPAR to the Board of Governors for information. The office of the VPAR posts the report on AU website.

Responses should be clear and concise. Please limit responses to the space provided.

Recommendation # 1

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Director and Dr. Jean-Marc Belanger

Completion by department? Yes    No   

Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT with respect to Francophone course content, a re-alignment of program delivery with program learning outcomes (and foci). Considerations for doing so include regional relevance, accreditation standards that recognize national Francophone realities (in Canada), and student profiles that the program seeks to serve. The Committee does not support the elimination of "Franco-Ontarian communities" from the program's mission, but does support the minimizing of its reference until it can be included.

Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

Dr. Belanger since January, 2017, has been infusing Francophone content into the curriculum for SWRK 2106 and SWRK 3207. Dr. Belanger has also solicited feedback from students in both classes who believe that a course on Francophone issues should be offered in the program, as opposed to infusing Francophone content into random courses. To that end, Dr. Belanger will be developing a Francophone Social Work course, and we anticipate that the first offering of this course will be as a Special Topics course in the academic year of 2018-2019.

### Recommendation # 2

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Program Director and All Faculty

Completion by department? Yes  No  Ongoing

Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT the BSW program consider reconfiguring SWRK 4004 [Field Education] into SWRK 4004 Part A and SWRK 4004 Part B, with separate registration. While the duration of the field practicum would be maintained (i.e., 700 hours), this alternative model of delivery would allow greater placement flexibility for the students, field faculty and coordinator; specifically, flexibility in the organization, administration, evaluation, and completion of the field component to the program. One element of this reconfiguration is aligning the frequency and timing of agency visits (e.g., from 5 to 3) with the necessity of doing so; for example, for those students doing well in placements, the number and time in-between agency visits might vary.

Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

The BSW program has consulted with the Registrar, Field Advisory Committee, students, and alumni on the proposed change. A final decision on this issue has been deferred until soliciting the input from the incoming full-time Social Work faculty after July 2017. That being said, the placement course has not been formally split by the Office of the Registrar at this time. Interim steps have been taken to allow for greater placement flexibility in the program. As such we are offering on a pilot basis, the opportunity for students with a second degree to complete their 700 hrs. of Field Placement during the spring/summer session of their final year, for both the Sault Ste Marie campus, and the Timmins Extension. In addition, SSW students are also eligible to apply for prior learning credit for some of the completed placements hours that they have completed for their SSW Diploma. The discussion around separating the Field course into two separate courses will be deferred until the fall/winter session of 2017-2018 when the full complement of Social Work full time faculty will be in place.

### Recommendation # 3

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Program Director and All Faculty

Completion by department? Yes  No  Ongoing

Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT in order to enhance writing proficiencies of BSW program students to a professional capacity, the BSW Program work with the English Department, to provide academic writing offerings from the ENGL program (e.g., ENGL 1501 & ENGL 1502).

Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

The program has collaborated with the English Department on requisite writing and composition content for social work students. ENGL 1802 has been revised so it more closely meets the needs of new, incoming social work students. That is, greater emphasis of the course

is placed on self-location and personal reflection papers, along with research papers. As well, ENGL 1802 begins with a historical tour of the campus and invites students to reflect on what it means to be a student in what was once a residential school. Moving forward ENGL 1802 will also place greater emphasis on library research skills. The social work academic advisers will recommend that social work students take ENGL 1501 and 1802 to fill six credits of general electives. With our full complement of social work faculty, the Social Work Department will be examining the utility of having ENGL 1802 a required course for social work.

The Social Work Department will also investigate other potential solutions to the challenges of incoming students not having the appropriate foundation in English proficiency. One idea put forward has been an online module with self-assessment for English proficiency be built in as part of a comprehensive overhaul of orientation programming for all students. Further, all students have access to Algoma University's writing lab, a free one-on-one service in which students can meet with a qualified Writing Lab Instructor to develop writing skills. Instructors are taking active steps to ensure that students are aware of the Writing Lab, and in some cases, assist with the referral for the first appointment. Instructors also review, and provide feedback to students with the following: reviewing works in progress or drafts of assignments; grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, logic, and coherency; discussing revisions and suggestions for writing development; teaching editing and revising techniques; and, assisting with documentation, citation, and research skills. The Writing Lab Instructor maintains an interactive resource site on the Course Management System (CMS) to which all registered students have access. That being said students in Social Work have reported long wait times and/or unavailability of the Writing Lab.

#### Recommendation # 4

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Program Director and All Faculty

Completion by department? Yes No

#### Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT Algoma University develop and implement a plan for the recruitment and retention of Indigenous BSW students, with the active participation of BSW program faculty and staff, Indigenous Student Services, the BSW Program Advisory Committee, the Registrar's Office, and other interested stakeholders. In addition, that the University develop an integrated advising and orientation strategy aimed at positioning SWRK students for program demands and successful progression.

#### Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

This recommendation has been approached in three ways. First, the program has strengthened its ties with the Anishinaabe Initiatives Division (AID) of Algoma University. AID receives funding directly from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to provide academic and cultural support for Anishinaabe students and Algoma University community members. The activities of AID staff directly support better recruitment and retention of students from

Indigenous communities. The Anishinaabe Outreach Officer, for instance, travels with representatives from other post-secondary institutions throughout Ontario as part of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP) tour. This tour travels to high schools and First Nation communities to provide awareness of post-secondary programs, as well as to serve as role models by sharing stories of post-secondary experience and success. Once students arrive on campus, they are further supported by events such as the Annual Gathering at the Rapids Pow-Wow, Elders' Gathering, and individualized advising provided by AID staff. The Elders' Council and the Elder-in-Residence program ensure that Anishinaabe students have regular (weekly) luncheons and numerous informal opportunities to connect with their culture as well as seek advice. The social work program regularly collaborates with the Director of Anishinaabe Initiatives to ensure AID staff recruit and support Anishinaabe students who are often under-represented and under-served in the post-secondary system.

Second, the program has developed a program-specific plan to contribute to better recruitment and retention of students from Indigenous communities. This program-specific plan is being implemented and monitored by a small working group that includes the Program Director, Dr. Rose Cameron (Program Faculty), the Director of Anishinaabe Initiatives, the Manager of Academic Development and Quality, the Director of Student Recruitment, and a representative from the Timmins site. The plan includes the annual examination of enrolment and retention data for Anishinaabe students, the enhancement of the composition of the program advisory committee to include representation from Indigenous communities, and development of a permanent link between the program and the Anishinaabe Peoples' Council (APC) among other activities.

Third, under the leadership of Dr. Rose Cameron, the program has undertaken a review of all of its courses with Indigenous content and has revised course descriptions to better reflect the focus on Anishinaabe social work. Specifically, the program has introduced a new social work elective, Cultural Caring Practices, which will be offered in the spring of 2017 for the third time; and revised the course descriptions of SWRK 2356, 3206, and 4206. It is anticipated that these additions and revisions shall better reflect Anishinaabe students' needs and desires to have their own culture and context more explicit within course content.

Dr. Rose Cameron has also taken the lead to review the curriculum content of SWRK 3406 & SWRK 3407 with the support of Theresa Binda. This initiative was a result of CASWE's (2015) recommendation that all Social Work Programs across Canada offer an Aboriginal course as part of their curriculum. In addition to this review, there is strong integration of Aboriginal content infused throughout the curriculum, which was initiated by Dr. Linda Savory-Gordon when the BSW Program was originally developed.

Dr. Rose Cameron, and the Judy Syrette, the Director of AID has developed a brochure to be used to recruit Aboriginal students in the Social Work Program. The brochure will be updated to reflect the new hires in May 2017. In addition, promotional posters and testimonies from social work students who have graduated from the program is planned for June 2017. These materials will be used by the AID recruiter to disseminate to communities, and by Rose Leeson in

Timmins. All Faculty in the program will also be disseminating the brochures throughout the North.

Many Anishinaabe students come into the program after taking a college diploma, most frequently a social services diploma. To facilitate the success of college students, the program has revised the articulation agreements with both Sault College and Northern College, so that college graduates now take both SWRK 1006/1007 upon admission to the program. To ensure that the knowledge and skills gained at the college level are still appropriately reflected, students receive additional elective credits. The program also undertook a review of course sequencing and made adjustments to serve students better.

The internal working group will consult with other social work programs to learn more about successful strategies and approaches to recruitment, retention, and program delivery for Indigenous students. The program hired, through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Internship Program, an Education Partnership Coordinator, Ms. Meghan Tarantini. Meghan Tarnantini is supporting the program's work around recruitment and retention of Anishinaabe students by conducting a literature review on successful practices in designing and delivering social work education with Indigenous communities including First Nations, coordinating meetings with Indigenous education providers and community-based organizations to build partnerships in delivering social work education to and with Indigenous communities, and assisting in setting up partnership-building events with Indigenous communities to support the social work education program. The first event took place in Sault Ste. Marie on the evening of March 8th, and addressed the critical and related issue of the relationship that social work education has to Indigenous reconciliation. This event was well attended in Sault Ste. Marie and fostered the building of trust with First Nations and Metis Peoples. Another similar event took place at the Timmins Extension on April 22nd. This event consisted of a public message about reconciliation from Elder Elizabeth Babin. Ms. Tarantini will also be connecting Indigenous program alumni with current and prospective students through mentorship opportunities, and will be promoting the Social Work Program with local First Nations and Metis Peoples.

Recommendation # 5

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Academic Dean and Program Director

Completion by department?  Yes    No    Ongoing

Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT the University actively engage and secure a suitably qualified and permanent full-time academic and professional leader for the BSW program. Such assurance is consistent with the governance and structure standards for program accreditation of the CASWE Council on Accreditation.

Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

Algoma University has been actively working to stabilize its faculty complement for the social work program at a level that meets the needs of its students and faculty. The Academic Dean, Dr. Richard McCutcheon, made program resourcing and stabilization one of his top priorities when he took up his role as Academic Dean at Algoma University in January 2015. Dr. Barbara Waterfall was hired as the new full-time permanent Director and began in August 1, 2016.

#### Recommendation # 6

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Academic Dean and Program Director  
Completion by department?  Yes    No    Ongoing

Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)

THAT the two recent limited-term (9 month) contract positions be converted to two tenure-track positions for the 2015-2016 academic year, consistent with the CASWE Commission on Accreditation (COA) recommendation. Adequate full-time academic staffing is also necessary for program stability and growth.

#### Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps

The faculty complement for the social work program in the fall of 2016 consisted of one full-time faculty and one director. In addition, the program employs four program support staff:

- Field Education Practicum and Admissions Coordinator (Sault Ste. Marie)
- Program (Field) Coordinator and Part-Time Faculty Member (Timmins)
- Part-Time (.5 FTE) Administrative Assistant (Sault Ste. Marie)
- Support Services Coordinator (Timmins)

Currently the Field Education Practicum and Admissions Coordinator (Sault Ste. Marie) is serving in an interim capacity, pending the return of the permanent Field Education Practicum and Admissions Coordinator who has been on medical leave. As well, the Part-Time (.5FTE) Administrative Assistant (Sault Ste. Marie) has been on medical leave and decided not to return to her position. We have hired a temporary replacement for this position on a two-month contract and will be posting for a permanent position in the spring/summer of 2017.

The required faculty complement has expanded since the time the CASWE accreditation self-study was completed, as a means of being compliant with the CASWE accreditation requirements of four full-time faculty and one director (CASWE Comments from first accreditation visit, March, 2014). Since the fall of 2016, we have hired one faculty CLTA position for a 3-5-year duration faculty at the Sault Ste. Marie campus. In addition, two full-time tenure track positions have been hired with a start date of July 1, 2017.

Table 1 compares faculty resources to enrolment. The program has sufficient faculty resources to meet the needs of the program. Further, Algoma University is a small university which requires the Director to teach. Having a teaching Director (9 credits per annum) and a strong complement of part-time instructors strengthens the ability of program faculty to meet the

needs of the student body. Enrolment in the BSW peaked in 2013 and has experienced a minor decline since, reflecting less than the decline in the university's overall numbers. Local demographics and application data for 2017 leads the university to anticipate another small decline in overall enrolment for 2017. This is in line with declining application numbers to social work programs province-wide. With the re-stabilization of the Social Work Program, and with strategic recruitment we anticipate that enrolment to increase for the year 2018.

**Table 1: BSW Historical Enrolment Data and Full-Time Faculty Complement**

Year	Social Work Enrolment in Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs)	Number of Full-Time Faculty (including Director)	Student (FTEs) to Full-Time Faculty Ratio
2010	43.0	2.5	17:1
2011	65.5	3	22:1
2012	103.1	4	26:1
2013	103.5	4	26:1
2014	89.3	3	30:1
2015	83.6	4	21:1
2016	77.2	5	15:1
2017	75.2	5	15.1

*\*Note: 2017 row is projected not actual.*

There remained an outstanding CASWE requirement of a full-time faculty hire in Timmins (First Accreditation Conditions, 2014). This social work hire is significant to meet the academic and support needs of students in Timmins, and to strengthen the overall social work program in Timmins and the North. The Algoma University agreed to a nine month CLTA hire for Timmins for the academic year of 2017-18. The job advertisement for this position is currently being developed and an anticipated hire will take place for August, 2017.

**Recommendation # 7**

Department member responsible for leading follow-up: Program Director and Registrar

Completion by department? Yes No

**Recommendation (cut and paste from FAR)**

THAT, where such is available, Algoma University consider the scheduling of SWRK classes that support Anishinaabe pedagogy (i.e., flexible classroom layouts), which may include the Shingwauk Auditorium.

**Outstanding Items / Actions pertaining to Recommendation and Next Steps**

This is being considered on an ongoing basis and will be requested of by the University Registrar when making course scheduling decisions. The Social Work Program also wishes to advocate for one of the classrooms in the EW, (such as EW 206) to be converted to a "circle room" to support Indigenous pedagogical practices.