

Motion for New Department
Submitted to the Committee on Faculty Affairs

Title of Motion: Creation of a Department of Social Work

Submitted By: Joyce Starr Johnson, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs (in accordance with the FGA motion passed on May 5, 2010, that motions regarding the addition or elimination of departments be directed to the Faculty General Assembly through the Committee on Faculty Affairs)

Date Submitted: August 18, 2010

It is moved that a Department of Social Work be formed.

Proposed Date of Implementation: July 1, 2011

Estimated Number of Majors: 50 students

Financial Impact (describe and list amount):

- Faculty: no new faculty members are needed until enrollment surpasses 75 undergraduate students. Current faculty advise approximately 25 students each
- New Library Holdings/Audio Visual Materials: library materials have been purchased through an FCC grant and through the generosity of a private donor
- Equipment: No specific equipment is requested
- Space: Accommodations for future faculty member will need to be addressed if enrollment surpasses 75 students

Effect on currently enrolled students (if any): Failure to approve this motion will jeopardize progress on program accreditation. Students graduating from an unaccredited program are unable to compete for employment as social workers. There are currently 50 students enrolled in this program and their employment outlook will be compromised if accreditation is not achieved, and recruiting new students to this popular program would raise ethical questions.

Rationale:

The purpose of this motion is to continue the establishment the social work program with the desired outcome of achieving full accreditation.

Current practice and certification in the field of Social Work has changed in recent years. The Council on Social Work Education now certifies social workers at the bachelor's level toward the goal of satisfying the need for social work practitioners (as opposed to a trend in recent years towards research-oriented master's and doctoral programs). The U.S. Government Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 22% increased demand for licensed social workers between 2006-2016, and students graduating from accredited bachelor's degree programs are in high demand by state and community agencies.

To become a licensed social worker at the bachelor's level, students must graduate from an accredited program. The State of Missouri prohibits the use of the title "social worker" by any person other than an individual who has been professionally educated in an accredited social work program (HB332, 2003). Further state legislation in 2004 allowed the licensing of bachelor-level social workers. State and local agencies have demonstrated a preference for hiring individuals with this educational preparation and licensure, and many have made it a requirement.

The recently approved BSW major (see FGA agenda from March 25 and minutes from April 8, 2009) was proposed and approved with the *stated goal* of achieving accreditation from the Council on Social Work Accreditation. The curriculum of the program at Fontbonne University was planned to prepare practitioners to deal with a broad array of community issues, and a site visitor from CSWE (January 10, 2010) praised the proposed curriculum for addressing best practices in the field and its applicability to today's social work needs. In particular, the curriculum offers a rotating set of courses that respond to the varied and ever-changing needs of social workers, and will be taught by practitioners who specialize in those areas. In addition, the Social Work major is closely aligned with the mission of Fontbonne University and directly attends to our vision of "serving a world in need."

To date, the BSW program has completed the first two stages of the 5-year process (awarded Candidacy status in June 2010), and work is in progress to meet or surpass all accreditation conditions in the coming 3 years. When this goal is achieved, students graduating from Fontbonne University's BSW program will be certified to work as licensed Social Workers. Without this accreditation, students will not have appropriate credentials to work in their chosen field.

One important criterion for receiving full accreditation is to meet guidelines for administration of the program. CSWE outlines the decision-making role of the program administrator in a fully accredited program, including, but not limited to, the recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and mentoring of faculty through tenure processes, supervising curricular processes and extra-curricular partnerships and activities, administration of a separate budget, accountability for full implementation of assessment of learning outcomes, and regular reporting and compliance with the accrediting agency. The CWSE defines these activities as necessary for the autonomous function of the unit within the institution. At Fontbonne University, these tasks have traditionally been assigned to department chairpersons with appropriate release time and compensation to complete these duties. Completion of these tasks without appropriate or comparable resources presents an inequitable situation that is remedied by approving Social Work as an independent academic unit.

Most accredited Social Work programs in the United States operate as independent units within their institutions, and recent accreditation actions indicate this preference. All recent accreditations have been granted to programs that operate as independent units; those programs embedded in other departments received their accreditation more than 10 years ago. 93% of all accredited programs (n=198) are administered independently. The CSWE uses the term "autonomous" to describe this administrative arrangement. Distribution of accredited Social Work programs in the United States is as follows:

117 (59%) operate as Departments of Social Work
67 (34%) operate as Schools of Social Work
9 (4.5%) operate within departments of Social Science
1 (0.5%) operates within a department of Science and Engineering
3 (1.5%) operate within a department of Education
1 (0.5%) operates within a department of Family and Social Service

The Social Work major at Fontbonne University currently has approximately 50 students enrolled, supported by two full-time faculty members and 10 adjunct faculty members who are practitioners in the field. The approximate revenue produced is currently \$1 million per year. The initial expenses for establishing the program and seeking accreditation were approved by the Board of Trustees several years ago and were recouped by enrollment during the first year of course offering, demonstrating accurate research and foresight for the demand for this program. The growth trajectory and potential revenue stream of this program, once fully accredited, is great, and can continue to contribute in positive ways to Fontbonne's future. In conjunction with the Department of Human Environmental Sciences, plans are already underway to expand outreach into rural communities to further Fontbonne's mission and address the needs of our dear neighbors. Furthermore, this outreach addresses accreditation standards about meeting the needs of underserved populations. Administration of these activities places further demands on the unit.

The program is currently housed in the Department of Education/Special Education. The administrator of this unit is currently charged with supervision of the Department of Education/Special Education, the certification programs housed in the department, as well as the secondary and B-12 programs housed in other departments. Adding the specifically articulated duties of the Social Work program on a permanent basis adds to an already overburdened role for this administrator and *would require him to seek a master's degree from a CSWE-accredited institution*. In practice, the current director of the Social Work program has completed these duties without equitable compensation or release time. Should this motion fail to gain approval, it would be unjust for Fontbonne University to continue to ask the director to continue this practice. A decision would need to be made about the viability of the program and the future of the 50 students currently enrolled.

Does the proposed department replace an existing one? No

Expected outcomes: It is anticipated that with autonomy as a department, Fontbonne University's Social Work program will receive full accreditation, and the number of students enrolled in the major will continue to increase, furthering the mission of the institution and contributing to its financial well-being.