

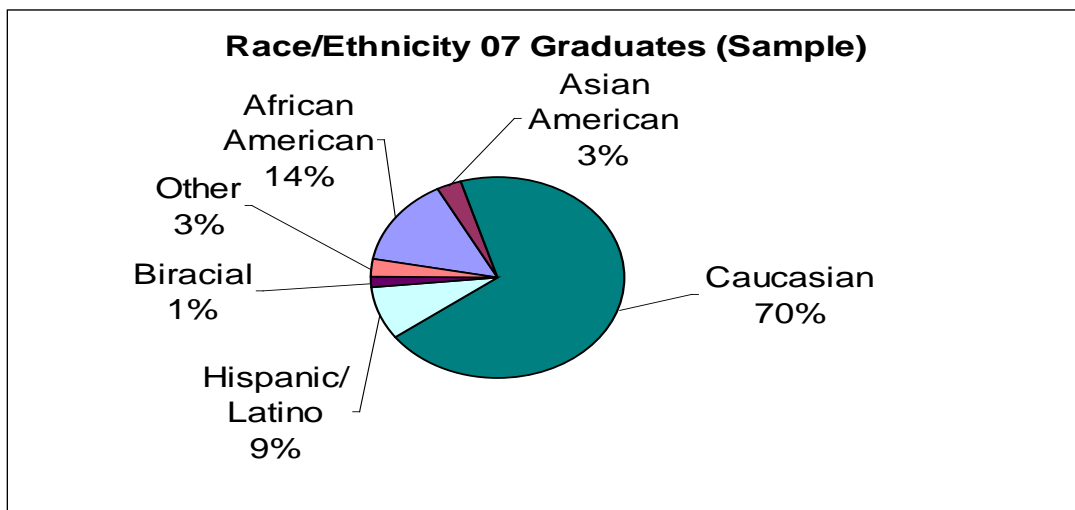
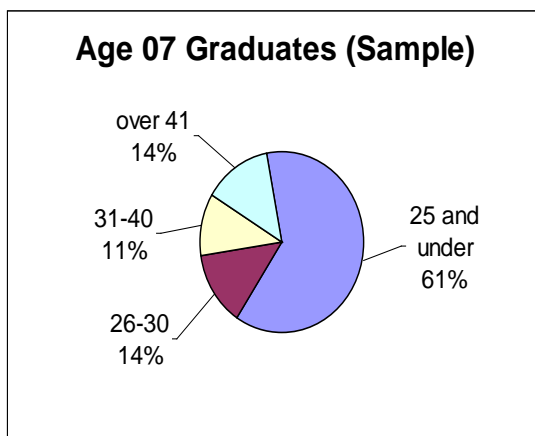
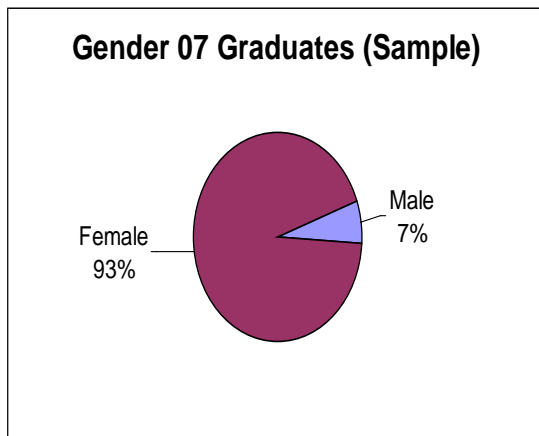
2008 UMBC Social Work Graduates Student Evaluation Report

Instrument

The evaluations contained 60 questions with 5-point Likert scale responses, with higher scores indicating more positive responses, capturing a variety of aspects of the Social Work program and the field experience. There were 21 questions about the Social Work program, 8 questions regarding the agency where students participated in field placement, 12 questions about their field instructor, 12 questions about the assignments given in field placement, and 7 questions about their liaison. The evaluation also included 7 open-ended questions with space provided for student feedback; these questions are not included in this summary. Quantitative responses were entered in an SPSS database. The areas of concern were compiled by collecting the items that indicated a more negative spread with at least 20% of responses falling at 3 and below, while the areas of success were items with a more positive spread with at least 90% of responses falling at 4 and above.

Demographics

There were a total of 80 returned evaluations. The following charts represent the distribution of demographics among those students who responded:



Analysis

Program Evaluation

Analysis of the responses to the evaluation yielded some areas of consideration. In rating their preparedness to use the knowledge and skills of generalist practice with different client populations, respondents felt that they were: well prepared to work with families (59%), not at all prepared or somewhat unprepared to work with families (41%) (PROG13); well prepared to work with groups (53%), not at all prepared or somewhat unprepared (47%) (PROG14); well prepared to work with organizations (38%), not at all or somewhat unprepared to work with organizations (62%) (PROG15); and well prepared to work with communities (38%), not at all prepared or somewhat unprepared (62%) (PROG16). Of student respondents, 67% felt they were able to use information technology to enhance their effectiveness as social workers, while 33% felt they were somewhat or less able to do so (PROG17). Of the students who returned the evaluation, 75% felt prepared to advocate for programs, services and policies that promote economic and social justice and enhance the well-being of clients and others in need of assistance, while 25% did not (PROG20).

Most of the students felt that they were prepared to practice within the values and historical traditions of the social work profession at graduation (96%) (PROG1). Students felt very positively about their ability to practice within the ethics of the social work profession (96%) (PROG2). Students also agreed that they were very well prepared to use a strengths-based perspective to guide their assessments and interventions (99%) (PROG6). 93% of students who responded felt strongly that they were able to communicate professionally (PROG10) and 93% agreed that they were prepared to demonstrate self-awareness and professional use of self in practice with client systems of all sizes (PROG11). Many students felt that they were prepared to appropriately use the knowledge and skills of generalist practice with individuals (92%) (PROG12). Of the students who responded, 92% agreed that they were able to understand the impact that social policies have on clients, social workers, and the delivery of social work services (PROG18) and 93% agreed that they were able to understand the impact that agency structure and function has on clients, workers, and the delivery of social work services (PROG19).

Agency Evaluation

The evaluation of field placements showed that 72% of students agreed that they received an adequate orientation to their specific assignments, while 28% were either neutral or disagreed (FIELD3). Similarly, 72% of students agreed that they had received an adequate explanation of their role as a student in training, while 28% were neutral or disagreed (FIELD4).

Field Instructor Evaluation

Of the 12 field instructor evaluation questions, 9 were flagged as areas of concern. 72-80% of responding students agreed with the following statements while 20%-28% were neutral or disagreed: “My field instructor was helpful in translating concepts and theories into actual practice” (INSTR2); “My field instructor was helpful in facilitating awareness of how to use my ‘self’ consciously in relation to clients” (INSTR3); “My field instructor was helpful in facilitating my work with other staff” (INSTR4); “My field instructor was helpful in facilitating my gaining an understanding of and carrying out my social work roles and tasks” (INSTR5); “My field instructor was helpful in facilitating an awareness of my own values in relation to my client’s values” (INSTR7); “My field instructor conveyed expectations clearly” (INSTR8); “I had regular weekly tutorial conferences with my field instructor”

(INSTR9); “My field instructor assisted me in implementing the objectives of my individual learning contract” (INSTR10); and “My field instructor required me to complete process recordings or tape recordings of interviews on a regular basis throughout the semester(s)” (INSTR12).

Assignments

Some students responded that their assignments in the following areas were in the high range of extent of experience: groups (49%) (ASSIGN3A), families (51%) (ASSIGN3B), individual clients (83%) (ASSIGN3C), intake/assessment (59%) (ASSIGN3D), discharge/aftercare planning (33%) (ASSIGN3E), community involvements/contacts (38%) (ASSIGN3F), opportunities to engage in research (28%) (ASSIGN3G) and opportunities to link clients to other community resources/services (83%) (ASSIGN3H). The following percentages of students felt that their extent of experience in these areas of assignment was in the medium to low range: groups (51%) (ASSIGN3A), families (49%) (ASSIGN3B), individual clients (17%) (ASSIGN3C), intake/assessment (41%) (ASSIGN3D), discharge/aftercare planning (67%) (ASSIGN3E), community involvements/contacts (62%) (ASSIGN3F), opportunities to engage in research (72%) (ASSIGN3G) and opportunities to link clients to other community resources/services (17%) (ASSIGN3H). While 78% rated the extent to which they thought their interventions influenced their clients’ lives in the high range, while the remaining one quarter rated their influence in the low to medium range (ASSIGN4).

Liaison Evaluation

Finally, one area of concern was flagged in the liaison evaluation; 72% of students agreed that monthly integrating seminars with their liaison were useful and the remaining 28% were neutral or disagreed (LIAIS6).

A large percentage of students agreed that: the goals and objectives of field instruction were clearly explained during orientation (88%) (LIAIS1) and the liaison was interested in the students’ field work experiences (95%) (LIAIS5).

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluations were positive. The modal response was 4 or 5 (5 being the highest score) for 86% of the program evaluation and 75% of the assignments evaluation. The modal response was 5 for 100% of the agency, field instructor and liaison evaluations. Of the 60 questions examined in this report, only 6 received a negative rating from the majority (over 50%) of the respondents. These 6 focused on the lack of: experience with groups, community involvement and contacts, discharge/aftercare planning in field placement, opportunities to engage in research (assignment questions), and the application of knowledge and skills of generalist practice with organizations and communities (program questions).

However, recent curricula changes may address these issues including material on communities and organizations that has been added to a Methods course. Additionally, the Technology in Social Work course has been revised to enhance students’ learning in this area. An area of concern that has existed over the last three years of program evaluation is the need for more research opportunities. Innovative ways to address this need and others identified by the evaluation will be part of the ongoing improvements in the department.

According to ANOVAs, there were no differences found in the responses from graduates in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 (see means chart). However, it should be noted that, using the criteria of 20% or more students responding with a 3 or lower to flag a question for concern, there were 30 questions flagged in the 2004 evaluations, 36 questions were flagged in the 2005 evaluations, 26 questions flagged in the 2006 evaluations, and 25 questions were flagged in the 2007 evaluations.

Means Chart.

The following chart illustrates the mean of the respondents' mean scores for each year of graduation by sections of the evaluation.

