

2013 UMBC Social Work Graduates Student Evaluation Report

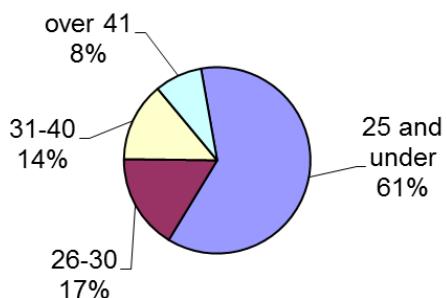
Instrument

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.

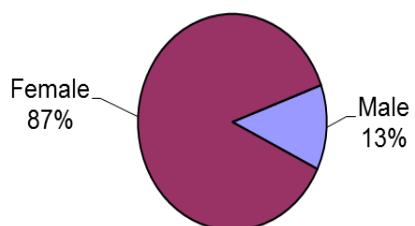
Demographics

There were a total of 111 returned evaluations. The following charts represent the distribution of demographics among those students who responded:

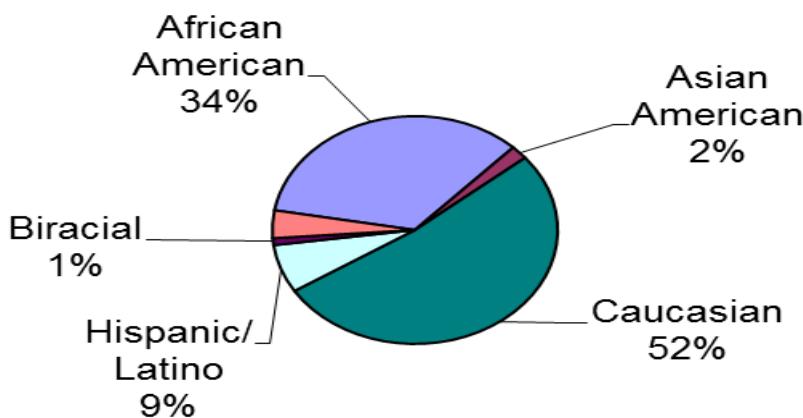
Age '13 Graduates (Sample)



Gender '13 Graduates (Sample)



Race/Ethnicity '13 Graduates (Sample)



Analysis

Program Evaluation

Analysis of the responses to the evaluation yielded some areas of consideration. According to students who responded to questions about skills for generalist practice with different client populations, respondents felt that they were: well prepared to work with families (68%), not at all prepared or somewhat unprepared to work with families (32%) (PROG13); well prepared to work with organizations (63%), not at all or somewhat unprepared to work with organizations (37%) (PROG15); well prepared to work with communities (58%), not at all prepared or somewhat unprepared (42%) (PROG16); well prepared to use technology to enhance their effectiveness as a social work professional (23%), not prepared or somewhat prepared (77%) (PROG17).

Most of the students felt very positively about their ability to practice within the ethics of the social work profession (97%) (PROG2). Many students (91%) felt that they could work effectively with client systems of diverse backgrounds (PROG3). Likewise, students responded that they were very prepared to use a bio-psycho-social perspective to guide their assessment and intervention efforts with client systems (98%) (PROG5). Students also agreed that they were very well prepared to use a strengths-based perspective to guide their assessments and interventions (96%) (PROG6). Students felt confident that they could use appropriate written (95%) (PROG9) and verbal (94%) (PROG10) professional communication skills with colleagues and clients. Most students who responded (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 (93%) (PROG12), and 93% of students 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 78% of students agreed that they received an adequate orientation to the specific service or department to which they were assigned (FIELD 2), while 22% were either neutral or disagreed. Also, 70% agreed that they received an adequate orientation to their specific assignments, while 30% were either neutral or disagreed (FIELD3). Further, 77% agreed that they received an adequate explanation of his/her role as a student in training; however, 23% were neutral or disagreed (FIELD4).

Many students (93%) reported that they felt physically safe while providing services for their agency (FIELD7) and 91% of students agreed that they felt emotionally safe while providing services for their agency (FIELD8).

Field Instructor Evaluation

Of the 12 field instructor evaluation questions, five items were flagged as areas of concern: 22% of students disagreed that their field instructor conveyed expectations clearly, while 78% agreed (INSTR8); 28% of students were either neutral or disagreed with the statement, “I had a regular weekly tutorial conference with my field instructor”(INSTR9); 79% agreed, and 21% had more negative ratings of “My field instructor assisted me in implementing the objectives of my individual learning contract”(INSTR10) and “My field instructor provided regular feedback about my learning throughout the semester(s)” (INSTR11); 63% agreed, and 37% of students disagreed with the statement, “My field instructor required me to complete process recordings or tape recordings of interviews on a regular basis throughout the semester(s)” (INSTR12).

None of the items in the field instructor survey had a positive spread to be considered areas of success.

Assignments

Some students responded that their assignments in the following areas were in the high range of extent of experience: groups (68%) (ASSIGN3A), families (33%) (ASSIGN3B), individual clients (84%) (ASSIGN3C), intake/assessment (54%) (ASSIGN3D), discharge/aftercare planning (58%) (ASSIGN3E), community involvements/contacts (52%) (ASSIGN3F), opportunities to engage in research (44%) (ASSIGN3G) and opportunities to link clients to other community resources/services (64%) (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 (32%) (ASSIGN3A), families (67%) (ASSIGN3B), individual clients (16%) (ASSIGN3C), intake/assessment (46%) (ASSIGN3D), discharge/aftercare planning (42%) (ASSIGN3E), community involvements/contacts (48%) (ASSIGN3F), opportunities to engage in research (56%) (ASSIGN3G) and opportunities to link clients to other community resources/services (36%) (ASSIGN3H). Also, 60% of students agreed that their interventions influenced their clients' lives, while 40% felt neutral or disagreed with the statement (ASSIGN4).

Liaison Evaluation

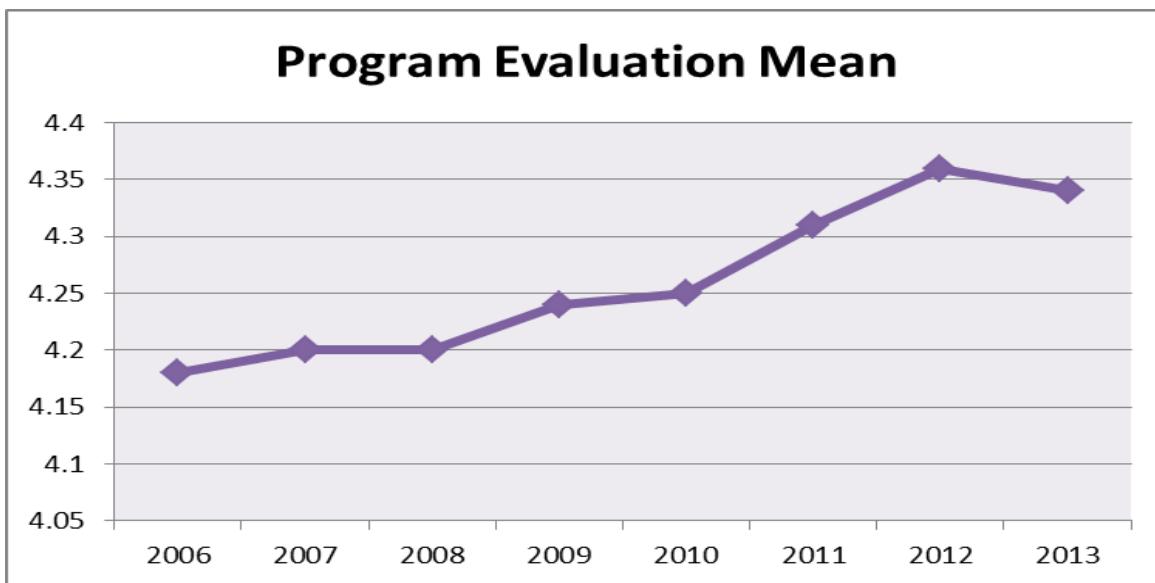
Finally, 26% of students who responded were neutral or disagreed that seminar discussions contributed to what they learned, while 74% agreed with this statement (LIAIS2). Also, 28% of students were neutral or disagreed that seminar discussions were useful, and 72% of students agreed with this statement (LIAIS6). Additionally, many students agreed that the liaison explained goals and objectives (93%) (LIAIS1), encouraged fair and open discussion (95%) (LIAIS3), the liaison actively encouraged all students to participate (92%) (LIAIS4), and the liaison was interested in the students' field work experience (98%) (LIAIS5).

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluations were very positive. The modal response was 4 or 5 (5 being the highest score) for 100% of the program 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 2 received a negative rating from the majority (over 50%) of the respondents. These focused on the lack of: experience with families and opportunities to engage in research. 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 differences found in the responses from graduates in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 for average scores on the program evaluation (see means chart on the next page). Follow-up t-tests found that 2006 scores were significantly lower than 2011 scores ($t = -2.19; p = .03$), 2012 scores ($t = -3.19; p = .002$), and 2013 scores ($t = -2.92; p = .004$). Finally, it should be noted that, using the criteria of 20% or more students responding with a 3 or lower to flag an item of 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, 25 questions were flagged in the 2007 evaluations, 16 questions were flagged in the 2008 evaluations,

17 questions were flagged in the 2009 evaluations, 20 questions were flagged in the 2010 evaluations, 18 questions were flagged in the 2011 evaluations, 16 questions were flagged in the 2012 evaluations, and 22 were flagged in the 2013 evaluations. Decreases in ratings were noted in the field placement and instructor sections of the evaluation. The following chart highlights the positive incremental improvement in the program evaluation mean scores each year.



Means Chart.

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

