

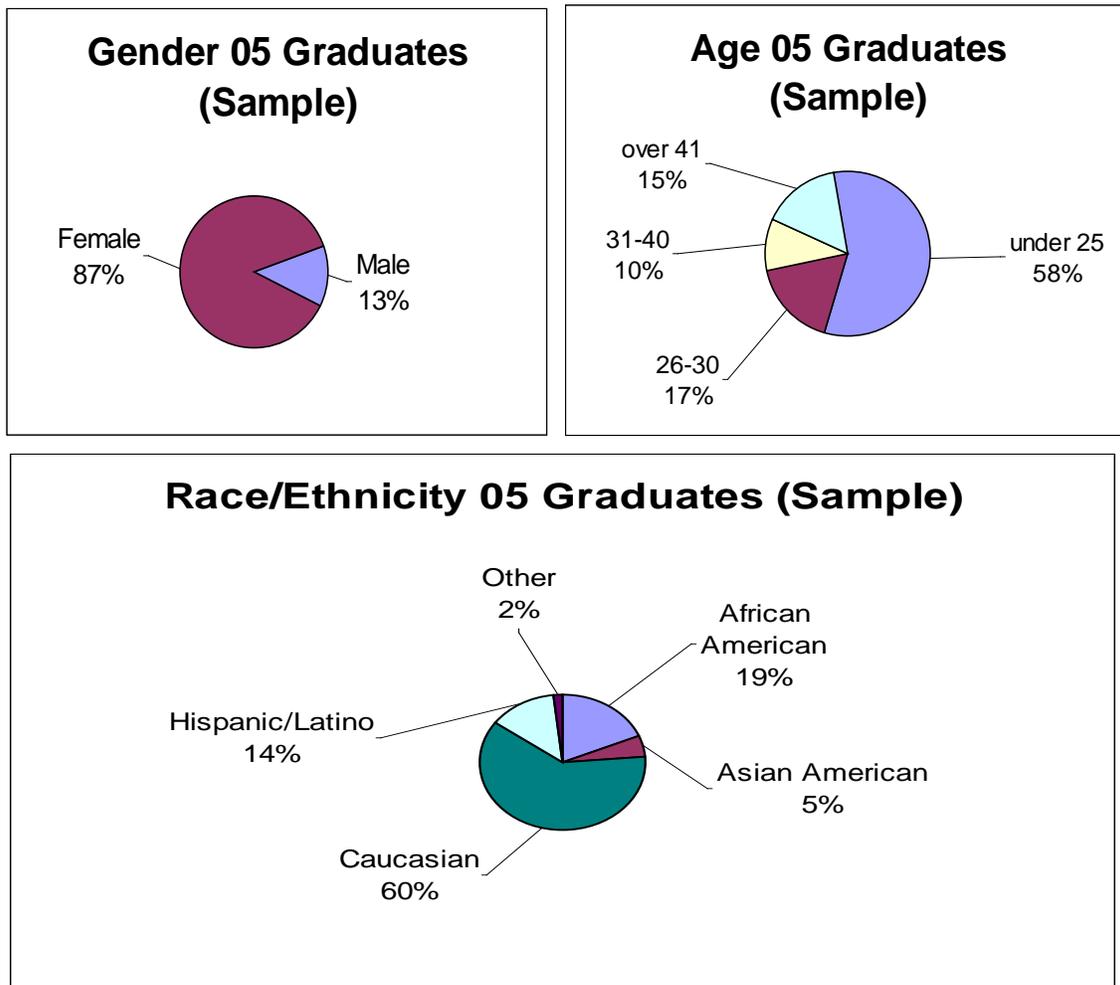
2005 UMBC Social Work Graduates Student Evaluation Report

Instrument

The evaluations contained questions with 5-point likert scale responses on a variety of aspects of the Social Work program and the field placement. 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; 4 questions about the assignments given in field placement; and 7 questions about their liaison. There were also 7 open-ended questions with space 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 showed a more negative spread with at least 20% of responses of 3 and below, while the areas of success were items with a more positive spread with at least 90% of responses of 4 and above.

Demographics

There were a total of 72 returned evaluations. The following charts represent the distribution of demographics among those who responded:



Analysis

Program Evaluation

Analysis of the responses to the evaluation yielded some areas of consideration. Around a quarter of responding students felt that the social work program did not prepare them to work with diverse populations (PROG3) or understand the implications of oppression (PROG4). A third felt that they were unable somewhat or less able to critically evaluate research (PROG7) to guide practice and critically evaluate and use theoretical (PROG8) knowledge to guide practice. About 20% of students rated their ability to use appropriate written and verbal professional communication skills as somewhat or less able (PROG9&10). Around a third of respondents felt their ability to use knowledge and skills of generalist practice was somewhat or less able for families (PROG13) and groups (PROG14), while over 50% scored similarly for organizations (PROG15) and communities (PROG16). Of the students who returned the evaluation, 26.9% felt they were somewhat or less able to use information technology to enhance their effectiveness as social workers (PROG17) and 29.5% rated themselves as somewhat or less able 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 (PROG20).

Students felt positive about their ability to practice ethically (PROG2) and within the values and traditions of the social work profession (PROG1). Students also agreed that they were able to use a bio-psycho-social perspective (PROG5) and a strengths-based perspective (PROG6) to guide their assessments and interventions. The ability to demonstrate self-awareness and professional use of self in practice was supported by most students (PROG11). Students agreed that they were able to appropriately use the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with individuals (PROG12) and to understand the impact that social work policies have on clients, social workers and the delivery of social work services (PROG18).

Agency Evaluation

The evaluation of field placements showed that 30.4% of students were either neutral or disagreed that they received an adequate orientation to their specific assignments (FIELD3). Similarly, 26.6% of students were neutral or disagreed that they had received an adequate explanation of their role as a student in training (FIELD4). Most students agreed with several aspects of the agency evaluation including: “there was an acceptance of social workers as professionals in my agency” (FIELD5); “I felt accepted as a student social worker and supported in my work by the interdisciplinary team” (FIELD6); “I felt physically safe while providing the services of my agency” (FIELD7); “I felt emotionally safe while providing the services of my agency” (FIELD8).

Field Instructor Evaluation

In the evaluation of field instructors, 20%-30% of responding students were neutral or disagreed with the following statements: “My field instructor was helpful in translating concepts and theories into actual practice (INSTR2)”; “My field instructor was helpful in facilitating my work with non-social work staff (INSTR4)”; “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)”; “My field

instructor provided me regular feedback about my learning throughout the semester(s) (INSTR11)”; “My field instructor required me to complete process recordings or tape recordings of interviews on a regular basis throughout the semester(s) (INSTR12).” Of the 12 field instructor evaluation questions, 8 were flagged as being an area of concern.

Assignments

Over 50% of students responded that their experiences in the following areas of assignments were in the medium to low range of extent of experience: groups (ASSIGN3A), families (ASSIGN3B), discharge/aftercare planning (ASSIGN3E), community involvements/contacts (ASSIGN3F) and opportunities to engage in research (ASSIGN3G). Over 30% had medium to low extent of experience in intake/assessment (ASSIGN3D), and medium to low extent of influencing their clients’ lives with their interventions (ASSIGN4). However, 91% of respondents rated their experience with individual clients as high.

Liaison Evaluation

Finally, the liaison evaluation had only one low scoring question. 22.1% of students were neutral or disagreed that the monthly integrating seminars with their liaison were useful (LIAIS6). Students agreed that the liaison encouraged fair and open discussion (LIAIS3) and that all students were actively encouraged to participate (LIAIS4).

Shady Grove Comparison

According to a t-test, the means for the total score of the program evaluation for main campus students (M=83.271; SD=11.185) and Shady Grove students (M=91.500; SD=9.031) were significantly different ($t=-2.847$; $p<.01$). On average, Shady Grove students rated the social work program about eight points higher than main campus students. When responses by Shady Grove students to program evaluation questions were isolated, only responses to PROG14,15,16 and 20 were flagged. They consisted of lower ratings of ability to use knowledge and skills of general social work practice with groups, organizations and communities, and advocating for programs, services and policies that promote economic and social justice and enhance well-being of clients and others in need of assistance. No significant differences were found in the means for the total scores of the other evaluations for main campus students compared to Shady Grove students.

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluations were positive. The modal response was 4 or 5 (5 being the highest score) for 90% of the program evaluation, and the modal response was 5 for 100% of the agency, field instructor and liaison evaluations. Of the 52 questions examined in this report, only 7 received a negative rating from the majority (over 50%) of the respondents. These primarily focused on the lack of experience with different populations in field placement (assignment questions). **According to a MANOVA, there were no differences found in the responses from graduates in 2003, 2004 and 2005 (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 20 questions flagged in the 2002-2003 evaluations, while 30 questions were flagged in the 2004 evaluations.

There are some areas of concern that the social work department could consider in order to better equip BSW students for careers in social work. Student responses indicated that the program was weak in preparing them for practice with clients with diverse backgrounds or to

understand the implications of discrimination and oppression in their practice. Further exploration of this deficit is encouraged. Focus groups have been suggested as a way to get more information from the students on this topic.

The social work department might also consider ways to improve the development of generalist skills in the field placement setting. Responses indicate that skills with individuals are practiced, but skills in other areas are weak. Also, according to students, areas of macro practice, theory and research are seen as not well-developed and less applicable to field placement. Content in these areas may need to be enriched to link learning to field application.

There is some indication that students view field instructors as less able to develop social work skills in the students and link them to material learned in class. There also seems to be less experience among students in areas of social work other than practice with individuals. These issues may indicate some need for field instructor training.

Means Chart.

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

