



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Commission on Research Annual Report to the CSWE Board September 2016-August 2017

Charge from the Board of Directors

The Commission on Research’s mission is to advance rigor, relevance, and high ethical standards in the teaching and conduct of research related to social work education. Toward that end, the Commission on Research shall provide leadership in establishing key research priorities for improving social work education, in promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning within social work education, as well as in specifically promoting quality in research curricula across methods and paradigms in BSW, MSW, and doctoral education. The Commission is concerned with advocating for research supported policies, practices and programs within CSWE, helping to build relevant data bases that promote innovation in social work education, and with strengthening the connections between social work education–related research and social justice. It will complete its mission in partnership and collaboration with sibling Commissions, Councils and task forces within CSWE as well as other social work professional organizations committed to excellence in the science of social work.

Members

Dr. Kia J. Bentley, Virginia Commonwealth University (Chair)
Dr. Kristin Bolton, University of North Carolina, Wilmington*
Dr. Jill Michelle Chonody, Indiana University Northwest
Dr. Lorraine M. Gutierrez, University of Michigan
Dr. Robert L. Herman-Smith, University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Dr. Anupama Jacob, Azusa Pacific University (CA)
Dr. Barbara L. Jones, University of Texas at Austin
Dr. David Kondrat, Indiana University at Indianapolis
Dr. Michael Mancini, St. Louis University (MO)
Dr. David Axlyn McLeod, University of Oklahoma
Dr. Shari E. Miller, University of Georgia
Dr. Karen M. Sowers, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

Council on Social Work Education Strategic Plan

Vision 2020: Strengthening the Profession through Research, Education, and Career Advancement

- 1. Strengthen the position of social work within higher education, the national political environment, and in the perceptions of the general public.*
- 2. Strengthen social work through identification and dissemination of emerging technology and innovative models, pedagogies, and practices.*

3. *Ensure the quality and sustainability of social work education through accreditation of baccalaureate and master's degree programs, research, and responsive faculty development.*
4. *Develop partnerships with organizations, agencies, corporations, and foundations both within social work and those external to social work to enhance collaboration on issues critical to social work education.*
5. *Promote the preparation of social work graduates who can practice effectively in an increasingly diverse and global practice environment.*
6. *Develop and maintain a healthy, viable organization by ensuring effective management, strong leadership, diversity of the staff, and open communication among the staff, Board of Directors, Commissions, Councils and other governance and programmatic entities.*

Commission Meetings and Focus

The Commission on Research held several face-to-face meetings this year, one was Thursday afternoon in October during the 2016 Annual Program Meeting (APM) in Atlanta and then again for a day and a half during the Spring Governance Meeting in Alexandria in March 2017. The Commission also “met” as a group in June via conference call and the Chair disseminated several email updates throughout the year. The Chair also hosted an orientation meeting in August via conference call for the one new member this cycle (* noted on list above) appointed July 1, 2017. The focus this year has been bringing closure to past initiatives and making forward movement on new ones, as is described below. We are pleased that almost every initiative involves significant collaboration with other Commissions and Councils or an interface of some kind with important social work groups:

1. Successful Partnering with SAGE in awarding the first *Innovation in Research Instruction Award* *CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 3, 4, 5*

As part of COR’s mission to advance excellence in promoting quality in research curricula across methods and paradigms in BSW, MSW, and doctoral education, the committee’s work over the past four years in designing and implementing a national award for excellence in research instruction in collaboration with Sage publications came to fruition with Board approval of the award last Fall. This Spring and Summer, we proceeded with a national call for nominees and a successful selection process. From a strong pool of applicants, the first awardee-Dr. Raymond Mayers Sanchez of Rutgers University- was chosen for his work in creating and using a virtual human service agency to teach students how to evaluate their own practice in culturally sensitive ways. He will receive his recognition at CSWE’s APM Awards Luncheon in October 2017.

2. Following-up to COR’s 2016 Connect Session “Teaching Research through the Lens of Social Justice” *CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 2, 3, 4, 5*

As another way to respond to COR’s charge of “promoting quality in research curricula,” the group hosted an open dialogue at APM for participants to explore and share ideas from the literature and their own academic experience on how to apply a distinct lens of social justice, human rights and diversity in teaching research methods and the contemporary role of inquiry in social work. The session has led to two products: a manuscript with the same name being submitted to the *Journal of Social Work Education*, which includes (a) an annotated bibliography on social justice and research instruction, and (b) the development of a comprehensive and more general bibliography on teaching research methods in social work education, which is now available on CSWE’s website

and will be further distributed to national listserves this Fall.

3. Launching a National Survey of Faculty

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 1,2, 3

In response to years of requests from various constituents, the COR took on the task of conducting a national survey of social work faculty. In contrast to CSWE's Annual Survey of Programs, this survey will examine faculty life, job satisfaction and work climate. IRB applications have been submitted to author's Universities and COR will seek CSWE small grant money to cover participant incentive. Survey dissemination is planned for Spring 2018.

4. Improving Data Mining of the Annual Survey of Social Work Programs

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 1,2,3

The COR is in the initial phases of investigating the possibility of expanding access to this database to members who might like to use the data in their own scientific inquiries. CSWE staff will be contacting other professional organizations to ascertain "best practices" in term of policies and parameters. We will then develop a proposal to the Board. In the meantime, in embracing our charge to examine the results of the Annual Survey every year and follow-up on any intriguing data, the COR plans to collaborate with staff to further look at faculty vacancies and student enrollment. This year's membership survey showed an impressive 56.4% of respondents said they valued and made use of research publications/statistics on social work education that CSWE puts out there.

5. Advancing Interprofessional Research

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, 3, 5

The COR is aggressively developing a number of scholarly products to advance interprofessional research and education, including a manuscript presenting a model of IPR and a manuscript about building capacity in social work. These ideas will be the focus on COR's 2018 APM Connect Session in Orlando.

6. Defining Research as Practice and Advancing MSW Research Specializations

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 2, 3, 5

The COR is examining data related to research specializations/concentrations in advanced MSW curricula nationally with an eye toward how we could support them and advance their development. That inspired a discussion about defining "research as practice," and the development of our 2017 APM Connect Session "Bridging the gap: Designing social work curriculum that integrates research and practice." After hosting NIH social worker, field instructor and research internship supervisor, Schuyler Cunningham, at our Spring meeting in Alexandria, we are now also considering how the COR can better support the conduct of research in field internships.

6. Developing Pedagogical Content for CSWE's Learning Academy

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 2, 4, 5

After hosting Carol Hostetter at one of our face-to-face meetings, COR members collaborated with her organization- Social Work Engagement in Research- to plan and present a panel on "Practical Ways to Get Students Excited and Involved in the Research Process" at the 2017 APM. They have

also worked to create three modules on teaching research for CSWE's Learning Academy: (a) online teaching of research, (b) community-based research, and (c) the flipped classroom.

7. Advancing Educational Policy and the Science of Social Work Accreditation

CSWE Strategic Plan Goals 1,2, 3, 4.

For several years, the COR has worked with CSWE Vice President Jo Ann Regan of the OSWA via participation on a Joint Research Task Force on EPAS (COR, with the Commission on Educational Policy and the Commission on Accreditation) to examine implementation of the 2015 EPAS and address the need for current and compelling data to support CSWE standards and practices. The Task Force called for the hiring of a Visiting Scholar to begin work on the five research questions that the group identified and that has been accomplished: To what extent are the competencies reflective of the demands/expectations of beginning social work practice? What is the rationale and what data do we need to justify, revise or eliminate certain accreditation requirements? What are best practices in field education across disciplines? What is the knowledge base underlying the diversity standards and what do we know about its impact on social work education? In what ways have programs restructured curriculum to respond to competencies (Barriers to change? Successful innovations?). The initial work has focused on the field standards.

8. Responding to our charge in "Identifying CSWE Research Priorities"

CSWE Strategic Plan goal 1

After two years of development and vetting within the organization, the COR brought our eight research priorities to the Board for presentation in November 2016 and they were enthusiastically "received." The COR is cataloging CSWE (including COR) efforts to embrace these priorities and will report these to the Board each Spring:

- Supporting the investigation of "best practices" in assessing and teaching competencies (knowledge, values, skills) in learner-centered environments across the curriculum,
- Continuing to refine and expand the collection, analysis, and dissemination of relevant data on important characteristics of BSW, MSW, and doctoral programs, applicants, students, graduates, and faculty in social work in the United States,
- Identifying instructional innovations and new models of successful interprofessional education with relevance for 21st century social work practice,
- Supporting inquiry around the outcomes of online and hybrid education and the consistency on online programs with accepted standards of "quality" in online learning,
- Supporting scientific inquiry into the empirical basis of major aspects of curriculum and accreditation policies,
- Assessing the impact of social work education and research related to advancement of human rights, social justice, and the diminution of disparities in health, mental health, and human services,
- Supporting the identification of "best practices" in research instruction, scientific inquiry, the critical evaluation of methods and analysis, and effective/judicious/thoughtful use of research findings in practice,
- Supporting inquiry around the correspondence and congruence between the current and emerging roles and activities of practicing social workers and current and anticipated curriculum content.