

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
NEW DOCTORAL DEGREE PROPOSAL STAFF ANALYSIS**

**Program:** Doctor of Social Work  
**Institution:** Florida Atlantic University  
**Staffed By:** R. Stevens, D. Barbu

**CIP Code:** 51.1503  
**Proposed Implementation Date:** Fall 2015  
**Initial Review Date:** 09/08/14     **Last Update:** 2/20/2015

**Projected program costs:**

	Total	% & \$ Current Reallocated	% & \$ New Recurring	% & \$ New Non- Recurring	% & \$ C&G	Auxiliary Funds	Cost per FTE	SUS Average Cost per FTE
Year 1	\$277,582	45% \$126,114	53.4% \$148,468	1.1% \$3,000	0% \$0	\$0	\$26,015	\$10,816 CIP 51
Year 5	\$566,376	78% \$443,376	22% \$123,000	0% \$0	0% \$0	\$0	\$17,699	

**Projected FTE and Headcount are:**

	Student Headcount	Student FTE
<b>First Year</b>	15	10.67
<b>Second Year</b>	30	21
<b>Third Year</b>	45	32
<b>Fourth Year</b>	45	32
<b>Fifth Year</b>	45	32

*On March 29, 2007, the Florida Board of Governors approved BOG Regulation 8.011, which sets forth criteria for implementation and authorization of new doctorates by the Board of Governors, as well as criteria for implementation and authorization of Bachelor's, Master's and Specialist degrees by Boards of Trustees. The following staff analysis is an assessment of how well the university meets BOG Accountability and Readiness criteria for implementation of this degree program.*

**Proposal Page Numbers:**

INTRODUCTION		ACCOUNTABILITY		READINESS				
Program Description	SUS Goals	Overall	Budget	Mission and Strength	Program Quality	Curriculum	Faculty	Resources
2	3	7	19	24	32	40	48	57

## **A. Program Description:**

Florida Atlantic University is proposing to implement a Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degree that “will be an advanced clinical practice degree emphasizing evidence-based clinical social work services provided to individuals, families, and groups, especially in social service, health and mental health care settings.” The program is expected to prepare graduates for leadership roles in advanced clinical social work, clinical supervision, and social work education (as clinical faculty for schools of social work teaching various levels of clinical practice).

A Master’s in Social Work (MSW) from an accredited program will be required for admission into the DSW program and completion of a 50 semester credit hour curriculum and a practice-oriented research project will be required to earn the degree. The proposal explains that as an advanced clinical practice degree, the DSW differs from a research-oriented PhD in Social Work, which primarily prepares graduates for academic positions and advanced research.

In reviewing the proposal Board staff has determined that the proposed program is a better fit for the National Center for Educational Statistics CIP Code 51.1503, Clinical/Medical Social Work than it would be for CIP 44.0701 which is generally assigned to general Social Work programs. Approving the program with a 51 CIP qualifies the program to be included in the Programs of Strategic Emphasis category titled Critical Workforce – Healthcare that was adopted by the Board of Governors in November 2013 as part of the mid-course system strategic plan alignment effort.

## **B. System-Level Analysis and Evaluation in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.011:**

Summary Observations:

- The proposed program will be relatively low cost to implement for the university.
- The proposal provides evidence that the university has the necessary resources to implement the proposed program.
- Labor market statistics at the national, state, and local level indicate an increasing demand for social workers at the master’s and bachelor’s degree level
- Labor market statistics cannot be used to verify workforce demand for the program at the doctorate level because the pertinent occupational codes are associated with lower degree levels.
- State level demand for social workers appears to be more than met by state university graduates, but it is not currently possible to determine how many of these graduates are prepared to practice in clinical social work.

- The proposal cites a 2013 study to support demand for the DSW for clinical faculty; however the findings of that study are not accurately described, creating the impression that 95% of respondents would consider a DSW for faculty positions.
- 17 letters of support are provided from universities and potential employing institutions, but none of them quantify the number of openings that may be available.
- The proposal makes an argument for the DSW as an emerging credential.

At the request of the Chair for the Academic and Student affairs Committee the proposed program was reviewed during the Health Initiatives Committee (HIC) Workshop on January 21, 2015. The Committee and its industry advisory group discussed workforce demand for clinical social workers and the following questions were used to guide the discussion.

- For the professional practice doctorates, is there evidence that graduates of these programs will benefit from a hiring preference, potential for promotion, or higher earnings?
- Are changes in the practice environment driving the transition to a higher credential? What are other drivers of credential change?
- Are the proposed programs likely to enroll students and be sustainable? If the market demand remains small, will the market become quickly saturated even in the presence of high student demand?

When considering these questions, the Committee and advisory group members acknowledged that there was an existing and growing need for clinical social workers in the healthcare industry, especially for mental health counseling. It was also acknowledged that expanding the curriculum beyond what is now part of most MSW programs to include a significant mental health component could improve patient outcomes by augmenting direct medical care with continued counseling and guidance.

The need for doctoral prepared faculty to teach in existing MSW programs was noted, and the question was raised as to whether the proposed DSW would address that need. University staff responded that there was a growing need for clinical faculty in social work programs and that the DSW would begin to fill that need.

Some members expressed concern that movement to a higher credential for clinical social work practitioners was being driven in part by the profession seeking to increase the income of its members, and that documentation of workforce demand for the DSW should be addressed. University representatives at the workshop responded that the university's focus was on improved preparation for clinical social workers, not on increasing the income of practicing professionals.

The following analysis by Board of Governors staff addresses need and demand for the proposed program.

The proposal provides an analysis of state and national need for the DSW that is based in part on the program being the only one that will be offered in Florida, and one of only four currently offered in the United States. Currently Ph.D. programs in Social Work are offered in Florida at FIU, FSU, USF, and Barry University. As noted in the FAU proposal, each of these has a primary emphasis on research and preparation of faculty. There is, as would be expected, some overlap in the curriculum of the existing Ph.D. programs and the proposed DSW. The USF Ph.D. in Social Work program has temporarily suspended new enrollments.

The proposal quotes U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data that projects the overall employment of social workers to grow by 25 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. The BLS also projects that employment of healthcare social workers will grow by 34%, with 31% growth in the area of mental health and substance abuse. The proposal notes that a bill has been introduced in Congress that recognizes this projected shortage of social workers and, if passed, will provide research, education and training grants to institutions of higher education to support recruitment and education of social work students at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) requirements for Medical and Health Social Workers, and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers are set at the MSW, or higher, level of credential while the credential for Social Workers is at the baccalaureate level, the BSW. In the workforce regions (20, 21, 22) surrounding FAU, DEO projects 100 annual openings from 2014 to 2022 for clinical social work programs requiring a Master's and 21 annual openings for social work programs requiring a bachelor's degree. Statewide the annual openings projected are 488 for master's level and 108 for bachelor's level. In academic year 2012-2013 the State University System produced 724 MSW graduates and 715 BSW graduates, but it is not currently possible to determine how many of these graduates are prepared to practice in clinical social work because such programs are majors under a broader curriculum and data is not collected at that level.

Because the expected education level in the projections from the U.S. BLS and Florida DEO is less than a doctorate, staff has been unable to verify workforce demand specifically for DSW graduates at the local, state, or national level. However, there is evidence in the labor market projections that social work will continue be a high growth occupation in Florida and the nation.

Statements are made on pages 10 and 11 of the proposal that the program will be attractive to working professionals who currently supervise BSW/MSW internships, and recent graduates from the FAU MSW. This is also illustrated in Table 1 of

Appendix A which projects the sources of enrollments as coming largely from the existing professional social worker pool and the recruitment of new MSW graduates into the DSW program. Since the MSW is the credential required for practice, the proposed DSW program should not be expected to contribute significant numbers of new clinical social workers to fill the projected workforce need, and could delay the entry of recent MSW graduates into the profession if they are recruited directly into the DSW. Instead, the proposed program is more focused on providing advanced clinical skills to address perceived weaknesses in the present delivery system.

To evaluate potential student demand for the proposed program, the FAU School of Social Work conducted a survey of agency social workers who supervise BSW/MSW students in their field placements and found that 40% of the respondents (n=50) would be interested in obtaining a clinical DSW. In addition the proposal states that graduates and alumni of the FAU MSW program have demonstrated continuous interest in seeking further specialization in clinical social work through a doctoral level program.

The proposal also cites the findings of a study from 2013 to demonstrate a demand in academia for DSW prepared faculty by stating that “95% of programs looking for tenure or tenure-track positions would consider a candidate with a DSW” (proposal page 12, 24 and 30). This statement mischaracterizes the 2013 study set up by three FAU professors (Barsky, Green, Ayayo) and published in the *Journal of Social Work*. The published study found that the 92% of the respondents indicated that a PhD is an important factor for hiring for tenured and tenure-earning faculty positions. When comparing the PhD with a DSW, only 62% of the respondents said that they would consider a DSW to be the equivalent of a PhD; 27% considered a DSW as less favorable than a PhD; and 5% noted that they would not consider a candidate with a DSW for an academic position. In terms of hiring criteria for tenured and tenure-earning faculty, “refereed publications” was found to be the second most important factor behind the type of degree, after strong interpersonal skills, when considering hiring for tenured and tenure-track positions. For non-tenure-track positions, “34% of the programs indicated that a PhD was important and 61% considered a DSW equivalent to a PhD” (Barsky, et al., 2013, p. 73).

One limitation of the study noted in the publication is that the survey “did not distinguish between practice-oriented and research-oriented DSW programs” (p. 80) and “many DSW degrees conferred prior to 2000s were from research-oriented programs that were equivalent or similar with PhDs [...] and the survey respondents may not have been aware that the new generation of DSW graduates are coming from programs with a strong practice orientation” (p. 77). Therefore, PhD degree recipients receive the highest consideration for tenure and tenure-earning faculty positions and the practice orientation of the new DSW programs places graduates “at a disadvantage when applying for certain positions at some universities” since current DSW programs “do not include advanced research courses in their curricula” (Barsky, et al., 2013, p.

78).

The proposed DSW at FAU follows the same practice orientation cited in the study and its curriculum does not include advanced research courses and/or a dissertation component. In addition, many of the projected DSW students are expected to attend part-time while also managing career and family demands and hence, are less likely to conduct research and publish in refereed journals, quoted in the study as the second most important factor in hiring decisions in academic positions.

Along with the proposal, FAU provided the Board of Governors with 17 letters of support for the proposed program to illustrate the need for DSW graduates in both academic and non-academic settings. Three letters have been received from postsecondary institutions (UCF, St. Leo University, and Southeastern University) noting that these institutions would consider graduates from this program for future faculty positions. Fourteen letters of support are provided by non-academic institutions noting that they would consider hiring DSW graduates; however, numbers of projected openings have not been provided and nine of the letters have similar form and content. One letter of support was received from FIU and expressed no concerns about duplication of its Ph.D. in Social Work.

Beginning on page 8, the proposal summarizes national studies which support the DSW as an emerging advanced practice credential in social work. One study suggests that demand is represented by the number of students willing to invest in acquiring the degree, and that advanced practice doctorates are vehicles for producing practice relevant knowledge and disseminating research to private practice. ([Council on Social Work Education, Social Work Policy Institute, National Association of Deans and Directors of Social Work](#)).

### **C. Assessment of the University Review Process in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.011:**

*Due to the system of stair step accountability set in place by the Board of Governors in Regulation 8.011, it is now incumbent upon University Board of Trustees to verify that all doctoral programs coming before the Board of Governors have met the requirements of the regulation. The following is an assessment of the university review process to ensure that all criteria set forth have been considered by the university prior to submission to the Board of Governors office.*

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

*Check 'yes' or 'no' box, and make comments beneath criterion as appropriate.*

**1. Overall** – *The proposal is in the correct format, includes all necessary signatures, and*

*contains complete and accurate tables for enrollment projections, faculty effort, and the proposed budget.*

YES NO

- The proposal has been approved by the university board of trustees and includes all required signatures.**
- The university has provided a proposal written in the standard SUS format which addresses new academic program approval criteria outlined in BOG Regulation 8.011.**
- The university has provided data that supports the need for an additional program in the State University System as well as letters of support or concern from the provosts of other state universities with substantially similar programs.**

The university has provided data and letters of support, including from FIU and UCF. However, the submitted documents do not provide a clear and convincing need for an additional doctoral level program in Social Work at this time.

- The university has provided complete and accurate projected enrollment, faculty effort, and budget tables that are in alignment with each other.**

Table 2 includes recurring dollars and new non-recurring dollars allocated for the program in year one and five.

- The university has included a statement in the proposal signed by the equity officer as to how this proposal will meet the goals of the university's equity accountability plan.**

- The program does not substantially duplicate programs at FAMU or FIU or, if it does, evidence was provided that consultations have occurred with the affected university on the impact of the new program on existing programs.**

A PhD in Social Work is offered at FIU and FIU provided a letter of support for the proposed DSW program, expressing no concerns about duplication.

**2. Budget** - *The proposal presents a complete and realistic budget for the program consistent with university and BOG policy, and shows that any redirection of funding will not have an unjustified negative impact on other needed programs.*

YES NO

- The University Board of Trustees has approved the most recent budget for**

this proposal.

- The university has reviewed the budget for the program to ensure that it is complete and reasonable, and the budget appears in alignment with expenditures by similar programs at other SUS institutions.
- In the event that resources within the institution are redirected to support the new program, the university has identified this redirection and determined that it will not have a negative impact on undergraduate education, or the university has provided a reasonable explanation for any impact of this redirection.

### **READINESS**

*Check 'yes' or 'no' box, and make comments beneath criterion as appropriate.*

*3. Program Quality – The proposal provides evidence that the university planning activities have been sufficient and responses to any recommendations to program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program have been addressed.*

YES NO

- The university has followed a collaborative planning process for the proposed program in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the University Board of Trustees.
- An external consultant has reviewed the proposal and supports the department's capability of successfully implementing this new program.
- The university has found the level of progress that the department has made in implementing the recommendations from program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program to be satisfactory.
- The university has analyzed the feasibility of providing all or a portion of the proposed program through distance learning.

The program will be offered 75% on campus in Boca Raton and 25% through distance learning.

- If necessary, the university has made allowances for licensure and legislative approval to be obtained in a timely manner.



Not applicable.

**4. Curriculum** - *The proposal provides evidence that the university has evaluated the proposed curriculum and found that it describes an appropriate and sequenced course of study, and that the university has evaluated the appropriateness of specialized accreditation for the program.*

YES NO

**The university has reviewed the curriculum and found that the course of study presented is appropriate to meet specific learning outcomes and industry driven competencies discussed in the proposal.**

**The university anticipates seeking accreditation for the proposed doctoral program, or provides a reasonable explanation as to why accreditation is not being sought.**

Program accreditation is not available at the doctoral level in this discipline. The MSW program is accredited by The Council on Social Work Education.

**5. Faculty** - *The proposal provides evidence that the university is prepared to ensure a critical mass of faculty will be available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments, and that faculty in the aggregate have the necessary experience and research activity to sustain a doctoral program.*

YES NO

**The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found that there is a critical mass of faculty available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments.**

**The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found that the faculty in aggregate has the necessary experience and research activity to sustain the program.**

**The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found the academic unit(s) associated with this new degree to be productive in teaching, research, and service.**

**If appropriate, the university has committed to hiring additional faculty in later years, based on estimated enrollments.**

**6. Resources** - *The proposal provides evidence that the university has ensured the available library volumes and serials; classroom, teaching laboratory, research laboratory, office space, equipment, clinical and internship sites, fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships*

*will be sufficient to initiate the program, and that if applicable, funding has been secured to make more resources available as students proceed through the program..*

**YES   NO**

- The university has provided a signed statement from the Library Director verifying that the library volumes and serials available are sufficient to initiate the program.**
- The university has ensured that the physical space necessary for the proposed program, including classrooms, laboratories and office space, is sufficient to initiate the program.**
- The university has ensured that necessary equipment is available to initiate the program.**
- The university has ensured that fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are sufficient to initiate the program.**
- If applicable, the university has ensured that the department has arranged a suitable number of clinical and internship sites.**