

**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:** D. Barbu, Ph.D.

**CIP Code:** 51.1503  
**Proposed Implementation Date:** Fall 2016  
**Initial Review Date:** 09/08/15 **Last Update:** 9/30/2015

**Projected program costs:**

	Total	% & \$ Current Reallocated	% & \$ New Recurring	% & \$ New Non- Recurring	% & \$ C&G	Auxiliary Funds	Cost per FTE	SUS Average Cost per FTE AY 2013-14
Year 1	\$277,582	60% \$167,114	39% \$107,468	1.1% \$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$26,015	\$9,642**
Year 5	\$566,376	78% \$443,376	22% \$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$17,699	

\*\* NOTE: SUS Average Cost per FTE is a less meaningful comparative measure for the 51 CIP because of the wide range of clinical and nonclinical programs included.

**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	6	14	26	30	38	41	54	63

## **A. Program Description:**

The 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” (p. 2). 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 institution 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. The DSW, however, “includes practice oriented research and evaluation” to prepare students for “innovative, complex, and sophisticated areas of practice” (p. 2).

The proposal notes that the practice focus of the DSW degree is similar to that of an advanced degree offered in other professional disciplines such as Audiology (Aud.D.), Pharmacy (PharmD), and Physical Therapy (DPT). If approved the DSW would be the first professional degree in social work in the state of Florida and would “prepare doctoral level social work clinicians to work in health, mental health, and social service areas in South Florida and the region” (p. 35).

## **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.
- 19 letters of support are provided from universities and non-academic institutions, but none of them quantify the number of openings that may be available.
- The proposal and supporting documentation make an argument for the DSW as

- an emerging credential driven by student demand for additional specialization.
- There is evidence that DSW graduates can obtain an increase in salary.

At the request of the Chair for the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Board of Governors 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, promotion potential, 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 saturated quickly 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 could improve patient outcomes by augmenting direct medical care with continued counseling and guidance.

The need for doctorally 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 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. Workshop participants were assured that the university's focus was on improved preparation for clinical social workers, not increasing the income of practicing professionals.

## **Need and Demand**

The following section addresses need and demand for the proposed program.

### **Need for DSW Graduates**

The proposal provides an analysis of state and national demand for the DSW graduates.

Currently Ph.D. programs in Social Work are offered in Florida at FIU, FSU, USF, and Barry University. The USF Ph.D. in Social Work program has temporarily suspended new enrollments. As noted in the proposal, each of these has a primary emphasis on research and preparation of faculty.

The proposal notes that a bill has been introduced in Congress that recognizes the 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 [bill](#) was initially introduced in Congress in 2011 and 2013, but it did not pass. The bill was reintroduced again in 2014, but there have not yet been any votes related to this bill.

The following section examines the supplemental documentation provided in support of the proposal in appendixes D and J.

The proposal packet includes a study commissioned by FAU and completed in August 2015 by Hanover Research (Appendix D). The Hanover report focused on examining the student and labor market need for the DSW degrees using Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) information. The following section examines the findings of the Hanover report.

- The Hanover report notes that, to date, a total of eight DSW programs have been developed in the U.S. and an additional one is under development (p. 10). Out of these 9 programs, four (4) are already offered online with some residency requirements and the ninth program will likely follow the same model. The proposed program from FAU would be the 10<sup>th</sup> DSW program in the nation.
- The report points to the fact that the professional organizations in the field, such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the Social Work Policy Institute as well as the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) seem to be driving the need for more DSW graduates in the workforce (p. 13).
- The report noted that according to Bureau of Labor Statistics a number of occupations related to social work were projected to expand at rates higher than the national average (Appendix D, Hanover Research, p. 15). Staff research revealed that none of these occupations, except for Postsecondary Teachers, required the completion of a doctoral level degree. The educational requirements ranged from at least a high school diploma to a master's level credential. Things looked similar in terms of educational requirements at the state level using information provided by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

- The report notes that by July 1, 2019 at least half of the workforce of Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) should hold baccalaureate or master's level credentials in social work, according to Florida Statute 402 (1). The report estimates that by 2019 the department will have to hire more than 500 workers with these credentials and new faculty with a doctoral degree will be needed to prepare more BSW and MSW students. However, according to the State University System (SUS) interactive data system, the SUS institutions have been awarding more than 700 baccalaureate degrees annually over the last three years for a total of 2,182 baccalaureate degrees awarded between AY 2011-2014 and more than 650 master's degrees annually, for a total of 2,222 master degrees over the same period in social work (CIP 44.0701). Finally, over the same period (AY 2010-2013) a total of 26 doctoral (Doctor of Philosophy) degrees in social work were awarded by SUS Institutions (CIP 44.0701). While some of these graduates leave Florida after graduation and some accept positions in the public and private sectors (outside of DCF), the social worker's marketplace seems to be saturated with BSW and MSW graduates and it is unlikely that the state will be confronted with a shortage social work faculty in the near future in Florida. Finally, between 2012-2014, enrollments in Social Work programs at undergraduate and graduate level exceeded 4,000 students annually.
  
- The report includes a table (Figure 3.1: Estimated job openings for social workers with doctorates based on 2022 Florida Employment projections) which provides an estimate of 71 annual job openings for graduates with doctoral degrees in the state of Florida (p. 14). This table (figure 3.1) combines information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Table 1.11: educational attainment for workers 25 years and older by detailed occupation for year 2010-11) as well as DEO employment projections between 2014-2022, for specific SOC codes associated with CIP codes 44.0701 (Social Work) and 51.1503 (Clinical/Medical Social Work).

On one hand, about 13 additional CIP codes are linked with these SOC codes and the SUS has already been preparing doctoral graduates in five (5) of them. The SUS CIP codes feeding into the SOC codes included in Figure 3.1 are 44.0701 Social Work, 52.0101, 52.0201 Business, 43.0110 Juvenile Corrections, and 51.1505 Marriage Counseling. During AY 2013-14, a total of 77 research doctorates have been awarded in these CIP codes by SUS institutions and during the AY 2011-12 and 2012-13, more than 65 degrees were awarded annually.

On the other hand, according to the Health Initiatives Committee (HIC) report (May 2015) for CIP 44.0701, 51.1505, and 51.1508, 32%, 32%, and 60%, respectively, of the doctoral degree graduates in the SUS were found employed full-time in the state of Florida, one year following graduation. Similar information for doctoral graduates in CIPs 52.0101 and 52.0201 (Business) from

SUS institutions is not available at this time.

- The report notes that a search for job openings using “social work” terms yielded a total of 17 positions nationwide using the [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) website. The same search was repeated on 9/9/2015 and yielded a total of 28 “Social Worker,” 44 “Case Manager,” and eight (8) “Director of Case Management” positions, the vast majority of them requiring a baccalaureate or master degree level credential.

Two papers to further demonstrate the demand for DSW graduates in the labor market are included in Appendix J. Please find below a brief analysis of the findings from these documents:

- Hartocollis, Solomon, Doyle, and Ditty (2015) evaluated the University of Pennsylvania’s DSW program. The study found that the DSW degree “holds promise as a value-added option alongside the PhD” (p. 127). The graduates were found to help address the “critical need for doctoral level practice teachers in BSW and MSW programs [...] with current alumni being hired as full-time practice professors and part-time faculty in BSW, MSW, and other human service programs” (p. 127). Another finding of the article was that the dissertation requirement of the DSW program (at UPenn) was perceived as valuable, alumni noting that it “enhanced their ability to work with specific client populations” (p. 127). This finding was in line with previous research literature in regards to how the dissertation impacts clinical practice in a positive manner (p. 127). While Hartocollis et al (2015) note the value of having a dissertation requirement as part of a DSW program, they also note that a dissertation requirement may not be appropriate for every DSW program (p. 127). The FAU DSW program includes a capstone requirement (FAU DSW proposal, p. 49).
- The second study included in this section was presented at the Social Work Leadership Forum (no date was provided). The study notes that “academic institutions have indicated a growing need for faculty holding a terminal degree in the profession who trained as advanced practitioners and come into academe with strong practice background” (p. 7). However, data or other type of evidence to support this need were not provided.

### **Student Demand**

The proposal includes the summary of a think tank report and three surveys of social work graduates, practitioners, community partners, and DSW graduates to assess their interest in the DSW program. The detailed results from these survey are included in Appendices F, G, and H.

The conclusions of the think tank report (2013) issued by the Social Work Policy

Institute and convened under the auspices of the National Association of the Social Workers are included in the proposal (FAU DSW proposal, p. 15). Although the conclusions of the report note that demand for doctoral education in social work is driven by students' interest, the report notes that "looking into the future, [Wayne Lindstrom, PhD, Consultant Sociotech] was pessimistic about the DSW as a way for clinicians to make more money, or to change the marketplace" (Social Work Policy Institute, 2013, p. 15). In other words, students seem to exhibit great interest in further specialization at the doctoral level; rewards in the labor market, however, in terms of higher salary or promotion are unlikely to be associated with the acquisition of the new credential and DSW graduates seem to have little interest in them.

The first survey provides details from a DSW information, input, and feedback session that included 62 community members (Appendix G). The participants were divided into five (5) focus groups and the survey found that attendees were "considering a DSW program for the purpose of degree parity with other professionals," but the "prospect of higher salaries did not appear in the open-ended focus groups" (FAU DSW, p. 17) (e.g. participants did not identify salary or promotion as main motivators for pursuing the DSW).

The second survey included 393 social work graduates and practitioners (Appendix H). Forty-four (44%) and 42% of the participants indicated that they were either strongly or moderately interested, respectively, "in taking a DSW program," with 34% and 39% of the respondents being very likely and moderately likely to apply for the DSW program in the next five years (FAU DSW, p. 17). The top three benefits of pursuing a clinically oriented DSW, as ranked by the survey participants, were the ability to "enhance clinical skills and practice," "open up career opportunities in academia (college/university positions)," and "provide a community of learners and leaders to advance the social work profession" (Appendix H, p. 7). Salary and promotion seemed to be less salient motivators for pursuing a DSW program (Appendix H, p. 7).

The third survey focused on DSW graduates from three universities - the University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, and the University of Tennessee - and included 17 participants (Appendix F). The main findings of the survey were that intellectual enhancement and improved knowledge were the top two motivators for pursuing a DSW degree. Salary increases and improved marketability were ranked as the weakest motivators for pursuing this program. However, out of the 17 participants, 53% noted that their salary increases followed the completion of the DSW program and 83% reported that the DSW increased their earnings potential.

The report and the surveys point to three main conclusions. First, student demand for the DSW program exists and some the main motivators for pursuing this degree tend to be intellectual enhancement as well as improved knowledge and skill. Second, respondents reported that salary and promotion were among the least significant

motivators for pursuing this program. Third, the completion of the DSW programs was found to lead to salary increases as well as increases in graduates' earning potential.

Along with the proposal, FAU provided the Board of Governors with 19 letters of support to illustrate the need for DSW graduates in both academic and non-academic settings (Appendix E). 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 (FAU DSW, pp. 18-19). Sixteen letters of support were provided by non-academic institutions noting that they would consider hiring DSW graduates; no number of potential openings, however, have been provided. One letter of support was received from FIU expressing no concerns about duplication of its Ph.D. in Social Work (Appendix C).

The proposal notes that the two main sources of applicants would be the social work agencies in the region and FAU MSW graduates (Appendix A, Table 1).

### **Analyst's Comments**

The proposal, reports, and surveys provided as part of the proposal packet point to three main conclusions. First, student demand for the DSW program exists and some of the main motivators for pursuing this degree tend to be intellectual enhancement as well as improved knowledge and skill. Second, salary and promotion were found to be among the least significant motivators for pursuing this program. Third, the completion of the DSW programs was found to lead to salary increases as well as increases in potential earnings.

### **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 pre-proposal was reviewed by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents (CAVP) workgroup and any concerns identified by the group have been listed and addressed in the proposal.**

The proposal was discussed by the CAVP group at its November 8, 2013 meeting and no concerns were voiced in regards to the development and implementation of this program.

- 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. Although the submitted documents do not provide a clear and convincing need for an additional doctoral level program in Social Work at this time from a workforce perspective, there is support from social workers in the field for more advanced knowledge and skills to respond to today's mental health crisis.

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

- 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.**
- The proposal indicates that the program will follow the cost-recovery or market-rate funding models. If so, details and timelines for getting approvals for these funding models are included in the proposal.**

The proposal will follow the traditional funding model – the program will be funded through E&G money.

- 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 at campus in Boca Raton (75%) and through distance learning (25%).

- 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.