

Program History

The Indiana University School of Social Work was founded in 1911 as the Department of Social Service, thus making it the oldest professional social work education program begun and continuously functioning as a part of a university (Rogers, 1983, p. 3).

Although originally affiliated with the Department of Economics and Social Sciences in 1911, the program operated primarily in conjunction with the Medical School where patients and families in need were referred for service. During the first few years, much of the learning was experiential in nature. Students were assigned cases and learned by providing actual social services to people in need. By 1915 the Department had developed a series of classroom-based courses to complement the earlier emphasis on the apprenticeship-learning model.

Much intellectual excitement accompanied those early years. Although the supply was low, the demand for educated or "trained" social workers was extremely high. The need for educated social workers was heightened by a commonly held faith in the capacity of the academy to discover and coordinate facts that might be applied to the amelioration of human misery and suffering.

Following the end of World War I, the program was formally integrated into the Department of Economics and Sociology. Known as the "Indiana University Combined Course for the Training of Social Workers", undergraduate students could augment their liberal arts studies with professional social work training and service experience. At that time, one year of graduate education in social work could also be acquired on either the Bloomington or Indianapolis campuses.

By 1924, several classroom courses were regularly offered in the combined program at Indianapolis, including: Theory of Social Work, Theory of Social Case Work, Field Work, Field of Social Work, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychiatry, Industrial Welfare Problems, Techniques of Social Case Work, the Family and the Community, as well as Research. These and related medical social work courses were routinely offered through the School of Medicine.

In 1930, the University established a Bureau of Social Research at Indianapolis in association with the social work program. The Bureau conducted several research studies related to topics such as unemployment, distribution of felonies, mortality rates, and juvenile court statistics. These research activities complemented the graduate program, which had added a second-year of study. The Master's degree required a research thesis and an oral examination in addition to the classroom and field practicum experiences. In 1935, during the Great Depression, the Training Course for Social Work was relegated to a Division within the Department of Sociology. The new Division shifted its curriculum focus to better prepare social workers for service to the vast number of unemployed persons through the rapidly growing public welfare programs.

World War II brought new challenges to the Division as the need for professionally trained social workers increased even further. Anticipating increased post-war demand, Indiana University reorganized the social work program as an independent academic unit with its own Director and administrative autonomy separate from the Department of Sociology.

By 1945, accredited graduate social work programs were required to include content related to eight basic curriculum areas as well as an advanced class and related field work experience in an area of specialization. The eight basic areas included "social work administration, social casework, social group work, community organization, social research, medical information, public welfare information, and psychiatric information" ([Rogers, 1983, p. 57). During the late 1940s and early 1950's, the Indiana University Division of Social Service received full accreditation for several areas of specialization, including medical social work in 1948, school social work in 1950, group work in 1952, and psychiatric social work in 1954. The 1950's also witnessed the emergence of both the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), professional organizations that helped shape both the substance and scope of social work education.

Although baccalaureate level social work courses had been offered for many years, in 1970, the School began a planning process that would ultimately lead to the development of a Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) degree accredited by CSWE in 1976. During the early 1970's, the traditional casework and group work tracks were merged into an "Interpersonal Practice" curriculum track designed to prepare students for direct clinical practice with individuals, families, and small groups. By 1973, a "Planning and Management" track was added, providing an educational option for graduate students interested in administrative practice. With this clearer definition of its mission, the Indiana University School of Social Service was renamed the Indiana University School of Social Work in 1977. From 1978 through 1982, the School refined the practice focus of the BSW curriculum in relation to a generalist social work paradigm. Two years later, the M.S.W. curriculum was similarly reorganized to incorporate generalist content within the first semester followed by concentration coursework in the second semester of the first year curriculum.

The demographic makeup of the faculty and student body changed dramatically during the decade of the 1980's. This period was marked by a concerted effort to broaden the scope and diversity of the School's mission. The hallmarks of this effort were the School's affiliation with the Council on International Programs (CIP), and the development of part-time and weekend, work-study options. Prior to this time, the School's reputation was based almost exclusively on its long tradition of educating generations of professional social workers - most of whom assumed direct service and administrative positions in public and private agencies throughout the State of Indiana. In the intervening years, bolstered by a dramatic increase in the number of doctorally educated faculty, the School gradually expanded its mission to include research and knowledge development as a complement to the traditional experiential and knowledge dissemination functions. This impetus ultimately culminated in the addition of a new Ph.D. Program in 1994, and more recently, the creation of the School's new Office of Research Services.

Paralleling these most recent changes has been the emergence of a variety of community-based field units headed by teacher/practitioners (i.e., non-tenure-track faculty members physically located in agency-based field settings). Tied to a range of critical service delivery areas (e.g., mental health, housing, child welfare, youth development, school social work, and neighborhood centers), these field units not only provide dynamic in vivo settings for collaborative student learning, but also viable laboratories for a wide range of practice-sensitive research.

At present, the Indiana University School of Social Work provides the full continuum of social work education, including degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels. Annually, more than 800 students study professional social work across five of Indiana University's eight core and regional campuses. As we embark on an exciting new millennium, the School is committed to extending this 90 year tradition of excellence and leadership. We pledge to not only provide

the highest quality professional social work education possible, but to do so in ways that contribute to the body of knowledge that informs the profession while improving the quality of life of the diverse communities of which we are a part.

¹ The University of Chicago School, The New York School (Columbia), and The Pennsylvania School were established at earlier dates, but were not affiliated with the universities until later. The School for Social Workers established in Boston was first maintained by Simmons College and Harvard University; in 1916 the connection with Harvard was discontinued and the school was conducted as a regular department of Simmons. Source: Jesse F. Steiner, *Education for Social Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921).

For additional information regarding the history of the Indiana University School of Social Work, please consult the following sources:

- Rogers, H.C. (1983). *Seventy years of social work education at Indiana University*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University School of Social Work.
- Busch, M., Powers, G.T., Metzger, D., Behrooz, C.S., Siegel, S., & Cournoyer, B.R. (2002). *Indiana University School of Social Work: 90 years of service and education. Advances in Social Work, 2.*