

CHAPTER 1: BLAZING A TRAIL



The Many Hats of Supervision Seminar led by Dorinda Noble and Andrew Marks, assisted by Amy Russell (top left) and Christine Norton (center left), August 2009, Padre Island, Texas



Texas State School of Social Work: Blazing a Trail

The School's Journey

The year 1899 marked the birth of a one-building state-authorized school known as Southwest Texas State Normal School, serving 300 students. Built on the banks of the crystal-clear San Marcos River in the rural Hill Country of central Texas, the quiet school grew slowly but steadily, always emphasizing teacher education.

Today, after providing education for more than 100 years, that institution is known as Texas State University-San Marcos. The fourth-largest university in the second-most populous state in the nation, Texas State serves over 34,000 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Located in San Marcos, a community of about 50,000 people, Texas State enjoys the ease of living that a smaller city affords, but it is only 40 miles north of San Antonio and 40 miles south of Austin.

Texas State
enjoys a
distinction few
universities can
boast. It is the
alma mater of a
United States
President:
Lyndon B.
Johnson.

Context of Texas State

That Austin-San Antonio corridor, one of the fastest-growing areas in the nation, is expected to be a sprawling megalopolis of about 3 million people in the next few years. A significant population group in the area is veterans. Texas State serves about 2000 student veterans, the highest number of any university in the state.

Not only is Central Texas changing in population, but the entire state is changing to a majority Hispanic state. Many residents speak Spanish. In 2011, Texas State became an Hispanic-Serving Institution, and 35% of Texas State students are classified as Hispanic. Having achieved HIS designation opens many doors to specific funding for Texas State, and we are beginning to explore options.

Being closer to Mexico than to any other state means that Texas State University is in proximity to some of the global forces that drive drug running and human trafficking, as well as undocumented border crossings. The state of Texas

traditionally values self-reliance and a “cowboy” mentality of solving one’s own problems. Texas has no state income tax and has huge funding issues to overcome. Consequently the state, which has been led by a steady stream of Republicans for some years, is not generous with social welfare funding. Regrettably, the state has a high drop-out rate, a large number of uninsured children, and a significant poverty rate. It also has great amounts of natural resources, a population that offers untold potential for achievement, and a relatively low cost of living in most of the state.

The Genesis of Social Work at Texas State

In the 1970s, a small collection of social work courses grew to become the Walter Richter Institute of Social Work. The Institute offered a BSW degree which the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) initially accredited in 1978 and has reaccredited continuously to the present.

In 1988, the Institute received a Title IV-B Child Welfare Grant, followed by a Title IV-E contract. This initiative gave birth to the Center for Children and Families (CCF). Originally housed in the School, CCF is now an interdisciplinary University center under the direction of Dr. Nancy Feyl Chavkin of the School’s faculty. It fosters collaboration between academic departments and community agencies for interdisciplinary research, education, and service, thereby extending the School’s mission. CCF has had IV-E and IV-B grants continuously since 1988, as well as funding from US Department of Education, US Department of Health and Human Services, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Hartford Foundation, and the Hogg Foundation, among others. It has helped build the education and the careers of countless students.

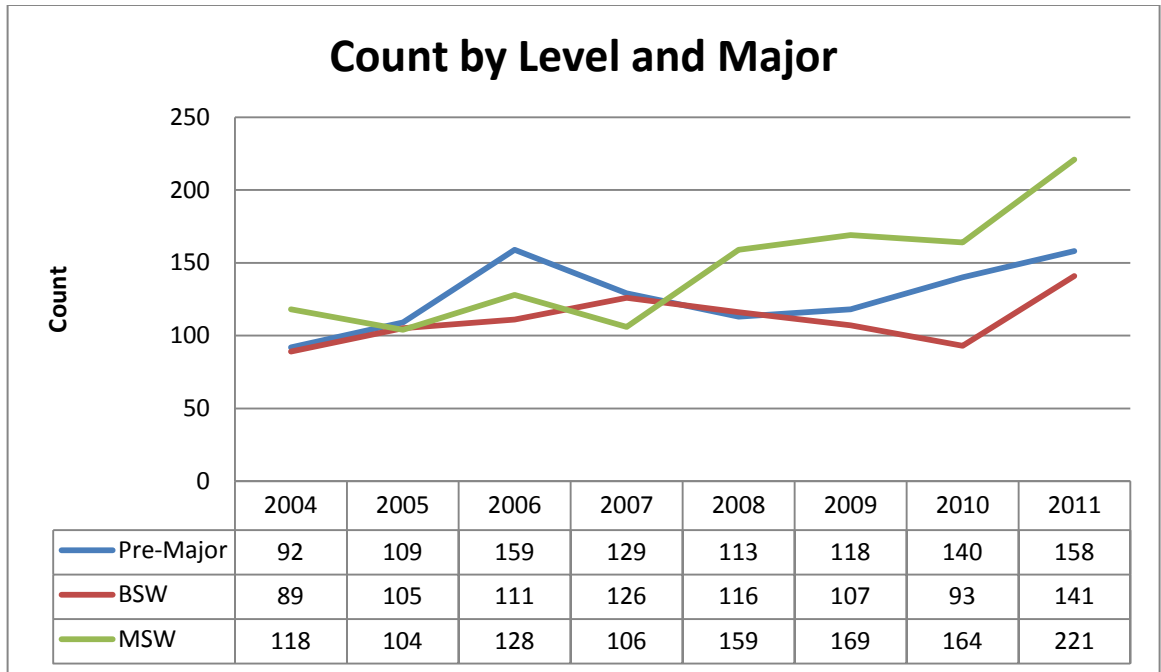
2000-2001 marked two milestones: the Richter institute (known as the Department of Social Work since 1996) became the School of Social Work, and the School’s new MSW degree was initially accredited by CSWE. In 2004 the School launched its online MSW degree program to join its on-campus MSW. The School’s growth has been significant, and it joined the College of Applied Arts in 2009. This College, a vibrant unit of seven departments, including Criminal Justice, and Family and Consumer Sciences, brings more grant money into the University than any other college.

Today the Texas State School of Social Work has 21 full-time faculty, of which 17 hold the doctorate. It serves about 600 students at any one time. Of those, approximately 275 are BSW students or pre-majors. The highly-successful MSW degree is offered both on-campus and online. The lessons faculty have learned from developing the online MSW have transformed the School from a traditional enterprise to an entrepreneurial, tech-savvy educational program that uses the extensive benefits of technology for both baccalaureate and master teaching.

Below is a chart showing our student enrollment since 2004.

Texas State
Center for
Children and
Families has
received more
than \$18 million
in funding and
has provided
more than \$2.5
million in student
educational
stipends and
graduate research
assistantships.

Texas State
produces more
school teachers
than any other
Texas University.



The School Approaches 2012 Reaffirmation

The School's faculty has approached reaffirmation, under the 2008 CSWE accreditation standards, as an opportunity to examine and fine-tune our carefully-conceptualized and studiously-delivered educational product. Faculty began translating our curriculum to an outcome-measure format more than two years ago.

- ✓ After studying the 2008 CSWE Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the faculty held a retreat in San Antonio two years ago to begin assessing how to actively measure outcomes in different ways.
- ✓ The Field faculty met with focus groups of agency-based field supervisors to glean from them the competencies they think our graduates need to be successful professionals. Faculty used this input to clarify what skills they needed to measure in students at different levels of the program.
- ✓ Faculty also met with students in focus groups to assess what they most want to learn, and what they believe they are learning.
- ✓ The School created an internet site, open to faculty, on the University teaching platform. Faculty post comments, suggestions, and materials relative to EPAS and the various elements of our educational product.
- ✓ Over the last two years, the faculty has met in as a "World Series Championship Team" mode. We divided into different "brackets" to examine in depth discrete elements such as diversity in the curriculum, implicit curriculum, various practice competencies, and so forth. Within

Dr. Betsy Wisner, tenure-track professor, said, "This is my first opportunity to participate in accreditation. The process has been invaluable in helping me understand how our courses intersect, build on one another, and prepare students for a fruitful field placement."

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN MARCOS, 2011**

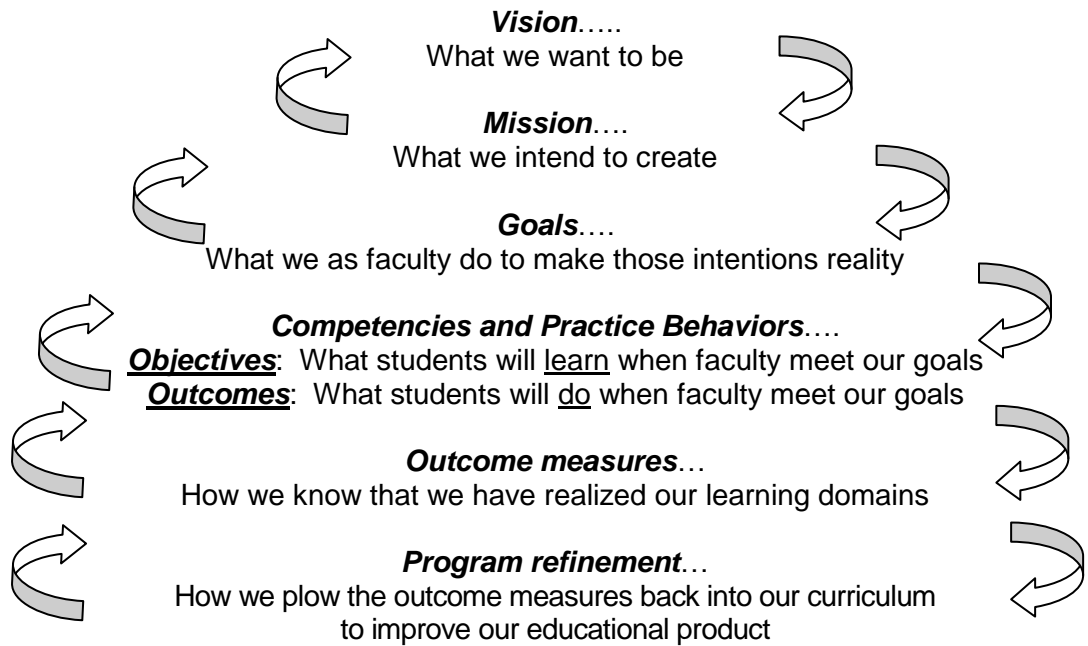
these brackets, faculty formed different “two-bies” to examine our curriculum, policies, procedures, and future.

- ✓ The School designated two faculty, Dr. Amy Russell and Dr. Nancy Chavkin, to oversee creating a model for our outcome measurement, and to guide the collection and assessment of resulting data. On at least a monthly basis, faculty discussed the process and data analysis, and based on this on-going evaluation, brainstormed ways to improve the School.
- ✓ Faculty worked together to review all syllabi, determining which competencies and practice behaviors were most appropriate to be measured in specific courses, and what concrete activities provided the best vehicles for measurement. As a result, all the School’s syllabi were rewritten, refreshed, and refurbished.
- ✓ The School has used its agency-based field supervisors as a professional consultation group, discussing EPAS at their regular supervisor meetings.
- ✓ Dr. Dorinda Noble, compiled the extensive information from faculty, field supervisors, and students, and authored this document.
- ✓ Prior to the 2012 site visit, we intend to have a “World Championship Game” to which we invite selected students and field supervisors to plan for the site visit. We will play “Accreditation Jeopardy” to make sure that everyone is clear about the contents of this document.

For the fall 2011 term, Texas State received 19,000 applications for 4000 open freshman slots.

Not only is the Mexican culture influential in this area, but so is the German culture. New Braunfels, 15 miles south of San Marcos, produced its newspaper only in German until well after World War I.

The Credo of Texas State School of Social Work



Texas State serves over 2000 student veterans and their dependents. The School of Social Work has been very involved in founding the Veteran Advisory Council on campus, working to develop behavioral health, health, academic, support, and peer-to-peer services for vets. Texas State has been named a Vet-Friendly campus for the third year in a row.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 1.0. The School's mission and goals address the profession's purpose, are grounded in core professional values (EP 1.1), and are informed by context (EP 1.2).

Educational Policy 1.1. Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are values which underpin the School's explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the profession's commitment to respect for all people and the quest for social and economic justice.

Educational Policy 1.2. Context encompasses Texas State's mission and the needs and opportunities presented in the University's setting. The School is influenced by its historical, political, economic, social, cultural, demographic, and global contexts and by the ways it engages these factors, as well as factors of new knowledge, technology, and ideas that influence the profession.

Accreditation Standard 1. *The School's mission and goals reflect the profession's purpose and values and the School's context.*
1.0.1 *The School's mission statement is consistent with the profession's purpose and values and the School's context.*
1.0.2 *The School identifies its goals and demonstrates how they are derived from the School's mission.*

The Mission and Goals of the School

Texas State School of Social Work has developed mission statements, a motto, an approach, and a set of goals which grow out of our commitment to professional values and ethics and are shaped by our context. The goals flow out of our mission.

- ✓ The School's mission is entirely consistent with the University mission.
- ✓ The School teaches concepts and behaviors that encourage service to others, particularly to those who are the most vulnerable in our society. The importance of human relationships is woven throughout our curriculum.
- ✓ The School stresses competence and integrity throughout our curriculum. Because two of our School faculty have close connections with the state licensing board, as well as the national consortium of licensing boards, our School has a unique emphasis on ethical, legal professional behavior.
- ✓ The commitment to human rights is significant in our School, and it is a growing emphasis. Because Texas State is close to Interstate 35, one of the nation's major avenues for drug running, human trafficking, and undocumented immigration, faculty and students often focus on the policy and service issues of such issues.
- ✓ Students of the School are taught to respect all people. They learn, for instance, about Islam-aphobia and how to combat it. The faculty is diverse

in race, ethnicity, and religion, and students are consequently exposed to different ideas and approaches.

- ✓ Texas State, a Hispanic-Serving Institution, is located closer to Mexico than to any other state. The blending of different ethnic streams creates an excellent learning laboratory.
- ✓ Texas State is located in an area which is quickly changing from a largely rural setting to a more urban area. Students, particularly in field placement, have the opportunity to deal with the challenges of both settings. Though our online program is limited to master's students, our BSW students benefit from the fact that the School reaches far beyond our immediate geographical area and thereby draws in perspectives from other parts of the country.
- ✓ BSW students have also benefitted from the faculty's growing expertise with using technology in teaching. All our classrooms are "Smart" rooms, and we generously use Internet resources, YouTube, chat rooms, and other technology to enhance learning.
- ✓ Texas State serves more student veterans than any other Texas university. The School has led the way to develop successful strategies of working with this special group of students.
- ✓ Texas State serves many first-generation college students as well. Since a number of the School's faculty are first-generation college students, they are particularly sensitive to the needs of this group.
- ✓ The School of Social Work benefits from being close to the state capital, Austin. Our students are able to participate in legislative and learning events such as Student Day at the Legislature, and we regularly are able to place students in legislative offices for field practicum.

Texas State students are doing great things. The Students in Free Enterprise chapter here was named National Champion at the 2011 SIFE Exposition in Minneapolis. Twelve Texas State students were named "outstanding overall" delegation for their representation of Saudi Arabia in the regional Model Arab League competition in Houston.

Our School Mission

(What we intend to accomplish)

The mission of the School of Social Work at Texas State University-San Marcos is to educate competent, ethical social workers who are prepared to serve as leaders for change in a dynamic, diverse society. The School transcends boundaries by using pedagogical technologies and applied strategies that make learning more accessible, both locally and globally. The School guides students to create and refine culturally competent, consumer-oriented intervention strategies that enhance personal and organizational well-being and build a more just society, particularly for vulnerable and often-forgotten people of all ages who are usually served by public monies.

Our School Motto

(What we intend to create)

Leadership for Change!

Our School Approach:

Transcending Boundaries in a Rapidly Changing World

(How we package our curriculum to prepare students to become leaders for change in a variety of settings operating in a dynamic social environment)

- ✓ transcending the boundaries of geographic location (through online instruction),

- ✓ spanning from local to global through including content on social, economic, and environmental justice, globalization, diversity
- ✓ transcending the notion of “traditional” student to include “non-traditional” learners such as student veterans, first-generation college students, and professionals in their mid-career points
- ✓ transcending historic clinical knowledge by expanding to diverse settings and interventions, incorporating cutting-edge intervention strategies such as contemporary music, technology, and wilderness therapy
- ✓ transcending traditional administrative knowledge by drawing in government efforts, non-profits, and entrepreneurial ventures
- ✓ embracing technology, popular culture, and the unique perspectives of students as vital components of the learning community

Our BSW Mission

The mission of the Bachelor of Social Work Degree Program at the Texas State University School of Social Work is to educate competent, ethical, generalist social workers who are prepared for beginning social work practice.

Desired Learning Outcomes

(What students will be able to do)

The School has adopted the 10 competencies and 41 practice behaviors outlined in the CSWE 2008 EPAS. This document will demonstrate the School’s commitment to incorporating and measuring those elements.

Outcome Measures

(How we know that students are achieving those practice behaviors)

Each competency and each practice behavior will be measured at least twice in the BSW curriculum through specific assignments or activities.

Program Refinement

(How we integrate the outcome results back into our curriculum to refine and improve our educational product)

The School examines the outcome measures and draws signs and signals from those measures to improve our curriculum, our policies, our teaching strategies, and our outreach to the community.

GOALS

The School aims to meet these goals for all students:

- 1. COMPREHENSIVENESS (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCY 1: PROFESSIONALISM):** The School will graduate baccalaureate social workers who can function competently using the generalist framework with systems of all sizes.
- 2. REASONING AND VALUING (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCY 3: CRITICAL THINKING):** The School will graduate social work practitioners who employ critical thinking and lucid self-assessment; understanding of professional history; ethical, value-based sensibilities; and

Texas State has an award-winning mariachi group, Mariachi Nueva Generacion, and one of its members won “Best Mariachi Vocalist” in the nation. The University has many other excellent musical groups. Cole Cote, a musical theatre major, won “Singing with Broadway Stars” and is going to New York to perform in 101 Years on Broadway.

scientific and creative processes to engage in competent, value-based social work with diverse clients and client groups in various settings.

The LBJ Debate
Society at Texas
State has won
many awards. So
has the American
Advertising
Federation team.

3. DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCY 7: HBSE): The School will graduate social work practitioners who comprehend, based on a broad array of liberal arts concepts and research knowledge, the needs of people (particularly the most vulnerable members of society), who grasp the ways those needs affect people's behaviors, and who can plan and implement effective practice methodologies to foster productive behaviors and ways of thinking.

4. DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCIES 4: DIVERSITY; 5: ADVANCE JUSTICE; AND 6: POLICY PRACTICE): The School will produce graduates who appreciate and respect the amazing diversity of the human family, who grasp how that diversity is reflected in the families and organizations that people create, who embrace diversity as a strength, who value social justice, and who ethically lead the struggle to foster a compassionate, productive, non-discriminatory society.

Texas State has a
"body farm" at
which
anthropologists
and crime experts
can study the
process of body
decomposition in
various
situations.

5. ACQUIRING AND REFINING SKILLS (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCIES 6: RESEARCH PRACTICE; 9: CONTEXTS; 10: PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE): The School will graduate practitioners who employ theoretically-sound, evidence-based interventions and communication techniques, who use supervision efficiently to improve their practices, who are prepared to evaluate and refine their methodologies, who are knowledgeable consumers and producers of research, and who are life-long professional learners.

6. PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP (WHICH RELATES TO COMPETENCY 2: ETHICAL PRACTICE): The School will produce leaders and competent organizational citizens who, because they understand the historical and contemporary contexts of social work, can develop innovative, humane, consumer-oriented policies and systems, can advocate for marginalized populations, and can build bridges between public entities, private concerns, and various disciplines to improve the well-being and productivity of people, particularly the most neglected members of society.