

October 31, 2007

Dear Social Work Students,

The School of Social Work will be restructured effective November 1, 2007. This decision was made after years of discussion and with the approval of the central administration. The MSW program will be continued and significantly strengthened. The BSW program, however, will be discontinued. Current BSW students will be able to complete their program and graduate from BYU, but no new students will be admitted. Current BSW students are all invited to meet with Emily Chaffin (422-3986) before the end of this semester to map out their graduation plans.

The discontinuance of the BSW program is consistent with administrative policy to prune some programs in order to infuse more resources into essential programs. The BSW program was discontinued because LDS Family Services employs MSW, not BSW, graduates and because the BSW degree is available through BYU Hawaii, BYU Idaho, and several Utah universities. As with other programs nationally, undergraduate students at BYU who desire an MSW can obtain excellent foundational training in Psychology, Sociology, or Family Life. Students not currently in the BSW track are encouraged to consult with the advisement center about these alternatives as they prepare for MSW training.

The MSW program at BYU will be strengthened in the following ways:

1. A multi-disciplinary faculty will bring enhanced rigor to the program. The current Social Work faculty will have joint appointments involving the departments of Psychology, Sociology, Family Life, and Political Science. Likewise, affiliated faculty from those departments will become members of the Social Work faculty with joint appointments. Some social work courses (e.g., research methods and statistics) will likely be taught from a multi-disciplinary perspective by faculty from other departments.
2. Beginning with the Fall 2008 incoming cohort, MSW students will be expected to complete a mentored research project. It is anticipated that they will present their findings to a professional gathering and submit their final reports for publication in a reputable social work journal.
3. MSW students will be encouraged to consider going on for doctoral work. In order to accommodate this goal, there will be an increased effort to bring to campus visiting professors who represent the top doctoral programs in the country and students will be mentored in the process of applying to those programs. Also a limited number of scholarships will be made available to students going on for doctoral work.
4. The clinical focus of the MSW program will be maintained and strengthened through a productive interaction between the clinical programs in Social Work, Psychology, and Marriage and Family Therapy.

I invite all BSW and MSW students as well as pre-social work majors to meet with me in order to clarify these changes and address your questions. This meeting will be held at 11:00 a.m. on November 8 in 250 SKWT.

Change is often painful and I'm sure questions will arise. These changes are being made with the best interests of the students in mind and with an acknowledgement of the dedicated service of the Social Work faculty. I ask for your patience as we work out the details of a revised program, and I welcome the opportunity to address your questions.

Sincerely,

David B. Magleby, Dean  
Family, Home, and Social Sciences