MSW Evaluation Report: 2015-2016
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Assessment is a catalyst for continuous program improvement and an integral component of the MSW competency-based educational design. It is an ongoing process that occurs during the life course of a program in order to improve outcomes for students. Contained in this report is a summary of evaluation data gleaned from the MSW program for the academic year 2015-2016. This information will be utilized to supplement departmental and college reports, as well as for CSWE Accreditation purposes. Additionally, these results will be shared with the faculty and larger social work community in order to continually receive input and improve the quality of the MSW program at WKU.

Overview

In order to assess the mastery of MSW students at WKU, several explicit as well as implicit measures were utilized. Explicit measures were as follows: (1) Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT); (2) Practice Readiness Exam (PRE); and (3) Field Assessment. Implicit measures were as follows: (1) Lum's Cultural Awareness Inventory (2003); and (2) MSW Exit Survey. More information is provided on each of these measures below in the relevant sections.

Explicit Measures

Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT)

In order to assess the mastery of foundation level knowledge of MSW students at WKU, the ACAT assesses standard curricular areas within accredited graduate social work programs in the United States. Curriculum A, the one administered to "traditional" WKU MSW students, assesses knowledge in the following curricular areas:

- Diversity
- Populations at Risk
- Social and Economic Justice
- Values and Ethics
- Policy & Services

- Social Work Practice
- Human Behavior in the Social Environment
- Research Methods

Results from the ACAT are provided to individual students in the form of standard scores for each curricular area as well as for overall performance for the cohort taking the test. These results are provided to students so that they can assess areas of strengths and weaknesses as they move forward into their concentration year of studies and prepare for the Practice Readiness Exam (PRE) exam. Their academic advisors play an integral role in this process. These curricular areas and the standard scores associated with them can be linked directly to current program objectives. According to the 2015-2016 WKU MSW score report, "ACAT scores range from 200 to 800 with an average of 500 and a standard deviation of 100…Nationally, 68 percent of the scores in any given year fall between approximately 400 and 600. Year-to-year variations in the size of the reference groups will cause scores to fall outside these limits. The content area scores are compared with a reference group of other examinees taking the same content area. The overall performance score is compared with other examinees taking the ACAT in this discipline with the same number of content areas."

As is done annually, the ACAT was administered to 22 WKU MSW students at the end of their foundation year of courses on March 26, 2016. The exam is carefully proctored and all traditional students are required to sit for the exam. Once completed, the exams were sent to ACAT personnel for scoring. Aggregate and individual scores were sent back to WKU and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23 for analysis. The national averages from 2001 through 2014 were obtained from the ACAT website and averaged for comparison. A one-sample t-test was conducted in order to determine if there was a difference between the national average and WKU students in each of the eight (8) content areas and overall (see Table 1).

Table 1
ACAT Results – 2 Year Traditional Cohort (Class of 2017)

Area (Reference Group *n*)	WKU Aggregate Score	Percentile	National Average	t-stat	p-value
Diversity (*n* = 7768)	541	66	496.7	1.907	.070
Populations at Risk (*n* = 7768)	523	59	498.3	1.399	.176

Social/Economic Justice (n = 7768)	510	54	495.4	0.615	.545
Values & Ethics (n = 7768)	526	60	497.3	1.674	.109
Policy & Services (n = 8714)	552	70	496.6	3.447	.002**
Social Work Practice (n = 8714)	547	68	504.5	2.604	.017*
HBSE (n = 8714)	512	55	496.6	0.844	.408
Research Methods (n = 8714)	532	63	505.6	1.363	.187
Overall (n = 7768)	542	66	509.1	1.771	.091

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

The results of this administration indicate that this cohort of traditional MSW students performed at the 66th percentile overall compared to similar MSW students nationwide. Thus, per the official ACAT report, based on a comparison group of 7768 MSW students taking the ACAT with 8 areas evaluated, 66% of students would be expected to score at or below WKU's overall performance score and 44% would be expected to score higher. Based on the statistical analysis, WKU students scored significantly better than the national average in the areas of Policy & Services (t = 3.447, p = .002) and Social Work Practice (t = 2.604, p = .017).

It is also important to examine how current WKU social work students score compared to previous years. Table 2 below depicts WKU scores from the 2014-2015 academic year compared to the 2015-2016 academic year. An independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine if there was a significant difference in scores in each of the eight (8) content areas as well as overall. These results are also presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2
ACAT Scores Compared to 2014/2015

Area (Reference Group *n*)	WKU Aggregate Score 2014-2015	WKU Aggregate Score 2015-2016	Mean Difference	t-stat	p-value
Diversity (*n* = 7768)	458	541	83	3.589	.002**
Populations at Risk (*n* = 7768)	465	523	58	3.244	.004**
Social/Economic Justice (*n* = 7768)	479	510	31	1.325	.200
Values & Ethics (*n* = 7768)	507	526	19	1.119	.276
Policy & Services (*n* = 8714)	512	552	40	2.497	.021*
Social Work Practice (*n* = 8714)	512	547	35	2.148	.044*
HBSE (*n* = 8714)	507	512	5	0.287	.777
Research Methods (*n* = 8714)	522	532	10	0.515	.612
Overall (*n* = 7768)	495	542	47	2.519	.020*

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Students in the current cohort scored highest in the areas of Policy & Services, Social Work Practice, and Diversity. While higher scores in the areas of Policy & Services and Social Work Practice are not surprising based on last year's results, it is important to note that Diversity was students' worst area in the previous administration. Further, compared to the 2015 cohort results, the 2016 cohort scored significantly higher in four (4) of the eight (8) content areas (i.e., Diversity; Populations at Risk; Policy & Services; Social Work Practice), with the largest gain being seen in the area of Diversity (see Table 2).

Students in the current cohort scored the lowest in the areas of Social/Economic Justice, HBSE, and Populations at Risk. This is also consistent with last year's cohort results, with the exception of HBSE. These areas tend to be the lowest scoring area for students at WKU. However, all scores improved from the 2015 cohort with significant improvement in the area of Populations at Risk (see Table 2).

Practice Readiness Exam (PRE)

Per departmental and WKU Graduate School requirements, all graduating MSW students must successfully pass a Practice Readiness Exam (PRE) during their final semester in order to successfully complete the program. Per the 2015-2016 MSW Student Handbook, the PRE exam gives students the opportunity to demonstrate basic competency in essential content areas of social work practice with an emphasis in rural settings. The exam contains 100 multiple choice questions in an objective format, similar to social work licensure exams. These questions are written by faculty whose primary assignment is in that content area. Questions are then reviewed annually by a PRE committee to ensure its applicability to social work content. Further, two faculty members mapped individual questions back to the competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Inter-rater reliability was established on all items. In the event that there was a discrepancy between raters, a third faculty member was consulted. The PRE is an excellent tool to prepare students to pass the intermediate licensure exam post-graduation, one of the desired outcomes of the MSW Program at WKU.

Students are required to pass the PRE exam with a score of 70 or better in order to graduate from the program. Per the WKU Graduate School Policy, a student only has two attempts to pass this comprehensive exam. Consequently, a student who fails the exam two times is subject to dismissal from the MSW Program. However, it should also be noted that students who fail the exam are provided with written information regarding their performance and advised on areas they need to improve on before they retake it during one of two later dates (i.e., several weeks from initial administration or during the next Fall semester).

As the test assesses knowledge of specific content from readings, lectures, and field practicums/experiences, it is considered an important evaluative measure of student learning and retention in the program. It measures not only concrete concepts gleaned but also puts students in "practice situations" where they must respond based on their professional and ethical training. It has been continually refined over the 12 years it has been administered and an item analysis is conducted after each administration to assess the efficacy of specific questions (to decide which ones to keep and which to discard). New questions are continually developed to have fresh questions on each administration, in addition to "battle tested" ones.

The 2016 exam included questions in the following subject areas (numbers of questions on each area exam are denoted):

- Cultural Competency and Diversity (4)
- Foundation Practice (20)
- Advanced Practice (14)
- Human Behavior in the Social Environment (6)
- Ethics (7)
- Foundation Policy (7)
- Advanced Policy (4)
- Groups (7)
- Diagnosis (6)
- Family Practice (5)
- Administration and Supervision (5)
- Community Organization (3)
- Rural Communities (5)
- Research (7)

Seventy (70) students took the PRE on April 11, 2016. Of these, 61 achieved a passing score of 70 and 9 failed to achieve this benchmark (following item analysis). Thus, 87.1% of students taking the exam passed and 12.9% failed during this administration. A majority (88.9%, n = 8) of students decided to retake the PRE on the first date given while one (1) student chose to wait until the September 2016 administration. On the first retake of the exam, on May 2, 2016, 5 students passed the exam with a minimum score of 70, while 3 did not attain the required benchmark. Results from the September 2016 administration are not yet available. Over the decade-long history of the exam, the 2016 exam fail rate was on par with previous administrations (i.e., average ~10%). Table 3 below depicts the percentage of questions missed by curricular area and cohort. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to determine if there was a significant difference in performance based on cohort location.

Table 3
2016 PRE Test Questions Missed by Curricular Area & Cohort (Percentage Missed)

Content Area	All Campuses (n = 70)	Bowling Green (n = 56)	Owensboro (n = 5)	E-town (n = 9)	F-stat	p-value
HBSE (6)	21.9%	22.3%	13.3%	24.1%	0.636	.533
Foundation Policy (7)	30.4%	30.1%	31.4%	31.7%	0.224	.800
Advanced Policy (4)	12.9%	13.0%	5.0%	16.7%	0.819	.445
Family Practice (5)	27.4%	26.8%	28.0%	31.1%	0.293	.747
Supervision and Administration (5)	21.4%	20.4%	20.0%	28.9%	0.739	.481
Research (7)	31.0%	28.6%	42.9%	39.7%	2.880	.063
Groups (7)	20.0%	18.1%	20.0%	31.7%	2.894	.062
Rural Communities (5)	32.3%	30.4%	32.0%	44.4%	1.932	.153
Diagnosis (6)	30.7%	29.8%	30.0%	37.0%	0.531	.590
Ethics (7)	13.7%	12.2%	20.0%	15.5%	1.173	.316
Diversity (4)	22.9%	21.4%	15.0%	36.1%	1.408	.252
Foundation Practice (20)	16.0%	15.6%	16.0%	18.3%	0.306	.737
Advanced Practice (14)	22.0%	21.3%	18.6%	27.8%	0.890	.416
Community Organizations (3)	22.9%	19.0%	33.3%	40.7%	3.097	.052
Total Questions (100)	22.3%	21.3%	22.2%	28.2%	2.671	.077

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Overall, the mean score on the 2016 PRE was 77.7 (SD = 8.5). Breaking the scores down by campus, the Bowling Green cohort scored the highest on average with a mean of 78.7 (SD = 8.3), while the Elizabethtown cohort scored the lowest on average with a mean of 71.8 (SD = 9.6). The Owensboro cohort on average scored 0.9 points lower than the Bowling Green campus and 6.0 points higher than the Elizabethtown cohort (M = 77.8, SD = 4.7). While there was no statistically significant difference between campuses overall or in individual content areas, a few areas (i.e., Research, Groups, and Community Organization) did demonstrate large differences between cohorts.

Looking at the table above, across all campuses the subject areas where the most students appeared to struggle (> 30% missed) were Rural Communities, Research, Diagnosis, and Foundation Policy. This is consistent with last year's results with the exception of Foundation Policy. The 2016 cohort replaced HBSE with Foundation Policy as one of the highest

missed content areas. With respect to the cohorts, all cohorts (i.e., Bowling Green, Owensboro, Elizabethtown) struggled in the areas of Foundation Policy and Rural Communities.

Across all campuses, the areas students missed the fewest questions (< 20% missed) in were Advanced Policy, Ethics, and Foundation Practice. This is different from last year's PRE results as the only area that students consistently performed well was in the area of Ethics. Last year, Advanced Practice and Supervision and Administration were among the highest performance areas. For the 2016 cohort, these content areas dropped to 7th and 5th, respectively. With respect to the cohorts, all cohorts (i.e., Bowling Green, Owensboro, Elizabethtown) performed well in the areas of Advanced Policy and Foundation Practice.

As previously mentioned, the 2016 exam included questions that were mapped back to the CSWE Competencies (numbers of questions for each competency are denoted) as follows:

- Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior (9)
- Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice (12)
- Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice (4)
- Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice (6)
- Competency 5: Engage in policy practice (12)
- Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (12)
- Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (24)
- Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (20)
- Competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (1)

Table 4 below depicts the percentage of PRE test questions missed by competency and cohort. An one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in scores for each competency as well as overall between cohorts.

Table 4
2016 PRE Test Questions Missed by Competency & Cohort (Percentage Missed)

Content Area	All Campuses (n = 70)	Bowling Green (n = 56)	Owensboro (n = 5)	E-town (n = 9)	F-stat	p-value
Competency 1 (9)	18.6%	16.5%	33.3%	23.4%	4.635	.013*
Competency 2 (12)	27.1%	25.9%	21.7%	38.0%	2.157	.124
Competency 3 (4)	29.3%	29.0%	25.0%	33.3%	0.235	.791
Competency 4 (6)	34.1%	31.6%	46.7%	42.6%	2.577	.083
Competency 5 (12)	23.3%	22.0%	25.0%	30.6%	1.903	.157
Competency 6 (12)	15.2%	13.7%	11.7%	26.9%	4.742	.012*
Competency 7 (24)	24.3%	24.2%	21.7%	26.4%	0.294	.746
Competency 8 (20)	17.6%	17.3%	15.0%	21.1%	0.746	.478
Competency 9 (1)	12.9%	10.7%	20.0%	22.2%	0.565	.571
Total Questions (100)	22.3%	21.3%	22.2%	28.2%	2.671	.077

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

While there was no statistically significant difference between campuses overall or in individual content areas, there were some statistically significant differences when examining performance based on competencies. Both Competency 1 (Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior) and Competency 6 (Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) demonstrated statistically significant differences based on cohort. For Competency 1, the Bowling Green cohort performed significantly better than both the Owensboro and Elizabethtown campuses while the Owensboro and Bowling Green cohorts performed significantly better than the Elizabethtown cohort on Competency 6.

Looking at the table above (Table 4), across all campuses the competency where most students appeared to struggle (> 30% missed) was Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice. The Elizabethtown cohort was unique in that there were 4 competencies that appeared to be problematic (i.e., Competency 2, Competency 3, Competency 4, and Competency 5). Across all campuses, the competencies students missed the fewest questions (< 20% missed) in were Competency 1 (Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior), Competency 6 (Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities), Competency 8 (Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities), and Competency 9 (Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities).

MSW Field Data/Evaluation

Just as with the domains assessed above, and in accordance with the accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the MSW Program annually collects field data in order to assess the program's compliance and success in meeting established benchmarks for each standard. More specifically, the percentage of students achieving each CSWE competency is calculated for both the foundation year as well as the concentration year. This information, which is gathered by the Field Director and posted on the MSW Program website, helps the program evaluate areas of strength and potential growth in field objectives. Table 5 below presents a summary from May 2016 summarizing the field assessment for academic year 2015-2016. Table 6 below presents the same data broken down by cohort location. Note that all Foundation Year students were enrolled in the Bowling Green cohort.

Table 5
Percentage of Students Meeting Field Competencies

Competency	Competency Benchmark	Foundation *n = 22*	Concentration *n = 70*
C1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	95.7%
C2: Apply social work ethical principles to provide professional practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	95.7%
C3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	92.9%
C4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	88.6%
C5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	90.0%
C6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice informed-research.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	87.1%
C7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	92.9%

C8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	72.7%	90.0%
C9: Respond to contexts and shape practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	85.7%
C10: Students engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	76.4%	95.7%

Looking at the results above, it is apparent that the MSW Program was 100% successful during the 2015-2016 year in meeting all of the competency benchmarks. Overall, the average for foundation students achieving competency benchmarks was 79%, compared to 91.4% for concentration year students in achieving benchmarks. Foundation-level students were most successful in the areas of identifying as a professional social worker, applying ethical principles to professional practice, engaging in diversity and difference, advancing human rights and social and economic justice, and applying knowledge of human behavior and the social environment. Similarly, concentration-level students also performed well in the areas of identifying as a professional social worker and applying ethical principles to professional practice. However, concentration-level students also performed well on Competency 10, which is "students engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities." This makes sense due to the advanced clinical skills that students should receive during their concentration year.

Table 6
Field Competencies By Cohort Concentration Year Only

Competency	Competency Benchmark	Bowling Green		Elizabethtown	Owensboro
		Foundation *n = 22*	Concentration *n = 56*	Concentration *n = 9*	Concentration *n = 5*
C1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	94.6%	100%	100%

C2: Apply social work ethical principles to provide professional practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	94.6%	100%	100%
C3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	91.1%	100%	100%
C4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	87.5%	88.9%	100%
C5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	91.1%	88.9%	80.0%
C6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice informed-research.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	89.3%	77.8%	80.0%
C7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	81.8%	92.9%	100%	80.0%
C8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	72.7%	91.1%	88.9%	80.0%
C9: Respond to contexts and shape practice.	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	77.3%	85.7%	88.9%	80.0%

C10: Students engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	70% of students will earn 4 or higher	76.4%	94.6%	100%	100%

Looking at the results presented in Table 6 above, it is apparent that the MSW Program was 100% successful during the 2015-2016 year in meeting all of the competency benchmarks across all cohorts. Overall, the average for concentration level students achieving competency benchmarks was 91.3% for the Bowling Green cohort, compared to 93.3% for the Elizabethtown cohort and 90.0% for the Owensboro cohort. Therefore, the cohorts were relatively similar across all competencies.

Table 7
Mean Field Scores

Competency	Overall		Bowling Green	Elizabethtown	Owensboro
	Foundation M (SD) n = 22	Concentration M (SD) n = 70	Concentration M (SD) n = 56	Concentration M (SD) n = 9	Concentration M (SD) n = 5
C1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.	4.45 (0.80)	4.67 (0.56)	4.66 (0.58)	4.67 (0.50)	4.80 (0.45)
C2: Apply social work ethical principles to provide professional practice.	4.45 (0.80)	4.63 (0.57)	4.61 (0.59)	4.67 (0.50)	4.80 (0.45)
C3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.	4.27 (0.83)	4.46 (0.63)	4.45 (0.66)	4.56 (0.53)	4.40 (0.55)
C4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.	4.41 (0.80)	4.51 (0.70)	4.48 (0.71)	4.56 (0.73)	4.80 (0.45)
C5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.	4.36 (0.79)	4.49 (0.68)	4.50 (0.66)	4.44 (0.73)	4.40 (0.89)

C6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice informed-research.	4.14 (0.77)	4.34 (0.70)	4.36 (0.67)	4.22 (0.83)	4.40 (0.89)
C7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.	4.36 (0.79)	4.54 (0.63)	4.54 (0.63)	4.67 (0.50)	4.40 (0.89)
C8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.	4.23 (0.87)	4.40 (0.67)	4.39 (0.65)	4.33 (0.71)	4.60 (0.89)
C9: Respond to contexts and shape practice.	4.27 (0.83)	4.33 (0.72)	4.32 (0.72)	4.33 (0.71)	4.40 (0.89)
C10: Students engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	4.18 (0.80)	4.59 (0.58)	4.59 (0.60)	4.56 (0.53)	4.60 (0.55)
Overall	4.31 (0.75)	4.50 (0.55)	4.49 (0.56)	4.50 (0.54)	4.56 (0.62)

An independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between foundation-level students and concentration-level students across all competencies. The only statistically significant difference was for Competency 10: Students engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (t = -2.603, p = 0.011). Concentration-level students scored 0.404 points higher than foundation-level students on this competency. As previously mentioned, this is expected due to the focus of concentration-level practicum placements compared to foundation-level practicum placements. A one-way ANOVA was conducted in order to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between cohorts; however, results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between cohorts.

Implicit Measures

Lum's Cultural Awareness Inventory

Lum's Cultural Awareness Inventory is used to assess a critical component of this program's standard and mission, which is "…to prepare students for advanced professional social work practice to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural

population in the community, in Kentucky, and in a global society." The program wants to produce graduates who know the traditions, histories, and cultural norms of multicultural groups and can put this knowledge into practice by designing culturally sensitive interventions. In fact, one of the primary goals of the MSW program at WKU is that graduates emerge with the knowledge, skills, and self-awareness required for culturally sensitive practice (Gabbard, Starks, Cappiccie, & Jaggers, 2011). Towards this end, both advanced standing and traditional students complete flagship diversity courses (SWRK 612 or SWRK 501) to master diversity and cultural competency content. This material is also infused throughout the curriculum and in many electives such as Homelessness, Forensic Social Work, Expressive Therapies, and Alternative Therapies. In order to assess student's cultural self-awareness, the MSW program at WKU utilizes an instrument that has been validated and employed in numerous diversity evaluative studies nationwide.

The Cultural Awareness Inventory is adapted from Lum's Social Work Cultural Competencies Self-Assessment (2003). The Cultural Awareness Inventory consists of a number of sections, including an introduction, background information, 44 statements that are answered on a 4-point scale, and two open-ended items at the conclusion of the instrument. This is a self-report instrument that measures self-perception of cultural awareness across the cultural domains of cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and inductive learning. Ultimately, there are 44 items where students rate their level of competency on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (unlikely) to 4 (definitely), with higher scores being indicative of a higher level of cultural competency in each of the aforementioned domains. Therefore, scores could range from 44 – 176. As alluded to above, the Cultural Awareness inventory include 4 subscales: *cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development,* and *inductive learning.* The *Cultural Awareness* domain contained 8 items, with possible scores ranging from 8 – 31. The *Knowledge Acquisition* domain included 9 items, with possible scores ranging from 9 – 36. There were 23 items related to *Skill Development*, indicating that possible scores could range from 23 – 92. The *Inductive Learning* domain included 4 items, with possible scores ranging from 4 – 16.

The Cultural Awareness Inventory is employed as a pre-and post-test assessment procedure, statistically evaluated with dependent sample t-tests. It is administered at the beginning (orientation) and conclusion of the student's MSW program. The goal is to assess for significant changes (or lack thereof) in students' perceived level of cultural competency and cultural self-awareness. While self-perceived change does have its obvious limitations (diversity content is also measured more concretely on the ACAT and PRE), it does allow for students to reflect back on the knowledge and skills they have acquired in courses and in fieldwork, which is a valuable exercise for them to engage in at the conclusion of their study. This, coupled with a self-reflection paper they write in their flagship course, helps them to identify biases, stereotypes, and schemas they must come to grips with in serving multicultural, and often oppressed, clients.

There were 48 students (68.6% of 70 graduating) who completed either the pre- or post-Cultural Awareness Inventory. Of those 48 students, 3 had to be eliminated from the analysis as a result of either missing the pre- or post-test resulting in a final sample of 45 students. Results are displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8
Cultural Competency Overall

Domain	Pre-test M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	t-stat	p-value
Cultural Awareness	29.09 (2.52)	29.91 (2.28)	-1.655	.105
Knowledge Acquisition	28.27 (4.52)	33.32 (2.72)	-7.160	<.001***
Skill Development	69.76 (10.88)	80.48 (7.92)	-6.552	<.001***
Inductive Learning	12.33 (2.42)	12.25 (1.94)	0.250	.804
Overall	139.44 (17.79)	155.95 (13.39)	-6.016	<.001***

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

A dependent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test on the subscales of the Cultural Awareness Inventory as well as overall. As the results in Table 7 indicate, there was a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test on two of the subscales (i.e., Knowledge Acquisition and Skill Development) as well as overall. The only areas where there was not a statistically significant difference were in the areas of cultural awareness and inductive learning.

MSW Student Exit Survey

Graduating MSW students were given the opportunity to complete an exit survey, which was administered during their last face-to-face class. This survey was administered at all campuses and assessed overall satisfaction with the MSW program as well as preparation for future social work practice. Students were also given the opportunity to provide any ideas they had to improve the student experience in the MSW program at WKU. In addition to demographic items, the exit survey included 24 items where students were asked to rate their level of agreement with a statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and one open-ended item that allowed students to comment on ways to improve the MSW program at WKU. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference on these items based on cohort. Table 9 below presents the results of the MSW Student Exit Survey.

Table 9
MSW Student Exit Survey Results

Item	All Campuses M(SD)	Bowling Green M(SD)	Owensboro M(SD)	E-town M(SD)	F-stat	p-value
I am satisfied with the MSW Program experience at WKU	4.33 (.908)	4.58 (.539)	4.50 (.577)	2.89 (1.269)	23.034	<.001***
The MSW Program at WKU is respectful of individual diversity.	4.61 (.583)	4.67 (.519)	5.00 (.000)	4.20 (.789)	3.945	.025*
I would recommend this program to a prospective student.	4.40 (.819)	4.65 (.483)	4.75 (.500)	3.10 (.994)	29.015	<.001***
I am satisfied with the student organizations available at the MSW Program.	3.98 (.896)	4.17 (.859)	3.50 (1.291)	3.30 (.483)	5.098	.009**
Overall, I am satisfied with the core curriculum offered in the MSW Program at WKU.	4.15 (.938)	4.29 (.824)	4.75 (.500)	3.20 (1.033)	7.975	<.001***
Overall, I am satisfied with the elective offerings within the Department of Social Work.	3.90 (.907)	3.91 (.952)	4.25 (.957)	3.70 (.675)	.538	.587
Overall, I am satisfied with the support I have received in the MSW Program at WKU.	4.47 (.695)	4.67 (.476)	4.50 (1.000)	3.50 (.707)	18.299	<.001***
Overall, I am satisfied with my field experience in the MSW Program at WKU.	4.16 (.969)	4.28 (.826)	4.75 (.500)	3.40 (1.350)	4.663	.013*
I had a manageable workload in the MSW Program at WKU.	3.90 (.882)	3.96 (.824)	4.25 (.957)	3.50 (1.080)	1.471	.238
Overall, library access at WKU is adequate.	4.03 (.868)	4.08 (.895)	4.50 (.577)	3.60 (.699)	1.965	.149

The WKU Student Accessibility Resource Center is adequate for my needs.	3.66 (.867)	3.69 (.926)	4.25 (.500)	3.30 (.483)	1.862	.164
The Counseling and Testing Center at WKU is adequate for my needs.	3.62 (.860)	3.65 (.812)	4.67 (.577)	3.20 (9.19)	3.755	.029*
The faculty in the MSW Program at WKU were sufficiently accessible.	4.33 (.790)	4.44 (.769)	5.00 (.000)	3.60 (.516)	6.940	.002**
I am satisfied with the quality of advising I received in the MSW Program at WKU.	4.26 (.922)	4.42 (.846)	4.25 (1.500)	3.50 (.707)	4.567	.014*
I am satisfied with the overall quality of instruction I received in the MSW Program at WKU.	4.16 (.853)	4.37 (.640)	4.25 (.957)	3.10 (.994)	12.876	<.001***
I feel comfortable approaching faculty to collaborate in service/research.	4.39 (.776)	4.52 (.743)	4.50 (.577)	3.70 (.675)	5.344	.007**
I feel prepared to begin advanced level professional practice.	4.26 (.700)	4.38 (.640)	4.50 (.577)	3.60 (.699)	6.248	.003**
I feel prepared to successfully work with multicultural clients in professional practice.	4.42 (.691)	4.50 (.715)	4.50 (.577)	4.00 (.471)	2.291	.110
I feel prepared to apply the NASW Code of Ethics in professional practice.	4.63 (.520)	4.71 (.504)	5.00 (.000)	4.10 (.316)	8.404	.001**
I feel prepared to engage in evidence based research in professional practice.	4.37 (.607)	4.46 (.582)	4.75 (.500)	3.80 (.422)	6.785	.002**
I feel prepared to be a consumer of evidence-based research.	4.40 (.613)	4.52 (.545)	4.75 (.500)	3.70 (.483)	10.676	<.001***
I feel prepared to advocate for the rights of vulnerable populations in professional practice.	4.52 (.620)	4.52 (.652)	5.00 (.000)	4.30 (.483)	1.877	.162

I feel prepared to engage in the political process as a professional social worker.	3.90 (.877)	3.98 (.872)	4.33 (.577)	3.40 (.843)	2.274	.112
I feel prepared for professional practice in a rural setting.	4.55 (.502)	4.60 (.496)	5.00 (.000)	4.20 (.422)	4.260	.019*

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

The results in Table 9 above demonstrate some interesting findings when examining the statistically significant differences across cohorts. There were 17 items where there was a statistically significant difference between cohorts and in each of the 17 items, the Elizabethtown cohort rated each item significantly lower than both the Bowling Green and Owensboro cohorts. It is also important to note that of the 24 items on the Exit Survey, six (6) of those items had a mean rating less than 4.0. Ultimately, these items related to student organizations, the offering of electives, workload, on-campus student services (i.e., Student Accessibility Resource Center and the Counseling and Testing Center), and readiness to be involved in the political process.

Recommendations for 2016-2017

With changes set forth by the CSWE, it is important to continually assess WKU's MSW Program evaluation strategies. As such, there will be several changes coming forth beginning in the Fall 2016. CSWE has mandated that there be two (2) explicit measures for each of the nine (9) competencies of social work education. This assessment has shown some weaknesses with respect to the assessment and evaluation of these competencies with regard to foundation-level knowledge, values, skills, and affective and cognitive processes. Therefore, it is recommended that rubrics be used in each of the core classes for major assignments that will provide the second explicit measure. It is further recommended that rubrics replace the ACAT as a foundation-level measure. Again, with the move to competency-based assessment, there is no way to map questions back to competencies using the ACAT. Personnel who compile results to send back to the program report that data in aggregate form and there is no way of knowing how students' performance maps back to the competencies set forth by the CSWE.

Further, there are also some recommendations based on the results presented in this report. These will be addressed by measure below:

- ACAT

- o As previously mentioned, it is recommended that the MSW program discontinue the use of the ACAT exam due to the difficulty in assessing mastery of competencies set forth by the CSWE.
- o It is important to note, however, that students continue to struggle in the areas of Social and Economic Justice and Populations-at-Risk. It is recommended that MSW faculty review content to ensure that students are being adequately exposed to this content.

- PRE
  - o With respect to content areas, students continue to struggle in the areas of Rural Communities, Research, Diagnosis, and Foundation Policy. Of particular concern is the area of Rural Communities. Given that the MSW program at WKU focuses on rural communities, it is disconcerting that this continues to be a problem area for students. It is recommended that MSW faculty review content in core classes to make sure that a rural focus is emphasized in course content.
  - o With respect to competencies, it is recommended that the PRE exam include a more equal representation of all competencies. For example, Competency 9, "Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities," was underrepresented by only one (1) question in the 2016 PRE administration.

- Field
  - o Due to the 100% achievement of Field benchmarks, it is recommended that the benchmark be increased to 85% rather than 70%. It is important that the MSW program continues to strive for excellence and this is one way that to demonstrate the desire to continuously improve.

- Cultural Awareness Inventory
  - o It is recommended that the Cultural Awareness Inventory be discontinued as a result of it being a self-report measure of cultural competence. Given that the CSWE is moving away from self-report measures as a form of assessment, the efficacy of continuing with this measure is questionable.

- Exit Survey
  - o Based on the results of the Exit Survey, it is recommended that particular attention is given to the online cohort. While the WKU MSW program is moving away from regional cohorts, it is beginning to embark on a new journey in online education. It is imperative that the online cohort receive the same level of instruction and attention as the face-to-face cohort. Thus, it is further recommended that a full-time faculty teach in each of the available time slots so that students have at least one (1) course with a full-time faculty member each semester.
  - o Based on the results of the Exit Survey, it is recommended that the development of new and relevant electives is a focus of the MSW program moving forward.

- o Administratively, it is recommended that the Exit Survey be validated in order to produce more meaningful results. Additionally, it is recommended that the Exit Survey is administered to students at least two (2) years post-graduation in order to determine whether they are currently employed in the field of social work.

These results and aforementioned recommendations will be reviewed during the August 2016 faculty meeting to see if additional (or different) recommendations should be considered.

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