

Concept Paper

Masters in Social Work

College of Health Sciences and Technology

“The Masters in Social Work (MSW) at RIT will be a clinical degree program to produce clinicians trained in innovative technologies and advancements in science to provide client-centered and evidence-based approaches in psychiatric and medical care environments.”

I. Title: Masters in Social Work (MSW)

II. Goals and Justification for the Program

The World Health Organization has stated that it is “time to invest in mental health (WHO, 2003), while Lancet published a paper stating “there is no health without mental health (Prince, 2007).” Mental health and substance use conditions are major contributors to the overall burden of disease across the globe (Kessler et al., 2009). In the United States alone and at the beginning of the current decade, about 45 million people (approximately 1/5 individuals) experienced behavioral health related diagnoses. Substance abuse affected about 22 million people age thirteen or older and was described by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a public health epidemic (SAMHSA, 2011; CDC, 2012).

A recent and extensive analysis funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration found that 77 percent of US counties had a severe shortage of practicing psychiatric professionals. Approximately 1/5 five counties had an unmet need for behavioral health clinicians overall (social workers, psychologists, and family therapists). Rural counties and those with lower per capita incomes had greater shortages than more densely populated counties and those whose residents were more affluent (Thomas et al., 2009).

In a recent survey, 49 percent of clinical directors in agencies specializing in the treatment of behavioral health disorders, especially substance use and/or dual diagnoses, acknowledged the difficulty filling open positions, primarily because of a lack of qualified applicants. Mental health conditions often include clients with trauma, illicit drug use, depression, alcohol use disorders, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorders to name a few. Behavioral health conditions are often linked to physical illnesses, serving as risk factors and often impeding compliance with treatment protocols that extends time to return to health (Ryan et al., 2013).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 27 percent increase in the number of jobs for counselors specializing in substance abuse and behavioral disorders between 2010 and 2018. That projection is based on the assumption that more people will seek treatment

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and that drug and dually diagnosed offenders will increasingly be required to obtain treatment rather than being sentenced to jail (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012, 2013).

Additionally, as pertains specifically to the proposal, the Bureau reports “employment of *social workers* is projected to grow 12 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth will be driven by increased demand for healthcare and social services, but will vary by specialty (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).”

The Masters in Social Work (MSW) program will offer training and education in behavioral health and medical fields, which complements other CHST clinical programs (CHST’s Clinical Psychology Internship Program and CHST’s Physician Assistant’s Program). The program will focus on client-centered approaches and it included integrated psychiatric and medical care.

The proposed program will train students in methods of care that integrate and use the latest technological advancements and evidenced-based interventions across child and adult clients and families with behavioral health treatment needs. Our newly developed ***Pre-Doctoral Level Clinical Psychology Internship Program*** will serve to complement the MSW program based on external partnerships that have already been established that have expressed interest in a multi-disciplinary training approach. Our Internship program has recently received **APPIC membership** and awaiting a site visit from **APA for accreditation**; a path similar to what is proposed for seeking accreditation for the MSW program as well. Based on existing strengths within CHST at RIT, the curricular and training focus will be on the integration of science, technology and application of medical health principles unique to social work practices. Additional emphases will be placed on cross fertilization of knowledge and multidisciplinary clinical training through links with CHST’s PA program, Nutrition Management and Exercise Science programs. This is a strategic advantage over all other programs as *CHST already houses a curriculum for medical training and placements for critical experiential learning* (e.g., P.A.’s, ultrasound, pre-med majors). Moreover, our programs will partner on scholarship pursuits as it pertains to the integration of interactive technologies through multidisciplinary teams of psychologists, social workers, physicians, medical illustrators, students in health informatics, and computer/game designers. Technology assisted tools (e.g., games for behavioral health, smart phone coping skill apps) will be used by students to augment and improve treatment outcomes.

III. Description of the MSW Program Curriculum

Required courses are categorized as either foundation or advanced clinical practice. Students must successfully complete all required foundation level courses prior to enrolling in any advanced course although they may enroll in electives at any time. The core program will follow the standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) which stipulates that students earn 60 credits of graduate study.

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The proposed MSW curriculum includes:

Foundational courses (24 credits)

- Social Work Practice/ Social Work Interventions I - 3 credit(s) and
- Social Work Practice/ Social Work Interventions II - 3 credit(s)
- Social Welfare Policy and Services - 3 credit(s)
- Human Behavior in the Social Environment/Persons in Social Context - 3 credit(s)
- SWK 628 - Human Diversity in Social Contexts - 3 credit(s)
- SWK 662 - Applied Research in Social Work - 3 credit(s)
- SWK 671 - Field Instruction I 3 credit(s) and
- SWK 672 - Field Instruction II 3 credit(s)

Advanced Clinical Practice (36 credits)

This concentration will prepare students to become clinicians who provide in-depth mental health services that utilize evidence-informed interventions with a wide range of populations.

- Field Instruction III - 3 credit(s)
- Field Instruction IV - 3 credit(s)
- Psychopathology - 3 credit(s)
- Interventions with Families/Family Systems Theory - 3 credit(s)
- Advanced Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups - 3 credit(s)
- Social Work Practice in Mental Health - 3 credit(s)
- Mental Health Policy - 3 credit(s)
- Clinical Practice Evaluation - 3 credit(s)
- Alcohol and Other Drugs in Social Work Practice - 3 credit(s)
- Electives (9 credits)

Each social work graduate will have a foundation in the use of current scientific, technologically sound, and evidence-based approaches to ensure student preparation for the emerging integrated health care environment. Courses will go beyond the standard content of counseling, diagnosis, prevention, and intervention, to incorporate additional competencies in telehealth, motivational interviewing, family therapy, addiction, attachment theory, neurobiological influences on psychopathology and intervention, and counseling in integrated care settings.

This integrated and comprehensive curriculum will prepare social work students to be leaders in their field via their training in innovative technologies and advancements in evidenced based models of care poised to obtain jobs across a wide array of medical and behavioral health care settings. Access to medical illustration, therapeutic gaming, and other advanced applications of health care technologies make the College of Health Sciences and Technology the logical host for the MSW program. The strategy of designing select program courses to overlap across multiple disciplines will create efficiencies, cross fertilization of knowledge, and enhance the educational experience for all.

IV. Fit with RIT Academic Portfolio Blueprint Characteristics

Social workers placed in the health care environment of the future will utilize state-of-the-art science and technological approaches directed toward integrated treatment of physical and behavioral health care needs. The Affordable Care Act has catalyzed an emphasis on using technologies, evidenced based science and efficiencies in the delivery of care. The planned delivery of integrated health care training within the College of Health Sciences and Technology creates the ideal environment to bring different disciplines and approaches together on the foundation of RIT's published Academic Portfolio Blueprint ideals. Social work students graduating from this graduate program will be in a position to help individuals understand and address the underlying biological, neurological, cultural, behavioral, and emotional factors, which interact in complex ways. They will have expertise regarding how best to navigate the behavioral and physical health care systems to benefit their clients' health and well-being.

At the local level, CHST has developed strong collaborative partnerships in the community to support clinical practicums, internship placements, clinical research initiatives, and adjunct faculty participation in curriculum delivery. At the local and community level, RIT's CHST has affiliation agreements with the Rochester Regional Health (Pros, Unity, Child/Family Health Care Clinic, E.R.), Hillside Family of Agencies, Monroe County Office of Mental Health, the Socio-Legal Center, Coordinated Care Services Incorporated, the Canandaigua Veterans Administration and associated satellite centers, Monroe County specialty courts (e.g. drug court, veteran's court, mental health court, family court, and human trafficking court). Training our students in the use of integrated, technologically advanced approaches will place graduates at the forefront the new initiatives that will be set forth by the Affordable Care Act (e.g., integration of behavioral health and medical care at one location in a systematic way).

At the national level, RIT has a collaborative relationship with Yale's School of Medicine, Psychiatry Department and the University of Connecticut, Farmington, CT that could offer placements in research and clinical training in a range of settings within behavioral health.

Mental illness and issues of behavioral health present great challenges to public and population health on the global scale. In addition to providing didactic training in these global health issues, efforts are being made to expand existing collaborative research and training relationships with international partners with faculty at King's College in London, England, Glasgow University in Scotland and Melbourne University in Australia. These sites could offer study abroad placements as both clinical rotations and/or research initiatives in behavioral health.

Our college has the foundation necessary to implement the highest quality of education through highly unique and specialized training to ensure quality clinicians, leaders and scholars in the field. Our students will be ambassadors of major change at the local, national and international level.

V. Synergy with Other Programs

Eligible students enrolled in undergraduate programs in psychology, undergraduate social work, the biomedical sciences, criminal justice and other undergraduate programs within and outside of RIT would be well suited to enroll in the Masters in Social Work program at RIT. Great potential exists in collaboration with faculty of the College of Liberal Arts around scholarship initiatives that could benefit both academic units.

The Masters in Social Work curriculum will also be designed in a way that encompasses the substantive content areas of the New York State Department of Education and NYS Office of Professions for Professional Licensure as an LMSW : <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/sw/sect52-30.htm>. This will continue the theme of opening classes up to students from different programs within RIT, which enhances classroom diversity and bolsters, scheduling efficiencies.

We plan to utilize many components of our existing clinical programs (Clinical Psychology Internship Program, PA curriculum and external clinical partnerships/practicum sites as foundation for MSW program (e.g., RRH practicum sites, Hillside Practicum sites, Multi-disciplinary Seminars for MSW students, PA's and Pre-Doctoral Clinical Psychology Interns) that will follow this Concept Paper. This MSW program will also serve as a springboard for the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology & School Psychology (PhD in partnership with COLA).

At the local level, the goals of the Masters in Social Work program will be to further build our collaborative endeavors with our community partners for off-site practicum and internship training sites. Placements currently exist through current Rochester Regional Health System, Veterans Administration, Monroe County Office of Mental Health, The Socio-Legal Center, Hillside Family of Agencies, Volunteers of America and Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI), and their affiliates.

The mission of our newly formed Behavioral Health Sciences Division will be to set ourselves apart from other Universities by integrating the use of innovative technologies (***Telehealth, Virtual Reality, Simulated Environments, Interactive Tools***) and advancements in science to build on scholar and community outreach with its impact on the local, regional, national, even global, scale. To date, our international clinical research collaborators are London, Spain, Scotland, Hong Kong and Brazil. Research grants have been submitted, two grants received (Project Advance w/the U.K.) and preliminary discussions are underway to pave the way for graduate/undergraduate student and internship fellowship exchanges between affiliated universities and clinical sites locally and abroad.

VI. Administrative Structure of the Program

The Program will be administered through ***the College of Health Sciences and Technology (CHST)*** with a dedicated budget and Program Director in support of operations quality oversight. The CHST is comprised of a number of academic programs that stand alone within the organizational design of the College; there is no departmental structure in place at this time although the proposed program will be part of a new School of Behavioral Health. The Program Director would report directly to the School Head

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and Dean of the College of Health Science and Technology, serve as a member of the CHST Administrative Council, and be responsible for recruitment, maintenance and assessment of the program and associated outcomes, oversight of student progress and success, and compliance with budget allocations. Clinical practicum experiences (externships) will be organized with the help of a dedicated clinical coordinator who would secure and oversee clinical training sites and functions of clinical instructors to ensure student learning that would meet accreditation standards. This MSW program would meet statutes of NYS Office of Professions to for Professional Licensure as an LMSW: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/sw/sect52-30.htm>

VII. Enrollment Management Expectations and Sustainment

Based on the unique niche created at RIT (including technological advances) with synergies across the College and its future strategic direction with internal and external strategic partners, the anticipation is that the Program would be able to attract a minimum of 20 full-time (5 part-time) students each year. The accompanying fiscal business model is based on these enrollment estimates and full completion of all requirements by full-time students in 2 years. Initially, courses will be offered on-campus but feasibility of online courses and/or blended model options will be explored.

Links to *accredited CSWE Accredited MSW Programs* in New York State:

- Binghamton University:
<https://www.binghamton.edu/social-work/academics/index.html>
- Nazareth-Brockport Greater Rochester Collaborate MSW Program:
<https://www2.naz.edu/academics/grad/msw-social-work-degree-program/>
- University at Buffalo:
<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/>
- Columbia University:
<http://socialwork.columbia.edu/>

Feedback from the Office of Enrollment Management in response to this concept paper included the following:

“The enrollment goals you have will require aggressive marketing and recruitment efforts as this program would require building awareness and interest in field that is not typically associated with the RIT brand. In addition, there is significant competition in the region. The attached spreadsheet lists examples of local and regional competitors with MSW programs and includes related degree options, focus areas, and tuition costs - most of which are significantly lower than RIT. In addition, many of these competitors offer broader academic portfolios and a range of flexible delivery models. If the MSW is being proposed as part of a strategic direction and collaboration for the College of Health Sciences and RIT it will be important to consider connections and resources you describe will be necessary to drive recruitment for the MSW and other graduate program/s that are part of that strategy. Given the range of options in the region and competitor costs, identifying and securing external resources to provide financial support and reduce costs for students will also be necessary. Leveraging internal resources and efforts, results from the contacts and connections you describe, aggressive marketing efforts centrally

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and in the department, and identifying external resources for tuition and assistantship will be required to achieve your enrollment goal of 15 – 20 students per year”.

The College understands fully the challenges associated with current and projected clinical academic program enrollments, sustainability, and growth. Particularly in areas of behavioral health, significant progress has been made to expand RIT’s reputation and connections through internal and external partnerships to support both student training and faculty scholarship pursuits.

VIII. Impact on Resources

The primary resources needed to start the program will be additional personnel in the form of adjunct and incremental core faculty. The College of Health Sciences and Technology currently offers a number of elective courses in behavioral sciences of interest to students of the Biomedical Sciences program. Three faculty have been hired, are engaged in teaching, and working in areas of teaching and educating about clinical care, scholarship and who carry partial appointments and responsibilities with select organizations outside of RIT (Rochester Regional Health’s Medical and Professional Staff, Monroe County Office of Mental Health, Social Legal Center, Hillside Family of Agencies, the Veterans Administration, etc.). With the development of the MSW program, CHST plans to hire one lecturer to teach 9 MSW classes and two tenure-track faculty members, one to serve as the Program Director as part of CHST’s administration (to carry a teaching load of 2 classes/year), and the other to teach 4 classes per year (hired in year 2 of the program). One additional lecturer will be hired in year four of the program who will be a shared hire between MSW, PA, and a newly proposed PhD in Clinical Psychology. Adjunct faculty (clinical partners at our community sites) will be hired to teach a total of approximately 5 courses/year. CHST will need to hire an Administrative Assistant to assist the Program Director and in coordination of accreditation logistics and to assist in scheduling of practicum experiences for the students. Regarding space needs, the College occupies existing space to handle the program but will continue to investigate potential renovations and incremental space to manage overall program growth. A minimal library budget will be included. In addition to incremental faculty planned for implementation of the proposed program, existing behavioral health faculty can contribute to core offerings and oversight of clinical preparation for program graduates. It is anticipated there will be additional benefit to the undergraduate population in CHST’s biomedical sciences major or in other associated majors from across the campus who want to obtain graduate degrees in behavioral health. This will allow students to package select courses, prepare for graduate work in the MSW with our advising support so as to retain our own students while also recruiting others from across the U.S.

IX. Conclusion

In sum, psychiatric disorders are escalating as are workforce vacancies in positions to treat clients with co-occurring psychiatric and medical conditions. Higher education programs and accrediting bodies must expedite curriculum program development to keep pace with emerging evidence-based practices and models of care using multidisciplinary teams across psychiatric and medical disciplines. The boundaries between the educational silos of the numerous behavioral health and medical disciplines need to become more permeable to address the absence of cross-fertilization of knowledge and skills across clinical provider types, effective team functioning, common standards of care, and

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consensus on core competencies. The College of Health Science and Technology is well positioned to build upon their current clinical and medical programs (Psychology Internship, PA, Nutrition Management, future PhD Clinical Psychology programs) and clinical placements (Rochester Regional Health and Community Partners/Faculty) to successfully launch a MSW program that aligns with this training mission. The MSW graduate will train and work alongside a multi-disciplinary team of clinicians in our community healthcare facilities as an extension of their education and training acquired at CHST's graduate programs in psychiatric and medical training.

References

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Appendix A

This MSW program would meet statutes of NYS Office of Professions to for Professional Licensure as an LMSW: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/sw/sect52-30.htm>

Section 52.30, Social Work

[Effective September 1, 2004]

- a. Programs leading to licensure in licensed master social work. In addition to meeting all applicable provisions of this Part, to be registered as a program recognized as leading to licensure in licensed master social work, which meets the requirements of subdivision (b) of section 74.1 of this Title, the program shall:
 1. be a program in social work leading to a master's degree or its equivalent, which includes at least 60 semester hours, or the equivalent, of graduate study, provided that no more than half of the total semester hours for the program may be advanced standing credit granted for social work study at the baccalaureate level;
 2. contain curricular content, including but not limited to, each of the following content areas:
 - i. social work values and ethics;
 - ii. diversity, social justice, and at-risk populations;
 - iii. human behavior in the social environment;
 - iv. social welfare policy and service delivery systems;
 - v. foundation and advanced social work practice; and
 - vi. social work practice evaluation and research;
 3. include a field practicum of at least 900 clock hours in social work integrated with the curricular content prescribed in paragraph (2) of this subdivision.
- b. Programs leading to licensure in licensed clinical social work. In addition to meeting all applicable provisions of this Part, to be registered as a program recognized as leading to licensure in licensed clinical social work, which meets the requirements of subdivision (c) of section 74.1 of this Title, the program shall:
 1. be a program in social work leading to a master's degree or its equivalent, which includes at least 60 semester hours, or the equivalent, of graduate study, provided that no more than half of the total semester hours for the program may be advanced standing credit granted for social work study at the baccalaureate level;
 2. contain curricular content, including but not limited to, each of the following content areas:
 - i. social work values and ethics;
 - ii. diversity, social justice, and at-risk populations;
 - iii. human behavior in the social environment;
 - iv. social welfare policy and service delivery systems;
 - v. foundation and advanced social work practice; and
 - vi. social work practice evaluation and research;

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3. include a field practicum of at least 900 clock hours in social work integrated with the curricular content prescribed in paragraph (2) of this subdivision; and
4. include at least 12 semester hours or the equivalent of coursework that prepares the individual to practice as a licensed clinical social worker, by providing clinical content which emphasizes the person-in-environment perspective and knowledge and skills in the following:
 - i. diagnosis and assessment in clinical social work practice;
 - ii. clinical social work treatment; and
 - iii. clinical social work practice with general and special populations.