

Minutes of the Social Work Advisory Council Meeting
April 23, 2014
Health Science Business Administration, Room 2005

The meeting was called to session promptly at 2:00pm. Mr. Paul Leavy took official Advisory Council photographs. Dr. Miah welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then stated the purpose of the council. Dr. Miah provided an opportunity for each council member to introduce themselves and share some good news that was occurring in their lives/within their agencies.

Dr. Miah shared some news regarding the department. He began by discussing the upcoming Master of Social Work (MSW) Hooding Ceremony and passed out invitations for the event. Dr. Martha Giddings, VSU MSW Faculty Member, explained the process of the MSW Hooding Ceremony and discussed the award ceremony. Dr. Richard Vodde, VSU MSW Faculty Member, encouraged Field Instructors to attend the Hooding Ceremony. Dr. Holliman, VSU MSW Faculty Member, added that the Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO) would provide very heavy hors d'oeuvres for the event.

Dr. Miah discussed the status of the Title IV-E Grant, indicating that the State of Georgia hopes to once again become a recipient of the grant. He mentioned that if the Title IV-E grant returns, VSU hopes to have ten students on the IV-E Grant. Dr. Miah explained that the IV-E Grant helps in increasing the workforce for the Department of Family and Children Services. He also shared that the department was in the planning stages of a Bachelor Social Work (BSW) program. He then briefly explained the accreditation process for the BSW program.

Future Admissions Strategies were discussed by Ms. Felicia Hilson, Director of Social Work Admissions and Recruiting. The MSW program is maintaining a consistent student enrollment. She also announced that VSU now offers in-state tuition rates for seven counties within the state of Florida. Ms. Hilson indicated that she has changed recruitment approach and now offers MSW Student Information Sessions in key areas across the state of Georgia, providing prospective students with an opportunity to come to learn more about the MSW program. The Web Hybrid program option continues to outnumber the On Campus program option.

Council Member and VSU MSW Alumni, Ms. Amber Friis thought it was a good idea for the department to market the in-state tuition to the Florida counties. Council Member Mr. David Troy shared that he persuades undergraduate students who intern at his agency to consider the MSW degree as an option. Mr. Troy suggested that other council members do the same with undergraduate students who have not declared a graduate major. Mr. Troy went on to say that he was glad that VSU's MSW program was staying on its toes because other web programs were requesting placements within the Valdosta area. Council Member Ms. Takeisha Ray suggested that working to market the city of Valdosta to prospective students may be helpful in increasing on-campus student enrollment. VSU Department Head of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT)/Professor and Council Member Dr. Kate Warner mentioned that the MSW and MFT programs have a very collaborative relationship. She further suggested that the times

that courses were scheduled may impact On-campus student enrollment. Mrs. Friis suggested VSU check out FSU's Social Work Department's marketing program. Mr. Troy stated that individuals have an obligation to let student interns know if they are not performing up to educational standards. Council Member Lisa Hill stated some students have big hearts although they may not be a good fit for the Social Work profession. She went on to suggest that the department utilizes social work professional associations to recruit students, such as Ms. Hilson's participation within the School Social Work Association. Ms. Hill remarked that marketing to professional agencies is essential in recruitment. Council Member and VSU MSW Alumni Sandra Wilcher suggested that the department works with students who do not fit the admission requirements to prevent students from attending another more expensive online institution. Mrs. Cooley suggested that students who are not admitted into the program should follow up with the admissions to seek suggestions for improving their applications. VSU MSW Faculty Dr. Michael Sanger mentioned that the department discussed the possibility of admitting a third cohort, helping to admit more students. Dr. Vodde added that the department would revisit the idea of adding an additional cohort, but initially slowed down the discussion due to all of the transition (moving into the new Health Science and Business Administration Building; hiring of the new Department Head, and the hiring of two new MSW faculty members). Council Member and MSW Alumni Kristy Plant added that a third cohort would be great, especially within the Macon area. Council Member and MSW Alumni Deborah Maine proposed that advisory council members attend admissions recruitment trips to discuss the MSW program with prospective students.

Dr. Diane Holliman discussed the GSWO was very active with the recent campus wide Relay for Life event. She further added that GSWO used the departmental tent which was imprinted with the departmental name and logo. She stated that the tent was provided a great presence at the event. She indicated that GSWO would invite MSW Alumni to attending Relay for Life and other MSW events in the future. Dr. Sanger added that would be great if more MSW alumni and the advisory council remained in touch. Dr. Miah stated that the MSW program needs a Social Work Alumni Association.

Mrs. Friis inquired about what is meant by changing from the Division of Social Work to the Department of Social Work. Dr. Miah explained that this was an organizational decision. He explained that aside from the Division of Social Work, no other divisions existed on campus. Additionally, becoming a department under the College of Education and Human Services allows for additional academic support and faculty collaboration.

Council Member Angela Willers inquired about opportunities for continuing education for social work professionals. Dr. Holliman mentioned that VSU Human Service Programs (Psychology, Marriage, and Family Therapy, and Social Work Departments) offer continuing education programs, such as the one that was offered in last February. Council Member and VSU Psychology Department Head Jackson Rainer announced that a continuing workshop will offer a continuing education program in July. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Field Practicums and future needs were discussed. It was suggested that VSU participates in some sort of field consortiums in this area. Mrs. Debra Maine suggested that VSU partner with Albany State University and Thomas University. It was also suggested that VSU hosts Field Instructor workshops

offering CEUs quarterly. VSU Assistant Field Director, Shameka Cooley mentioned that VSU has pioneered the web hybrid program and it will be great to pioneer the consortiums. Dr. Jackson Rainer shared that this was a dry area for resources, stating that once students graduate, they typically move back to the city. Mrs. Cooley indicated that the Field Office is expected to place 65-70 students all across the state of Georgia during the upcoming academic year. She asked the committee to inform her about VSU MSW alumni so she can contact them to see if they would be interested in serving as field mentors.

Council Member Kimberly Marshall inquired about the process for placing students in agencies where a social worker was not employed. Mrs. Cooley stated that VSU has begun to offer more off-site supervision for placements that don't employ Social Workers. However, she mentioned that problems exist with off-site supervision. Dr. Martha Giddings stated that off-site supervision depended on the student and many variables. Council Member Sandra Wilcher stated that it also depended on the on-site task supervisor.

Mrs. Friis suggested that more creativity was needed to help students complete their practicum hours. She suggested the possibility of complete summer hours/block placements. Mrs. Wilcher suggested that some placements should be offered at night. Mrs. Willers added that block placements can sometimes be very problematic. Dr. Giddings shared that faculty are on ten month contracts which will not provide faculty to supervise students. Dr. Vodde mentioned that the theme of more flexibility demands more person power. Dr. Kate Warner asked if the Advisory Board could present the Dean a memo to discuss these ideas.

Dr. Miah provided an update on the two departmental searches. The Administrative Coordinator position has been offered to an individual and he hopes that the person will be able to start in about 15 days. He shared that Mrs. Shameka Cooley has served as acting Field Director and had done an awesome job. He also stated that the department concluded interviews for the Field Director today. The department hopes to that the Field Director will be able to start on July 1st.

Dr. Miah provided an update on the clinic and shared that VSU has a state of the art clinic. He shared that VSU has an action plan regarding how the Department of Social Work plans to use the clinic. Dr. Vodde stated that the Human Service programs (Social Work, Kinesiology, and Speech Communications) hopes to provide services within the clinic. He further stated that Social Work wants to use the clinic as a practicum setting for social work students. He hopes that the clinic will be able to offer generic social work services to other health service programs and offer dedicated services to certain populations. He pointed out that input and suggestions from the Advisory Committee was needed. Dr. Miah wanted to assure area agencies that VSU's social work department is not infringing on or taking business from other agencies. Dr. Holliman stated the Partnership for Health Clinic is a free clinic for the working poor (aged 18-64) for the residents of Lowndes County. She continued, stating that the partnership also works with MFT's Family Works Clinic. Dr. Holliman shared that students recognized there are a lot of needs, but not a lot of resources or places to see people. Dr. Rainer stated that he would like to work with Social Work in the clinic particularly, with the referral resources. He stated that psychology no

longer has a clinic because the clinic was located on the third floor of an interior building on main campus and parking made it difficult for clients to come to the clinic.

At the end, Dr. Miah once again thanked everyone for their attendance and great ideas. He indicated that he would notify the committee of the next Advisory Board meeting soon. Dr. Miah invited council members to tour the Social Work Suite and the clinic. The meeting was officially adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Felicia Hilson.