BSW Student Advisement

In accordance with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the BSW Department in the School of Social Work has a systematic and periodic review schedule to make certain that all students are advised according to the general education and social work major requirements. Students upon declaring social work as a major are immediately assigned a faculty advisor for the duration of their matriculation in the BSW Program. All social work majors are required to meet with their faculty advisor at least once a semester but more frequent contact is highly recommended. It is the responsibility of the faculty advisor to assist students with the sequential choosing of their courses, as well as acculturate them to the social work profession.

In the BSW Program, advising is a multi-faceted process for assisting students with course selection and registration, orientation to academic and professional expectations, clarifying academic policies and procedures, socialization to the profession, including career planning, and successful completion of the program. Advisors also assist students in obtaining both the university and external resources when needed.

All social work majors are advised by full-time social work faculty members who have masters and/or doctorate degrees in social work. New faculty members are oriented to the advising process and requirements and are given the BSW Department Advising Manual for reference. Fellow faculty who are familiar with the advising process and program requirements are available to assist new faculty until the faculty member feels confident in his/her ability to handle advising. To further enhance the student’s advising experience, faculty advisors are very knowledgeable about the accreditation standards for baccalaureate programs through the work of the School of Social Work’s Curriculum Committee. Additionally, BSW faculty advisors have the opportunity through faculty meetings to meet regularly to discuss program issues, propose changes, and discuss students’ matriculation concerns.

To emphasize our collective perspective on advising, students receive personal, academic and career advisement individually, in groups, and in the classroom, informally and formally. Faculty advisors review students’ academic progress each semester during the advising and registration process. During the advisement process, students are encouraged to evaluate their potential for
success in the program and in the profession. Students in the BSW Program spend valued time with faculty members during their office hours gaining needed support and direction. Social Work faculty, in accordance with University Policy, must be available to students at least eight (8) hours per week excluding class time. These hours are clearly posted near/on the faculty member’s office door, in the BSW Department’s main office, and on the bulletin boards located outside of the BSW Department.

Faculty advisors review students’ academic progress each semester during the advising and registration process. During the advisement process, students are encouraged to evaluate their potential for success in the program and in the profession. The Professional Self-Assessment Rubric that students complete when submitting their application for admission into the program is used as part of the advising process. The student and the advisor are able to continually review the student’s progress and process on a continuum of topics related to the student’s professional development. Throughout their undergraduate experience in the BSW Department, students are encouraged to be involved in volunteerism, the student social work organization and participation in workshops, seminars, and conferences as means for ongoing assessment of their aptitude and motivation for a career in social work.

Students are assigned a faculty advisor by the BSW Program Director. The responsibilities of the faculty advisor are to:

A. Familiarize students with academic requirements, students rights, and pertinent University policies and procedures;
B. Make sure students are completing general education requirements that constitute the liberal arts base for the social work major;
C. Assure that students are completing the social work major and support courses in the appropriate sequence;
D. Detect and assist students with academic problems in a timely manner;
E. Assist students in dealing with personal problems which interfere with academic and/or field performance;
F. To make appropriate referrals for supportive academic services, including counseling if necessary;
G. Inform students of professional responsibilities and requirements;
H. Handle matters of student misconduct; and
I. Help students develop career goals.

There are times when the BSW Department Faculty will refer students to other advisement and placement centers in the University. This may occur when additional services are needed or when there may be issues of a dual relationship. These services can include the following:

A. Academic Success Center
B. Counseling Center
C. Financial Aid
D. Disability Support Services

During certain times in the academic year such as registration, late registration, and the beginning of each academic term, the faculty will implement a system of extended office hours in addition to an on-call schedule to accommodate the students’ schedules, and to keep students from having to wait long periods of time to see their advisor.

During monthly BSW Faculty meetings, a standard agenda item includes student reviews in which faculty can discuss concerns about the academic and/or professional development of their advisee or student in their courses. Where sufficient concerns surface, students are referred to the Program Director who in turn meets with the student to discuss the concerns. In addition to the advisor, the Program Director regularly meets with the student for a specified amount of time to provide additional support and monitoring as needed.

By working closely with the student, the advisor emphasizes the prevention and early detection of academic problems, personal problems, problems of misconduct, etc., and responds immediately to these issues before they lead to probationary status or pose serious threat of dismissal from the program and/or University.

During the beginning of the Fall and Spring semester, the BSW Department has a mandatory meeting for all social work and potential social work majors. These orientations are conducted with all faculty members of the School of Social Work present and afford the opportunity for students to meet with the faculty in a forum in which all components of the program are
explained. Additionally, the students are divided into small groups with the BSW faculty members facilitating further opportunity for dialogue about the program.

Advising policies and procedures are included in the Social Work Student Handbook which can be accessed online via the BSW Department website on the Morgan State University webpage (www.Morgan.edu/School_of_Social_Work.html). These procedures are reviewed during the required student orientation classes for social work majors (ORSW 101), the annual orientations for Social Work students, and during ongoing advising and registration each semester.