



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

## BSW Program Bulletin 2023-2024



### **Transformative Social Work: Profound. Generative. Relational**

<https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork>

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*This bulletin is intended primarily for use by  
students in the BSW Program. Statements  
contained in this bulletin as subject to  
change with notice.*

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## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATION**

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Department Chair	Jan Fook, PhD, FAcSS
MSW Program Coordinator	Kelly Melekis, PhD
BSW Program Coordinator	Danielle Jatlow, MSW
Field Education Coordinator	Jean Sienkewicz, MSW
Department Business Manager	Kate Ball Clem, BA
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### **FULL-TIME FACULTY**

Simon Chan, Associate Professor of Social Work

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Christine Marie Velez, Assistant Professor of Social Work

## **Department of Social Work Description and History**

The Department of Social Work at the University of Vermont (UVM) offers two nationally accredited social work degrees, a Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) and a Master of Social Work (M.S.W.). Social work education at UVM is intended to prepare students for the multiple role-demands and organizationally based settings characteristic of social work in Vermont and northern New England. While the program prepares students for social work practice that is locally informed, it also is mindful of national and global trends and influences. These include issues of human rights, social justice, human diversity, and the globalization of economic, cultural, and political spheres of life. Therefore, emphases are placed on preparing students to become reflective, conscientious, lifelong learners and professionals whose practice will reflect humane and empowering knowledge, skills, and values.

Social work education at UVM began with the establishment of the B.S.W. Program in 1974. The B.S.W. Program has been located in several academic units at UVM, most recently in the former Department of Special Education. In 1989, when the University began the M.S.W. Program, the Department of Social Work was formed as an academic unit in the College of Education and Social Services (CESS). The first ten years of the Department's life entailed maintaining and enhancing the quality of the B.S.W. Program while developing the M.S.W. Program. One aspect of this was to earn reaffirmation for the B.S.W. Program and initial accreditation for the M.S.W. Program. This was achieved in 1993 from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Reaffirmation for the M.S.W. program was achieved in 1998. Both programs have consistently earned the title of "accredited" programs since that time.

### **BSW Program Mission Statement**

The BSW Program through its teaching, scholarship, and public service prepares undergraduate students for entry level generalist social work practice. With a particular emphasis on social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, students and faculty work together to consider and practice from a deeply relational and strengths-oriented methodology. In order to consider long-lasting change at all levels, students and faculty explore and question methods and policies that have long been taken for granted as "truth" and offer opposing referents that consider issues of social difference, power, oppression, and human rights. Students are prepared through coursework and field experiences to see their practice in the context of working within the most intimate (individual) relationships to the most far-reaching (global) relationships and with all levels in between.

### **BSW Program Goals**

The program goals are identified below and are carried out by our faculty, field instructors, and our work with community partners.

1. Ensure the undergraduate social work community includes and draws upon the experiences of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and field instructors as we carry out our joint commitment to social work education and the creation of a department culture that is welcoming, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating.
2. Facilitate teaching and learning experiences with students across multiple subject areas and fields of practice but always in the context of strengths.
3. Provide teaching and learning experiences with and for students to understand the historical social change and social justice mission of our profession by focusing their work with people who are vulnerable and for whom issues of justice have impacted their lived experiences.
4. Prepare students for generalist social work practice with people who are devalued, marginalized, or underserved.

5. Foster awareness of social work from a global perspective and its implications for practice with people from diverse backgrounds.
6. Teach and support students to contextualize social work theory, policy, research, and practice in relation to change at all levels of generalist practice.
7. Work together to guide students through their development as self-reflective practitioners.
8. Create environments where students can examine practices, policies, and activities through a critical social construction lens and make practice decisions from their participation in that process.
9. Integrate and bring into focus the uniqueness of the human needs of our Vermont communities and the social work practice opportunities within those communities.

### **BSW Program Bulletin Purpose**

The University of Vermont Undergraduate Catalogue serves as the primary resource for all students. The course requirements and a sample program of study for social work can be found in that catalogue <https://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/educationandsocialservices/socialwork/> or by visiting the Department of Social Work's website. <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork> What follows here, in the BSW Program Bulletin, is information more specific to the Social Work major.

### **Department Leadership**

#### ***Department Chairperson***

The Department of Social Work is headed by a Chairperson. In social work education, chairpersons of departments are known as "Chairs." The Chair provides leadership in formulating with the faculty the Programs' philosophical orientation, curriculum, and policies. The Chair supervises and works collegially with the social work faculty and staff to conduct the affairs of the Department and to contribute to their professional development and success. The Chair also carries the fiscal responsibility for the Department of Social Work that includes the development and management of department resources. In ensuring the viability of the Department, the Chair works collaboratively with other members of the College, University, state, and social work profession, locally, nationally, and internationally. For example, our Chair meets regularly with the Dean of the College of Education and Social Services and the other department chairpersons in the College. The Chair attends meetings of the National Association of Deans and Chairs of social work education programs in the United States. The Chair has frequent communication with key administrators in human service agencies in Vermont, and participates in professional associations, including the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education.

#### ***Program and Field Education Coordinators***

The coordinators in the Department of Social Work are the B.S.W. Program Coordinator, the M.S.W. Program Coordinator, and the Field Education Coordinator. Coordinators are full-time faculty members who, in addition to their regular faculty responsibilities, have significant administrative duties. The B.S.W. Program and M.S.W. Program Coordinators are responsible for most administrative aspects of their respective programs. The Field Education Coordinator is responsible for the administration of the field education component of each program's curriculum.

The coordinators work closely with the Chair, the faculty, staff, and students to ensure timely and integrated planning, communicating, and completion of projects. They have no supervisory functions with the full-time faculty, and they share supervisory responsibilities for part-time faculty with the Department Chair. Each coordinator works with a standing faculty committee.

### ***Academic Advisors***

As part of their teaching responsibilities, all full-time faculty members serve as advisors to a number of undergraduate and graduate students. In social work education, advisors have two areas of responsibility, professional advisement, and academic advisement. All students are assigned an advisor when they enter the B.S.W. Program. During the first semester, advisors and students (advisees) plan together for students' individual course of study in the Program according to the students' interests and the Program, College, and University requirements. While Advisors will make recommendations and outline policies, the ultimate decision and responsibility for program-completion rests with the student. Advisors meet at least once a semester with their advisees to check with them on their progress and to plan for the next semester. They are available at other times during the semester as needed. They also must be involved as soon as possible when serious concerns about one of their advisees are raised.

### ***Department Staff***

The Department has two support staff members who provide assistance in carrying out the work of the Department. The professional support staff is comprised of the following positions: An Office Manager for the Department, and an academic support person for the Field, BSW and MSW. All support staff members can answer students' general questions. However, they do not provide academic or professional advisement.

### **Policies and Processes**

The policies and processes that guide our collaborative work together as a whole UVM Community can be found on the UVM Institutional Policy Website by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/>

However, there remain some specific department/program policies and processes that we want to have available for students. Keep in mind that students are responsible for knowing and following the policies found here.

### **Department Governance**

The governance of the Department is carried out according to policies and procedures of the University, the colleges, the profession of social work, and the Department itself. Academic and social work traditions and practices, and state and federal laws shape these policies and procedures. The Chair of the Department holds the institutionally and professionally sanctioned decision-making authority for matters regarding department personnel, finances, external relations, and department operating policies. The Chair may delegate some decisions to coordinators and to other members of the faculty, such as student requests for exceptions, the hiring, or deployment of part-time instructors, and scheduling courses.

The program committees develop the objectives, policies and procedures for the content, delivery and faculty. Department and program level decisions are passed on to individual faculty members who implement them through their course designs, teaching and advising.

The instructors of more than one section of a course usually work collaboratively in shaping the requirements and methods of that course to achieve general congruence across sections and with the overall curriculum. In the case of courses taught by part-time faculty, a full-time faculty member supports the instructor in integrating the Department's philosophy of social work and the faculty's expectations for the course. If a course has only one section, or only part-time faculty instructors, the relevant coordinator

provides this support and oversight. If it has more than one section, and only one part-time instructor, the full-time instructor teaching the course provides these functions.

Since February 2003, full-time faculty are represented by a union, United Academics (UA). UA and the University of Vermont have entered into contracts that cover working conditions, including terms of appointment, for faculty members.

### **Electronic Mail and BSW Listserv**

E-mail is the faculty's and staff's primary mode of written communication with students. All students, faculty members, and staff members are provided with an e-mail account and address when they begin as a student or employee of the University. Faculty and staff within the Department of Social Work will use student UVM email accounts for all communication. At times, when wanting to reach all undergraduates at the same time, the BSW Student Listserv will be used. Therefore, students are responsible for checking this email daily. If students would like to merge their UVM account with a private account, there are instructions on the UVM website to help students meet that end.

### **Admissions Processes and Benchmarks**

There are two avenues that are available for students to declare social work as their major. The first is to declare upon admission to the University and the second is to transfer into social work after enrollment. If students decide to transfer into social work from another major, they have two benchmarks they must meet:

1. They must have a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or better
2. They must contact the Students Services Office within the College of Education and Social Service for an initial review of course sequencing
3. They must complete an application

Once transfer students apply and are accepted to the Undergraduate Social Work Program, they will be connected with a faculty member who will serve as their academic advisor. Together students will chart their course throughout their work toward the Bachelor's of Science in Social Work degree.

### **Transfer of Credits**

Any student who wishes to transfer in credit from another university must go through UVM's Transfer Affairs Office. A student's transcript is analyzed and depending on course grade (must have earned a C or better in previous institution) and course content, a determination will be made in terms of whether or not the course fulfills a specific requirement or simply course credit.

Any student who wishes to have social work credits transfer in and meet the program requirements of the BSW program at UVM will need to submit the course syllabus for review. At a minimum, the course in question must have been taken at an accredited social work program. The BSW Program Coordinator, in conjunction with appropriate BSW Program Committee members, review syllabi for content so as to determine if and for what program requirements will be met. It is important to note that, social work credits from another institution may transfer into UVM for credit only – meaning, the student will get credit for those courses but they may not meet the BSW Program requirements.

## **Previous Work and Life Experience**

The faculty views life experience and previous work experience as valuable and helpful to prospective students. Nevertheless, the BSW Program **does not waive** its academic requirements, including field requirements, for these experiences.

## **Mutual Agreements in Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and learning about social work can be a complex process since social work itself is a profession which aspires to *assist people within their social context*. This involves knowing about the *whole person* (physically, mentally, emotionally and socially) and their *whole context* (materially, socially, structurally and politically), and how the two domains interact. Moreover, we try to work with people where they are at, while minimizing our preconceptions. This involves being able to appreciate and listen to very different perspectives, so as to help make personal and social changes more effectively. *In a transformative approach to social work, the relational as well as the political aspects of situations intertwine in their mutual importance. Therefore, how we teach about all the above is as important as the content itself.* Below we aim to outline what the *mutual agreements between instructors and students should be in order to enable teaching and learning to occur in-line with these principles.*

There are common learning and teaching principles which fit best with this approach. These are:

- Learning best occurs if learners are actively engaged with the learning process and take mutual responsibility for their own learning
- Learning is more than simply the taking in of new knowledge (as implied by a “banking” model of education) – knowledge is also actively co-created by learners in interaction with others
- It is important to recognize the hidden or implicit curriculum (fundamental but implicit messages received by learners, whether or not explicitly intended by instructors) – the learning environment is therefore significant. This can include anything from the behavior modelled by instructors; how interactions are facilitated; to what is included in curricula (or not); how exercises are included or structured; how readings and assignments are integrated.
- Different types of learning happen in many different contexts (formal classroom learning as opposed to experiences outside the classroom e.g. other interactions with faculty, colleagues)

There are therefore several sets of mutual responsibilities which follow on from these principles:

### ***For Instructors***

- Awareness of messages being communicated by the hidden curriculum and trying to ensure that these are consistent with the explicit curriculum
- Creating opportunities for students’ active engagement with learning and co-creation of knowledge
- Modelling the values and principles upon which the programs and courses are based
- Creating opportunities for different types of learning (both within and outside the classroom)
- Designing a syllabus/curriculum which clearly addresses explicit goals
- Ensuring that classroom pedagogy is congruent with course goals

### ***For Students***

- Active participation in all learning activities (an “engaged presence” and attendance – see attendance policy below)
- Taking a role in actively creating their own learning and knowledge and being aware of how they are doing so
- Undertaking reading and assignments as set in the course syllabus

- Co-responsibility (with classmates and instructors) to create an inclusive learning environment
- Feedback to instructors if there is lack of clarity regarding course goals or expectations
- Participation in dialogue about mutual responsibilities and expectations

### **Attendance**

While satisfactory completion of all written work is expected and necessary, it is only one aspect of the learning which is required to be a capable social work practitioner. Classroom interactions and the relational skills and learning developed through these, are also integral factors in becoming an effective social worker. A grade on one paper does not necessarily indicate how and whether such skills have been learnt. For this, what we have termed an “engaged presence” is necessary. This active participation in classroom discussion, and dialogue with colleagues, forms a crucial aspect of social learning, which is a more naturalistic way in which we as individuals, learn from our environment and experiences. For this reason, we require class attendance (or its on-line equivalent). “Engaged presence” is also a model for professional social work practice, in which we advance the generative thinking, listening, understanding, speaking, and learning that can only come from a relationally-developed group environment.

For this reason, the focus will be on whether or not students have attended class and the learning they have derived from this, rather than whether or not there are good reasons for non-attendance. This means that there will not be “make up” work assigned for non-attendance. However, how individual instructors choose to implement an attendance policy will be at their discretion. Please see specific examples below and individual course syllabi for details.

Examples:

- attendance may be assigned a particular percentage of the final grade
- learning from attendance (and participation) may be assessed by an assignment or an aspect required in an assignment (e.g. a weekly reflection on what was learnt from readings/class discussion each week)

### **Conduct for Social Workers**

Once students begin as Social Work majors, they join a group of people who treat one another with respect and dignity. Conduct for Social Workers can be formally defined as the standard behaviors and tenets of practice that is commonly expected of social workers as prescribed by the profession and the state. These standard behaviors and tenets apply to Social Work education within the Social Work Department at the University of Vermont, as well.

As one of the central sources of defining the ethical tenets of U.S. social work, the NASW Code of Ethics is presented to each new student during the Foundations of Social Work Class (SWSS 002). During their participation in the Undergraduate Social Work Program, students are also provided with other guides for conduct including ethical decision-making frameworks, international human rights declarations and conventions, and readings about particular aspects, case examples, and practice implications of the philosophy, values, and ethical obligations of the profession. Among the values that are central to social work ethics are: respect for others; personal integrity; a commitment to human rights, social, economic, racial, and environmental justice; an openness to growth and change; and an appreciation of human diversity. Students are held accountable for learning the standards of ethical practice in social work, and for identifying with them as professionals. The following Conduct for Social Workers policy clarifies the expectations of students and faculty in the Undergraduate Social Work Program. Adherence to this policy is considered an essential aspect of students’ academic performance in the Program.



## ***Conduct for Social Workers Policy***

It is the policy of the Undergraduate Social Work Program that students and faculty are to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, the values of the social work profession and the Department of Social Work. Further, it is expected that they will demonstrate this conduct in all settings (formal and informal) related to their membership in the Department and the profession, including the University, the field agency, and the community. Likewise, it is expected that they will apply this standard in all interactions (formal and informal) with staff, students, faculty, and others with whom they come into contact through their involvement in the B.S.W. Program.

This policy is established as an academic standard of professional social work education and as such is treated in the Undergraduate Social Work Program as a criterion for evaluating academic and field practicum performance. Rather than separating conduct from academic performance, students should understand that the Undergraduate Social Work Program takes its cues from related case law and social work scholarship that indicate that these are one and the same.

## ***Guiding Principles for Deepening our Social Work Identity***

Additionally, students work together in their practice classes (SWSS 3630, 4680, 4690, 4710, and 4720) to deepen their identities as social workers. The principles outlined below give this guidance.

1. Social Workers consider how our overall behavior impacts others - clients, service users, co-workers, learning colleagues, team members, the entire staff of organizations, and members of the broader community.
  - Consider attendance and punctuality for classes, meetings and appointments; oral, written, and electronic communication that is clear and respectful; and adherence to confidentiality.
2. Social Workers prioritize looking at and knowing ourselves deeply enough that our work with others is not encumbered by personal agendas (consciously or unconsciously).
  - Consider personal strengths, challenges, growth areas, and “blind spots”; how to navigate the knowledge that comes from self-awareness; and how to engage supervisory discussions that draw on this awareness/knowledge.
3. Social Workers practice by consciously considering how social difference and intersectionality impacts the lived experience of others.
  - Consider what we know, what we don’t know, and what we “don’t know we don’t know”; how we understand the dynamics of diverse and multiple identities in relation to power, privilege, oppression, and discrimination.
4. Social Workers engage in collaborative relationships
  - Consider relationships with clients, service-users, co-workers, learning colleagues, team members, the entire staff of our organizations, and broader community members.
5. Social Workers remain open to respectfully and effectively giving and receiving feedback
  - Consider curiosity about multiple/differing viewpoints & experiences; having no predetermined agendas or assumptions; and having a desire to create an understanding that is of benefit to the whole of the situation.
6. Social Workers engage in and assess ethical practice
  - Consider understanding the value of ethical practice and who it impacts; having familiarity and “knowing” of the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical principles/guidance nationally and internationally; how to identify ethical dilemmas and how to thoughtfully and intentionally move through decision-making because of this process.
7. Social Workers develop a familiarity with available resources that inform social work practice and have a willingness and ability to access them when needed

- Consider publications, policies (at all levels of practice), the BSW Program Bulletin, the UVM Catalogue, relationships with consultants, etc.

### **Grading and Evaluation**

Individual course instructors are responsible for creating a course syllabus that outlines the terms and conditions for evaluation and grading. While the university has a grading standard (<https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/grades>), how student's work is graded is the responsibility of the instructor. In the undergraduate social work program, minimum grade requirements exist for:

**Social Work General Education Requirements.** With these courses, students must earn a C- or better. If a student does not earn a C- or higher, as long as they earn a D- they will get credit for the course *as an elective* rather than the specific general education requirement, specifically. Working with the student's academic advisor is recommended. For example, if a student earns a D in an Economics course (below a C- for the gen ed requirement, but not lower than a D-), the Advisor can help the student select a different Economics course to take in order to meet the requirement.

**Social Work Professional Requirements.** With these courses, students must complete all required Social Work courses with no more than two grades below a B and none of these grades can be below a C. If a student does not meet this requirement, they could be asked to take this course again or they may be disenrolled from the social work major. Please see "Student/Faculty Support Meetings below for details about the process.

### **Student/Faculty Support Meetings**

These meetings are convened by the BSW Program Coordinator at the request of a faculty member (course instructor or advisor) for the purpose of providing guidance and support to students toward the successful completion of the Social Work major. The group gathered may consist of any of the following: the referring faculty member, the student, the academic advisor, the Field Ed Coordinator, and the BSW Program Director.

Referrals are generally made in instances such as:

- Faculty member(s) is concerned about a student and wants to consult with other faculty teaching/advising the student. In this case the first meeting may not include the student.
- Student is not meeting the benchmarks for minimum grade requirements and their progression through the curriculum may be impacted.
- Student is not meeting internship requirements and is not responding to a previously agreed upon plan to begin meeting those requirements.
- Faculty member has observed academic challenges that may indicate that academic supports outside of the classroom could be helpful.
- Student requests additional supports.

The meeting outcomes and resources for students are recorded in a letter to the student and distributed to all attendees.

### **Independent Studies**

Students may earn credit for independent work as long as the following criteria are met.

1. They submit an independent study proposal to a faculty member with whom they want to complete the work. The proposal includes at minimum:
  - Subject area and personal rationale for wanting to do the work
  - Number of credits
  - Grading of either A - F or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
  - Projected work plan for completion across the semester
2. The selected faculty member agrees to be the instructor and to offer feedback throughout the semester and evaluation at the end of the semester.

## **Appeals and Grievances**

Students have a right to appeal grades and departmental decisions made by faculty in matters that concern them. Students also have the right to file a grievance regarding the substance of a policy or practice within the Department. Faculty and students are, *however*, encouraged to settle differences they may have with one another directly before engaging in formal approaches to resolving these differences. Care is taken to ensure that this effort is not used as a way to stall or undermine the student's rights. If any student feels or believes that it would be inadvisable to attempt resolution on their own without a formal process, they can certainly begin the formal process immediately.

### ***Appeals***

Appeals at the Department level must have merit relating to the application of a policy and/or must seek to introduce new and relevant information into the decision process that was not considered previously. Typically, appeals pertain to the following matters: (a) admission decisions (i.e., the decision not to admit an applicant), (b) decisions resulting from application of University, College, or Department policies (i.e., a professor's failure to use the grading criteria that were specified in a course syllabus at the beginning of a semester, or a decision that conflicts with written policy), and (c) denial of requests for an exception to policies or practices. Please keep in mind that grades are not subject to appeal unless the application of the evaluation procedure or process is deemed to be prejudicial, capricious, or erroneous. The grade appeal process is university wide and can be found here:

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

When a student decides to initiate an appeal, it must be received from the student *in writing* within five business days of the decision that is being appealed. If the nature of the decision requires that it be appealed sooner than this, the student puts the appeal in writing via electronic mail and adds a phone call to the appropriate faculty member to notify him/her of the decision to appeal. The written appeal is to clearly indicate: (a) the decision(s) being appealed, (b) the grounds on which the appeal is being made, and (c) the specific outcome being sought. Along with this, the student is asked to include any new information that, in his/her judgment, was not considered at the time the decision, or last denial, was made.

Unless compelling reasons prevent this, the appeal is directed first to the individual or committee whose decision is being appealed (i.e., a classroom instructor, a field instructor, a faculty field liaison, a coordinator, or the B.S.W. Program Committee). The individual who receives the appeal must respond to it in a timely manner, adequate to considering relevant information and to implementing any actions that are decided upon. During an academic year, appeals are considered within fourteen days of their receipt. Occasionally, a longer period may be taken due to circumstances (i.e., institutional recesses or key decision makers' prior scheduling commitments, such as traveling out of state).

If the appeal involves a faculty member on the B.S.W. Program Committee, that person shall recuse him/herself from the decision-making process.

The merit of the appeal is considered using the criteria outlined above. Once an appeal is reviewed and a judgement rendered, the resulting decision is conveyed in writing to the student and copied to the academic advisor as well as the individual or committee named in the appeal.

In letters of acceptance, students are informed of the actions which will be taken, by whom, within what time-frame, and any other pertinent information. In letters of denial, students are advised of the next avenue of appeal that may be taken.

Appeals denied by a classroom instructor or faculty advisor are taken to the B.S.W. Program Coordinator and then to the B.S.W. Program Committee. Those denied by the Field Education Coordinator are taken to the Field Education Committee. Students may appeal a coordinator's decision to the Chair of the Department. If the Chair denies the appeal, the student may opt to direct it to the Student Affairs Committee working on behalf of the Dean of the College of Education and Social Services. University and Program policies hold sway in decisions regarding a student's appeal. Hearings of appeals by institutional members outside the Department (i.e., the Student Affairs Committee) are typically restricted to a review of whether the Department or Program followed its own established practices.

### ***Grievances***

Grievances involve taking issue with the substance of a policy or a practice. They fall into three categories: 1) violations of due process, 2) decisions that have no rational basis or that represent an abuse of authority or discretion, and 3) violations of fundamental rights. In accordance with University policy, students have formal procedures for the appeal and resolution of grievances, beginning with their own department.

The procedure for filing a grievance is the same as that outlined for filing an appeal (see above). A student may appeal the B.S.W. Program Coordinator's decision by petitioning the Chair/Director in writing. If the issue still cannot be resolved, the student can present the grievance in writing to the CESS Student Affairs Committee who will act on behalf of the Dean of the College of Education and Social Services.

### **Requests for Exceptions**

Students interested in requesting an exception to program policies or procedures (i.e. taking courses out of sequence) are to consult with their advisors. Initially, the advisor's role in this process is to assist the student to clarify the nature of and reason for the request. As part of this discussion, the advisor ensures that the student understands the policies and procedures in question and their rationale. If the student decides to make a formal request, the advisor explains the process for doing so and the responsibilities of the faculty members who will be involved (including the advisor).

If a student decides to pursue a **request for an exception**, the advisor's responsibilities involve carefully and respectfully assisting the student to follow the designated process while simultaneously representing and interpreting the integrity of the B.S.W. Program and the social work profession. The advisor acts as a conduit and provider of information, a facilitative participant in the consideration of the request for both the student and the faculty, and a recorder of the process and the results. These responsibilities ensure that all parties are heard and that their perspectives and choices are understood. Ultimately, they are intended to contribute to the student's development as an ethical, effective social worker who can work within policies and toward change of policies.

The process for formally pursuing an exception involves the student writing a letter detailing the following: the formal request, the rationale, and the implications for his/her completion of the Program to the appropriate coordinator (Undergraduate Program Coordinator or Field Education Coordinator). This written request must be received at least **six weeks prior to registration** for enrollment in the semester for which the request would go into effect, with exceptions for rare emergency situations. The advisor helps the student determine which coordinator should receive the request. Upon receipt of the written copy of the request, a copy is filed in the student's advisement folder.

The coordinator weighs the individual needs and preferences of the student with curricular coherence and the integrity of the Program. The coordinator may choose to consult further with the student, the advisor, and the student's classroom instructors or other faculty members with information specific to the request. The coordinator may decide independently or in consultation with the B.S.W. Program Committee or Department Chair. Decisions are communicated to the student in writing within four weeks of the coordinator receiving the written request. Students who propose to complete pre-requisites for senior year in between completing the field readiness review process and the start of fall term must show proof of having met the requirements before they can begin their field assignments in the fall.

### **Request for Change in Academic Advisor**

If a student would like to request a change in advisor assignments, the student should speak to their current advisor first. Once this discussion occurs, the student submits a letter to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator formalizing the request. The Coordinator considers the rationale for the request and will decide on a case-by-case basis, according to the policies of UVM, the Department, and the profession. The Coordinator may consult the advisor, advisee, or other faculty members for additional information. If a preference exists regarding the assignment of a particular faculty member, it should be indicated in the letter of request. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator takes this preference into account, but is not obligated to grant it due to the multiple considerations involved in advising assignments (i.e., workload distribution across the faculty, the University's mutual agreement process, and the circumstances surrounding the request).

### **Program Renewal Process**

The undergraduate program is organized around a core group of faculty, who identify as the BSW Program Committee. Each year the faculty considers two primary documents to inform the renewal of the both the implicit and explicit curriculum. The first is the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes as it relates to the Core Competencies set forth by our accrediting body, The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The second is the student Program Evaluation related to the student-experience.

The data from these two instruments are prepared by our College Accreditation Specialist and the BSW Program Committee reviews the data individually and together. The Committee then discusses future goals as a result of the information learned.