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Author(s): Pamela Colorado

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION
IN NATIVE SOCIAL WORK
AT THE BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK LEVEL

A report submitted to Dr. Ray Thomlison, Dean,
Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary

by

Dr. Pam Colorado, Coordinator
Native Studies Development Project

November 24, 1987

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1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The University of Calgary Native Options Program is committed to the development of scholarly and academic excellence in Native social welfare. To this end our definition of Native social work includes:

- the education of Native and non-Native students who wish to work with a Native population.
- the integration or infusion of Native content into the generic social work courses.

Neither the Native population nor the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Welfare want diluted course content or reduced requirements for a Native options track. Instead, Native course content, methods and field instruction will be subsumed under the generic course numbers. The goal and objectives of the Native Options Program will be to produce successfully synthesized, biculturally functioning social workers (Swenson).

2. TOWARD A NATIVE OPTIONS

The University of Calgary is committed to establishing a Native Options Program. This commitment stems from six forces:

- Native bands and people are a significant population in Alberta and have critical human service needs. The Faculty of Social Welfare is charged with the provincial mandate to provide social work education which would begin to address these needs;
- There is no mechanism or process for eliciting or integrating Native knowledge into social work theory or practice;
- Nearly ten years of fragmental intradivisional efforts have not produced the coherent, unified program hoped for;
- The Collins report of 1986 recommended a Native concentration for the three Divisions, but was not funded beyond the two-year developmental phase;
- Without additional or outside funding, the Faculty of Social Welfare has now hired and obligated one Native M.S.W. full-time sessional and one Native Ph.D. (one day per week) to begin meeting the needs of the Native community and to spearhead the drive for a Native Options Program;

- Historically, only a few Native students have been admitted to the program. Those who are admitted are unduly burdened with the lack of culture specific curriculum and the need to assume total responsibility for re-interpreting course content into a Native context. Moreover, the transition back into the Native world rests solely on the shoulders of our graduates.

3. NATIVE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS, DESIGN ISSUES

The struggle to articulate and implement a Native Options Program is not unique to the University of Calgary. The first decade of such efforts has produced a number of concerns. Dunbar-Ortiz, Ph.D., Sioux, catalogues these issues:

- There are few Indian scholars;
- Native social work programs remain unstable due to a lack of qualified Indian faculty to develop academically viable curricula and research;
- The absence of Ph.D.'s, publications and research mean that programs flounder in instability. Indian faculty remain temporary, part-time and are eventually phased out in retention, promotion, and tenure procedures of the University;
- Indian students are especially sensitive to the historical process of attempted acculturation --- the educational system;
- Native studies are essential for educating the non-Native majority and for the Nation building process of tribes;
- The University is not an appropriate vehicle to learn one's cultural values. Instead a profession is to be gained. Mastery does not mean acceptance of Non-Indian values. But the ability to analyze and assess problems and issues and date within an historical and larger socio-economic context requires substantial reading, research, writing, discussion and the acquired ability to assimilate and analyze information;
- Funding and counseling should be based on the realities of Indian and non-Indian relationships, not on university realities;
- Federal and foundation funding should be supplemental;
- Indians should be encouraged to pursue substantial education;
- Specialized programs in different universities should complement each other, not overlap; Ortiz punctuates her list of concerns with this advice:

A sense of mission, despite limitations, could work miracles in transformation of Indian high education from a mechanical mass production to excellence.

This proposal follows close on the heels of Ortiz. The document that follows is a blueprint for developing a Native social work program with a mission. That mission is the creation of a program which will address and draw from the interface (relationship) between Natives and non-Natives; to create opportunities for the two cultures to cooperate, collaborate and communicate.

4. THE CONCEPT

The Ortiz analysis points to a developmental problem in Native social work efforts. This is, programs either attempt to mass produce "Native" social workers or to teach culture within the university. As Ortiz notes, both approaches are conceptually flawed and fundamentally confounded.

The University is not the appropriate locus of cultural education; such teaching requires a tribal context. Moreover, it is the right and responsibility of First Nations to provide such education. On the other hand, avoiding cultural issues adhering to the mono-cultural, European tradition also presents problems.

Reliance upon a monocultural tradition within a multicultural arena constitutes an essentially transparent form of intellectual domination, achievable only within the context of parallel forms of domination....Churchill

The Native Options Project will learn from and move beyond this developmental conundrum. Merely establishing the Project will address one critical problem - the recognition of the multicultural basis of social work and the destruction of the deadly myth of one truth in social work theory. Deloria, distinguished Sioux scholar, notes:

One of the most painful experiences for American Indian students is to come into conflict with the teachings of science which purport to explain phenomena already explained by tribal knowledge and tradition. The assumption of the western educational system is that the information dispensed by universities is always correct and the beliefs or teachings of the tribe are always wrong...

Considering the present state of things, it is important for scholars...to begin to help us break the ice of ignorance and neglect which has been thrust upon our traditions for nearly half a millennium. Without the voices of respected white scholars, there is little chance we can get sufficient attention from the scientific establishment to plead our own case. But we should remember...(that this is)a call for each of us to enter into the exchange of knowledge...(and we, Native Americans are called) to offer our knowledge to the larger benefit of our species...

Churchill offers one final piece of incentive for a biculturally-focused grounded Native Options:

By pooling knowledge, resources and effort in a broad forum such as interdisciplinary studies, perhaps we can jointly seek to expand our knowledge of the world...the signposts point to a reconciliation of the two approaches. Western science must reintegrate human emotions and intuitions into its interpretation of phenomena; Eastern peoples must confront the physical world and the effects of technology. We shall understand as these traditionally opposing views seek a unity, the world of historical experiences is far more mysterious and eventful than we had previously expected. Such an achievement would be one from which all humanity would benefit...

5. HOW DO WE DEVELOP A NATIVE OPTIONS?

The Native Options Project must be seen as an ongoing transcultural process. The components or mechanisms for initiating the process include:

- an integrated curriculum
- a Native Advisory Committee
- a Native Options Track, consisting of optional courses which have been tailored towards Native social welfare issues.

6. NATIVE SOCIAL WORK COMPONENT

The Native Social Work Program will be an integral part of the existing B.S.W. programme, offered at the University of Calgary. The B.S.W. program will integrate "Native content" to specific required courses and also offer students a concentration of courses that are critical to working with Native people. As a result, all students will be offered critical components of the N.S.W. programme specific to their choice in the B.S.W. degree programme.

The Native social work component will provide appropriate prerequisite and field of practice courses in conjunction with the existing required methods/practicum courses of the B.S.W. programme. A Native Advisory Committee will assist in the development and operation of N.S.W. through prayer, teaching and advice.

The following are core courses required by all students enrolled in the B.S.W. programme; included are students pursuing the Native concentration.

- SOWK 311 Human Development: Childhood and Adolescence
- SOWK 315 Communication and Social Work Interaction
- * SOWK 325 Ideology and Social Welfare
- * SOWK 341 Social Work: Its Social Science Foundations
- SOWK 411 Human Development: Adulthood
- SOWK 423 Canadian Social Policy
- SOWK 432 Practicum I
- SOWK 434 Methods I
- SOWK 435 Groups in Social Work Practice
- SOWK 441 The Scientific Base of Social Work Practice
- SOWK 461 Social Welfare Administration
- SOWK 532 Practicum II
- SOWK 534 Methods II

Those marked with an asterisk will integrate the Native component to the course content. Thus, these courses will be made relevant to the Native situation and clientele. This can be accomplished by individual instructors who have had background to the Native situation, thus applying theory and concept to the Native situation (See Appendix 1). For example, the Canadian Social Policy course should include policy directly affecting Native people.

The following core courses will be developed specifically for the Native concentration. Native Science is the basis of knowledge and practice; therefore, a course equivalent to SOWK 441 is critical to the programme. Practice must also be made available in either Native communities or in agencies with a large Native client population.

- N.S.W. 432 Practicum I
- N.S.W. 434 Methods II
- N.S.W. 441 Native Scientific Base of Social Work Practice

The Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary will decide whether N.S.W.

~~441 will remain as a core course and students may be exempt for another core~~
 course, or students with the Native concentration are expected to take one extra
 core course.

The Native Social Work component will include the above core courses plus five
 social work options. These courses are pertinent to the field of Native studies and
 practice.

SOWK 551.01 Intergroup Relations (Native Canadians)
 SOWK 551.02 Alcohol and Drug Abuse
 SOWK 551.05 Child Welfare
 SOWK 555.09 Community Issues
 SOWK 555.15 Integrative Approaches

The above courses with the core course will make up the Native Social Work
 component for the B.S.W. programme.

The following courses will be options for the students and may be made relevant
 to the specific situation to Native people.

SOWK 551.10 Social Work and Corrections
 SOWK 555.07 Child Sexual Abuse
 SOWK 591 Directed Reading
 SOWK 595 Conference Course

6.1. Native Advisory Committee

A Native Advisory Committee be established with one-third of the committee
 being elders. The elders will be able to provide guidance through prayer, teach
 tribal tradition and give advice on tribal policy and law. Other Committee
 members will be represented from the various distinct cultural communities among
 Native people. This committee will advise the Faculty on all aspects of the
 N.S.W. programme, including curriculum, recruitment, admissions, appeals, policy
 and planning. It is recommended that the Native Advisory Committee be a sub-
 committee of the Undergraduate Committee. This Committee will also assist
 Native Communities with joint research projects.

6.1.2. Native Studies

There are courses in other university programs such as Native American Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Psychology and Anthropology which teach Native American history, culture and contributions. Where these courses exist, the Native social work component must utilize them in the two year prerequisite courses of the B.S.W. degree programme. Native organization such as the Indian Association of Alberta, Metis Society of Alberta, Native Counselling of Alberta, and Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education must be involved in the developing of courses and research for viable solutions and programmes for the "myriad" of social problems facing their constituents.

The Native Social Work component is integrated into the core stream of the B.S.W. degree programme, because it is not sufficient to separate "Native content" to only those who choose Native studies, but is for those who work in the field of Social Welfare. (Recommended from Report to the Attorney General, Dec. 1984, by Assistant Chief Judge W. White, Provincial Court of Alberta).

6.1.3. Field Placements

Social work programs must have a full and direct involvement with Native communities. The practica for all students enrolled in the N.S.W. will be involved in both the non-Native and Native fields of work placements. It is critical for the students to access both practica and to integrate and synthesize their theory and methods in their respective practica. Where there isn't a Native Community such as in an urban setting, agencies with large target populations that are Native may be the only suitable practica placements.

These practica placements are not only valuable learning experiences, but provide excellent opportunities for developing social work practicum placements in agencies that serve Native people. This can be done by demonstrating to agencies that professional Native people have the ability to perform at the same levels as professional social workers. Secondly, these agencies are a means of developing contacts and job placements for social work graduates.

6.1.4. Native Options Faculty

Native Social Work Programmes will have both Native and non-Native instructors. Non-Native instructors will be selected on the basis of their experiences and commitment to Native issues. Further these faculty will serve in the critical role of mentor for students in the Native Options component. Native instructors and elders must demonstrate a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills of Native culture. This is essential if we are to develop sensitivity to and an understanding of Native culture.

Faculty staff will include a Native Coordinator and two Native faculty members, sessional instructors, one counsellor and one clerical support. It is recommended that existing Non-Native Social Work faculty members who can be recognized as specialists in the field of Native Studies can teach Native Social Work courses specific to their specialization.

6.1.5. Position Descriptions

The Coordinator will coordinate all activities of the Native Social Work Programme, including consultation with the university and First Nations' communities and Native agencies, development of the curriculum, and coordinate meetings to ensure relevance in the Native concentration area.

The counsellor/tutor position will advise, support and recruit Native students and will also liaise with other faculty members, departments and practicum agencies.

Full-time professors will have full tenured positions with the Faculty and carry regular course load and research initiatives as it may take 5 - 10 years to develop a pool of Native Ph.D.'s. The full-time position may be entered at the M.S.W. level. Part-time sessional instructors with at least an M.S.W. will teach many of the courses in the Native Social Work Programme.

The core components of the Native Social Work Programme must be an integral part of the university budget. Provincial and federal governments special grants should be used to provide the support costs for development, remedial and support services that may not otherwise be available to the university.

~~6.1.6. Recruitment of Native Students and Support Services~~

Recruitment for Native students and their success depends largely upon the Native Social Work Programme. Active Native student recruitment must be extended to schools on reservations, Metis settlements, universities, colleges, Native agencies and other Native communities, to both public and separate off-reserve schools and to public welfare agencies.

The Native Social Work components needed to develop support services for Native students which include:

- Financial security should be guaranteed for Native students;
- Opportunities for individual and small group counselling and discussions. Native students, Native faculty and other qualified persons would be involved;
- Socializing activities for staff and students;
- Activities to enhance self-image;
- Extensive tutorial assistance and remedial courses as indicated;
- Special training in the use of libraries, writing papers, research, etc.; and,
- Provision of Native-related library materials.

The Native Students' Services at the University of Calgary, the Office of the Advisor on Native Affairs at the University of Alberta, and the Native American Studies Department at the University of Lethbridge successfully provide many of these services. The Native support services should be fully supported and further developed in close consultation with those programmes already established.

Funds required for these special services need to be negotiated with provincial and federal governments and foundations.

6.1.7. Admissions Criteria

The B.S.W. degree is often thought of as a four year social work programme when instead it is a two year programme completed after two years of general arts courses or after completion of a two year college Social Services diploma.

University undergraduate students planning to enter the B.S.W. degree are normally required to complete 20 university level semester courses (two years) chosen from a broad list of options. Once completed, students are eligible for admission to the B.S.W. programme, which is comprised of 20 social work semester courses (two years). Consideration will be given to N.S.W. students who speak a Native language or have taken Native Studies in these two years.

Graduates of an Alberta Community College two-year Social Services programme will receive, on admission, up to ten unassigned social work semester credits; and, in addition, credit for up to ten non-social work semester courses will be awarded on a course-for-course basis as indicated in The Provincial Transfer Guide.

Successful completion of 20 university level semester courses or a two-year college Social Services diploma does not mean automatic entry into the B.S.W. programme. Enrolment limits have been established on social work courses in relation to the number of students who can be accommodated in practicum settings. Admission decisions are based on academic standing and the extent of relevant work, volunteer and general life experience.

Appropriate methods must be developed for assessing the academic qualifications of prospective Native students whose background and grade point averages might not accurately reflect their potential. These appropriate methods can be determined with the advice of the Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that giving a higher weight to life experience compared to grade point average need to be discussed.

6.1.8. Programme Networking

Programmes for Native social work students must be coordinated at all post-secondary levels to ensure that there is continuity in opportunities for Native people. Linkages between both the college and university level programmes should offer Native students a "career-ladder" of opportunities since an individual may choose to enter the work force at either level.

Post-secondary levels must facilitate and support social work education. The community college here takes leadership in this role. It is felt that a two-year college social service diploma may initially be more attractive to many Native students than a four year university B.S.W. programme. All efforts should be made to enhance the credit recognition and transferability for these students. A word of caution is that many persons who may successfully complete Social Services diploma programmes at community colleges and then go onto very meaningful and successful careers in social services are, for whatever reason,

not able to successfully complete a university level professional programme, i.e., not all college graduates are adequately prepared or ready for university level study.

The following mechanisms and processes can be initiated to enhance the networking programme:

- Better communication of the opportunities available to Native students who are interested in accessing the post-secondary system. Students should be able to enter the system at various levels according to their educational background and proficiency in basic academic skills.
- More comprehensive articulation between programmes and post-secondary institutions must be initiated to ensure credit transferability or recognition, thus facilitating student educational mobility, culminating in a degree if so desired.
- Intensified communication and cooperative links to be established between the post-secondary institutions and employers of social work graduates, with the intent of permitting students to leave the post-secondary system at various levels and seek employment, and yet ensuring that improved in-service training opportunities are made available for skill upgrading.

- To ensure programme networking, there must be regular meetings with representatives of all the post-secondary education systems in Alberta to discuss the above programme networking issues. In the last year, this has occurred with representatives of the community colleges and universities in Alberta. Further networking meetings are planned.

6.1.9. Family and Community Involvement

Families must be encouraged to support their children in the education process. It has been observed that Native students from so-called "leadership families" continue further up the educational ladder than the vast majority of Native students. It seems that education and role-modelling are more actively supported by these leadership families.

Similar to the need for family support, it is very important that the Native community, including elders, friends and relatives support students' efforts to obtain an education. Individual tribes and groups must be given the responsibility and opportunity to provide input into educational programmes for Native students. The Native community, students, and successful graduates need to be involved in the education process, not only for student support but also to keep the curriculum relevant to Native needs. It is stressed that Native elders need to be involved in any Native Social Work education concentration developed in this faculty. Elder involvement may include representation on the Native Advisory Committee, possibly an Elder in residence and guest lectures.

7. SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIVE SOCIAL WORK COMPONENT TO THE B.S.W. DEGREE PROGRAMME

7.1.1. Programme Content

- Native Curriculum developed;
- Increased opportunities for Native Studies;
- Increased opportunities for Native students in the field of Social Welfare.

7.1.2. Staff

- Full-time Coordinator
- Two full-time instructors/professors
- Counsellor/tutor

7.1.3. Support

- Internal support services
- Tutorial service
- Social activities

7.1.4. Networking (U. of C. N.S.W.)

- Between post-secondary levels
- Among Native communities/agencies
- Among Non-Native communities/agencies

8. APPENDIX 1

Enclosed is a letter from Dr. Nutter who so graciously went through the course content to identify areas for Native content. This is the type of consultation and collaboration that is envisioned with the Faculty members once the proposal has been passed by Faculty Council.

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