

Graduates of Master of Social Work Program Will Be Eligible for Provisional License

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JONESBORO -- Arkansas State University has received outstanding news from the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board in response to a request from the university.

Sandra Brown, chair, notified the university that the Licensing Board has agreed to allow ASU's May 2011 graduates from the master of social work (MSW) program to apply and be considered for a one-year provisional license.

Once the program achieves full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), individuals who pass the master's level licensing exam will be eligible to receive the full license.

"The immediate response of the Social Work Licensing Board to ASU's request for consideration of provisional licensure for the May 2011 Master's in Social Work graduates was impressive," according to Dr. Susan Hanrahan, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions.

"The board members' actions give our students the opportunity to practice social work in Arkansas and not have to relocate to another state to begin their practice. This is very good news, not just for the graduates but also for the agencies who are seeking licensed master's social workers in a workforce environment where significant shortages exist," she added.

Arkansas State University's master of social work (MSW) program has been a candidate for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 2008. Thus far, the program has met all benchmarks successfully in the four-step accreditation process and is on track to achieve accreditation in the fall of 2012.

The decision on accreditation initially was expected in June 2011. However, CSWE informed the university in fall 2010 that the timeline had changed to a June 2012 review date.

State law provides that only graduates of an accredited master of social work program may sit for the exam, which is a required step for licensed masters social workers in Arkansas.

The university announced Jan. 27 that it had set a high priority on finding ways to assist the students who are nearly finished with the program. The provisional license alternative was an important first step. ASU will be visiting with CSWE to seek consideration of a summer 2011 date to have the MSW program evaluated for accreditation rather than waiting until June 2012.

"Clearly, this would be a highly desirable outcome for the students, ASU, and the State of Arkansas," Dr. Hanrahan also said.

Graduates of the bachelor of social work (BSE) program are not affected by the recent developments. The BSW program has been accredited continuously since 1978 and received a reaffirmation of reaccreditation in June 2010. The BSW program is currently accredited until June 2018.

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