

Nov. 21, 2011

## ASU - Jonesboro: ASU's master of social work program receives accreditation through October 2015

The Commission on Accreditation (COA) has granted Arkansas State University's master of social work (MSW) program, which has been a candidate for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), initial accreditation from the academic year of 2008-09 to October 2015.

At its recent 2011 October meeting, the COA reviewed the Benchmark IV Document and Self Study, the Commissioner's Benchmark IV Review Brief and Accreditation Review Brief and ASU's program response regarding the application for the master of social work program which is housed in the College of Nursing and Health Professions (CNHP). A letter written by Dr. James P. Adams, chair of the Commission on Accreditation, that ASU's program achieved that status, notified ASU interim chancellor Dr. Dan Howard.

"We are extremely pleased that Arkansas State University's master of social work program achieved initial accreditation and we recognize and celebrate the outcome of the hard and dedicated work of the faculty and administrators who made this a reality," said Dr. Howard. "The university believes deeply in the benefits of going through the process of preparing for accreditation and appreciates the additional value that specialized accreditation provides to students who graduate from accredited programs such as the MSW program and to those who employ them."

In January 2011, ASU's MSW program had successfully met all benchmarks in the four-step accreditation process and was on track to achieve accreditation in the fall semester of 2011. However, while examining the accreditation guidelines more closely and through additional consultation with CSWE, the university discovered that the accreditation was actually on schedule to be granted in the fall of 2012.

The change in schedule became problematic for students who had expected to graduate from an accredited program in May 2011, which would make them eligible for state Licensed Master Social Worker examination. State law provides that only graduates of an accredited master of social work program may sit for the exam, which is administered by the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board.

"This is wonderful news for the students and supports all of the extraordinary work and effort put forth by Dr. Loretta Brewer, interim chair, and Dr. Dick Freer, MSW director," said Dr. Susan Hanrahan, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. "Dr. Glen Jones (interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost) and I are particularly grateful to the Arkansas Licensing Board and the Council on Social Work Education who worked with us on this difficult issue."

"I am delighted with this outcome and extend my deepest appreciation to the inaugural class of MSW graduates and their employers for their steadfast belief in our faculty and administrative team as we worked diligently to secure this vital accreditation from COA," commented Dr. Jones.

Procedures regarding the process of Reaffirmation may be found on the CSWE website at <http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Reaffirmation.aspx>.

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