NAME OF COURSE: The Safety of Minors on College and University Campuses: A Social Justice Challenge, Part II

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This mini-course offers an interdisciplinary approach to explore how universities and states are responding to gaps in the safety net for minors engaged in college and university sponsored or affiliated activities. Faith-based parallel challenges will be presented. Historical and inter-disciplinary comparative perspectives will be explored, and current university initiatives designed to increase minor safety will be presented.

Based on lessons learned and as a summary to the mini-course, implications for research and training on university campus will be proposed for any campus personnel engaged in university-sponsored or affiliated activities involving minors. Implications for policies, procedures and practices designed to assure the safety of minors engaged in on-campus or University affiliated activities will be explored including the compatibility of legal protection for both institutions and victims.

Students will learn about ways to advocate for change, ethical professional challenges, skills for critical analysis, interdisciplinary and institutional responsibilities to address minor safety and their compatibility. Students will identify evidence-based practices to promote safety on campus and will be actively involved in training design, development and planned evaluation based on lessons learned through session presentations and assigned readings.

In terms of core competencies and associated skills, students will be able to:
- Analyze, formulate and advocate for changes in social policies to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services
- Apply social work values and ethical principles to guide professional practice
- Apply critical thinking within the context of professional social work practice
- Practice without discrimination, with attention to power, and with respect for diversity and intersectional differences
- Promote visions of social and economic justice that advance human rights
- Respond to contexts that shape practice and knowledge

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Through learning about minor safety on campus, students will be able to:
(1) Describe the scope of the problem in terms of incidents and prevalence rates from parallel institutions or organizations (e.g., faith-based).
(2) Describe compatibility challenges between professional and institutional responses to breaches in minor safety on campus
(3) Identify ways to strengthen current policies, procedures and practices designed to assure minor safety
(4) Identify issues relevant to diversity and social justice for promoting and training about minor safety with college and university personnel.
(5) Identify critical components in the design, development and evaluation of a training program targeting college and university personnel to promote and protect minor safety on campus.

REQUIREMENT FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT
Students must attend all five seminars. Students are also expected complete a reflection paper at the end of the term, which will be suitable for an ePortfolio. The reflection paper will demonstrate knowledge and skills acquired from the seminar sessions, how these will impact their careers, and lessons learned for addressing minor safety. Particular attention should be focused on micro and macro issues, commonalities across contexts where minor safety is an issue, and recommendations for better protections for minors on college and university campuses.

SIGNIFICANCE
Social work has been a driving force in shaping policies, procedures and service provisions aimed at protecting children in the US. The growth in interest on campuses throughout the country to engage children in a wide range of activities has led to increased opportunity for interdisciplinary contact between adults and minors in many different contexts. Unfortunately, an increasing number of cases have come to light on college and university campuses documenting similar patterns including failure to take abuse allegations seriously, privileging the situation of the accused over that of minors, concealing allegations, delaying the reporting of allegations to appropriate authorities, and failing, on the part of responsible parties, to acknowledge wrong-doing or errors in responding.

For several decades federal legislation and state child protection systems have mandated the reporting of familial child maltreatment that becomes known to health care professionals, school personnel (pre-school – 12), medical, mental health and social service providers. Federal legislation and state child protection systems have not generally mandated reporting by university and college faculty, students and staff. Moreover, there are virtually no child protection systems that mandate the reporting of non-familial child maltreatment. Typically, law enforcement handles these cases while reports by professionals and the public are voluntary.

This seminar series explores current gaps and limitations in assuring the safety of minors, drawing attention to the inter-disciplinary responsibility to promote minor safety and appropriately respond when breaches occur. Implications for policy, procedures and practices and training are expected to address the identified challenges to minor safety on campus.