

Introduction

Throughout the five-year implementation of the DEI 1.0 Strategic Plan, the SSW demonstrated its commitment to reimagining the ways in which diversity, equity and inclusion modalities were practiced, taught and integrated into the institutional and cultural fabric of the school. This document provides a brief but detailed overview of some of the main deliverables and outcomes outlined in the DEI 1.0 Strategic Plan.

Primary DEI Goals of SSW Units

Faculty Affairs:

- Increase the diversity of faculty from underrepresented groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, diverse sexual identities and gender expressions.
- Ensure consistent support for career development of all junior faculty.
- Improve upon hiring and promotion practices to attract, retain, reward and inspire LEO and Governing Faculty to continually hone their ability to facilitate transformational learning via inclusive teaching methods.
- Faculty will acquire greater skill and ability to participate, lead and respond to and facilitate transformational learning via inclusive teaching methods.
- Faculty will engage in more purposeful and organized engagement related to populations that are currently, and have historically, been shut off from opportunities.
- SSW will make public an informed social work discourse related to current events and social justice matters deemed important and part of our responsibility as a school of social work.
- Increase cultural humility regarding community knowledge and involvement and increase faculty involvement in community activities/partnerships with social work-related organizations.

Administration and Operations:

- Increase the diversity of staff from underrepresented groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, diverse sexual identities and gender expressions.
- Ensure consistency for supportive career development and professionally rewarding work experiences.
- Staff will have expanded opportunities to participate and engage in career development activities in general and particularly in discussions about Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS) to understand the application and implications of PODS within the school and the curriculum.

Educational Programs:

- Increase the diversity of students from underrepresented groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, diverse sexual identities and gender expressions.
- Increase the diversity of LEO faculty from underrepresented groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, diverse sexual identities and gender expressions.
- Improve upon hiring and promotion practices (working with HR/Academic HR and/or OGC) to attract, retain, reward and inspire LEO and governing faculty to continually hone their ability to facilitate transformational learning via inclusive teaching methods.
- Increase DEI focus of offices dealing with outside communities such as the Program Evaluation Group, Office of Global Activities, Continuing Education Program, Community Action and Social Change undergraduate minor and Office of Field Education.
- Students will develop greater skills and abilities to participate, lead and respond in transformational conversations.
- Increase cultural humility regarding community knowledge and involvement and increase faculty involvement in community activities/partnerships and with social work-related organizations.

Research:

- Increase DEI focus of offices dealing with outside communities such as the Program Evaluation Group, Office of Global Activities, Continuing Education Program, Community Action and Social Change undergraduate minor and Office of Field Education.
- Identify ways by which more financial integration can occur with the external community. There is a need to identify funding streams and aim toward sustainability.

Contributions to the SSW DEI Strategic Plan

1. Development and presentation of the SSW Anti-Racism Statement
<https://ssw.umich.edu/assets/anti-racism-statement/>
 - a. The purpose of the particular design and format of the Anti-Racism Statement was in part to:
 - i. Create the sensibility of the statement as an enduring expression of commitment by the School of Social Work;
 - ii. Provide a time frame for periodic revisions and new ideas to the statement by the School of Social Work's signature stakeholders, including current active and engaged faculty, staff and students;

- iii. Provide an “inward-facing forum” for discussion, dialogue and ideas for forward-thinking revision to this statement.
 - b. A future goal of this statement is to identify a location for an outward-facing SSW Anti-Racism Statement to the general external communities (e.g. potential students, family members and alumni), which will also allow viewers access to leaving questions, comments and perspectives concerning the statement in a public comment section below.
- 2. Willingness to help lead and facilitate discussions and solutions toward difficult issues facing the SSW in the immediate future
 - a. The impacts of structural financial challenges to higher education to the goals of DEI, including:
 - i. Decades-long substantial decreases in state aid to higher education, with no end in sight;
 - ii. Decades-long increases in tuition as a financial resource to educational units (e.g. SSW);
 - iii. Increasing expenses (e.g., salaries, equipment, building maintenance) essential to SSW operations;
 - iv. Generating competitive salaries and compensation for new faculty hires (both junior and senior) and retention/recruitment of established senior faculty.
 - b. The challenges faced by broadly diverse student populations currently attending or considering attending the SSW, including:
 - i. Substantial financial assistance for tuition, with a preference for grants over loans;
 - ii. Supportive financial assistance for housing, medical needs and transportation.
- 3. The usefulness of the Senior Management Team has been an essential component to the facilitation of DEI-based principles, thinking and activity since its creation in 2021 and should be a topic of review and assessment — and continued for at least another round of DEI initiatives (2023-2028).

Programs, interventions and Strategies Implemented in DEI 1.0

Anti-Racism Fund:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/initiatives/antiracism-budget-advisory-group>

“In 2020, the School of Social Work created an Anti-Racism Fund in response to concerns brought forth by student groups including the Association of Black Social Work Students,

Black Radical Healing Pathways, and the broader student body to address concerns related to institutional racism within our school of social work. This student-led Anti-Racism Fund invites MSW and PhD students to submit individual or student group proposals for anti-racism projects with a specific focus on confronting and combatting: Anti-Blackness; Racism against Indigenous Peoples; and White Supremacy. If SSW and/or the Anti-Racism Budget Advisory Group (AR-BAC) is uncertain of the legality/permissibility of any proposals, SSW and/or AR-BAC will check with OGC before making the award.”

Undoing Racism:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/diversity-equity-inclusion/initiatives/undoing-racism>

“Undoing Racism is a community collective of students, staff, and faculty in the School of Social Work dedicated to fighting white supremacy at the individual, school, and structural levels. This workgroup was established in 2019 after students, staff, and faculty took part in the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond Undoing Racism[®] workshops. Since then, the Undoing Racism workgroup has been working to implement the People’s Institute anti-racist community organizing model — recognizing that community organizing within our school is critical to move toward an anti-racist and anti-oppressive program to bring along all members of the community.”

Common Roots:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/diversity-equity-inclusion/initiatives/common-roots>

“Common Roots is a committee consisting of representatives from the SSW’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the LatinX Social Work Coalition, Black Radical Healing Pathways, Association of Black Social Workers, the Office of Student Services, the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition and other SSW students. Through collaboration, community support and affirmation, Common Roots hopes to build healing spaces for and to nurture the flourishing and empowerment of communities of color including faculty, staff and students at the School of Social Work, through programming that is open to all who share its mission.”

Community Conversations:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/student-life/community-conversations>

“Communication is a key social work skill. Sometimes written communication is great, while other times, verbal communication is more effective. At the SSW, anyone can call us together for a Community Conversation — about any topic impacting students that they think lends itself best to verbal communication. We take these conversations seriously, so thought has been given to the format and process.”

PRAXIS:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/diversity-equity-inclusion/initiatives/praxis>

“The Promoting Action for Intersectional Social Justice (PRAXIS) committee seeks to act for

justice by articulating definitions of social justice in micro, mezzo and macro contexts by developing and recommending goals for the School of Social Work. PRAXIS furthers justice and prevents and ameliorates injustice by identifying and applying emerging knowledge related to relevant justice goals and developing strategies that illuminate and alter/eliminate assumptions and practices that contribute to different mechanisms of oppression.”

Faculty Allies for Diversity Committee:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/diversity-equity-inclusion/initiatives/faculty-allies-for-diversity>

“The Faculty Allies for Diversity Committee (FADC) is a group of faculty members who work within the University of Michigan School of Social Work in collaboration with Rackham’s diversity initiatives. Over the last decade, FADC has actively engaged with doctoral students, including those from under-represented groups, to provide informational, instrumental and emotional support. FADC believes diversity matters and there is a need for equitable and inclusive diversity. FADC plays an important leadership role in the School of Social Work and, as a collective, moves forward the broader university mission around promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Curricular innovation: MSW Program Pathways

<https://ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/pathways>

The School's view of pathways is based on the idea that rapidly changing policies, emerging evidence-based practices, and dramatic changes in service delivery patterns and structures require a graduate to be well-grounded in the methodologies of change as well as the contexts of practice. The curriculum builds on a generalist essential curriculum and provides students the choice of eight specialized pathways.

Specialized pathways focus on theories and interventions related to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and/or society. Pathways also provide an opportunity to apply this knowledge, focusing on selected contexts and domains of practice, with particular attention given to specific policies, procedures and practices. Each pathway serves to broaden and deepen foundation knowledge and skills, and enhance the specialized skills needed for students to know the hows and whys of their interventions.

Diversified Recruitment and Matriculation Strategies

The items below this description serve as examples of the ways in which the School of Social Work responded to the need for a differentiated and accessible approach to the recruitment of MSW candidates from broadly diverse backgrounds. The creation of two 4 + 1 MSW programs on the UM-Ann Arbor and UM-Dearborn campuses allow undergraduate students pursuing degrees in Sociology and Health & Human Services, respectively, the opportunity to take foundation-level social work courses during their final years of college, so that they may begin taking the advanced coursework upon starting the MSW program. Similarly, the MasterTrack Online MSW allows students and/or professionals to take the foundation-level courses in social work online, and to take advanced courses upon beginning the MSW program. Given that the cost of higher education continues to rise throughout the country, these programs provide students an opportunity to attain graduate degrees at a lower economic cost, compared to students who have not completed the foundation courses/attained BSWs ahead of time. Lastly, the creation of the Online MSW program offers students from near and far to obtain a graduate degree while also working full-time/attending to their individual life circumstances.

- 4+1 Masters Program, UM-Dearborn: <https://ssw.umich.edu/programs/undergraduate-social-work-options/dearborn>
- 4+1 Masters Program, UM-Ann Arbor: <https://ssw.umich.edu/programs/undergraduate-social-work-options/sociology-and-social-work>
- MasterTrack Online MSW: <https://ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/online/mastertrack>
- Online MSW: <https://ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/online>

Highlights from 2021-2022:

1. The Undoing Racism Working Group successfully facilitated community conversations throughout the 2021-2022 academic year. The conversations centered on theories and social work practices related to anti-racism as well as the impact of political ideology on social work practice. Participants included faculty, staff and students.
2. COVID-19 emergency funds continued to be disbursed to students in need.
3. DEI co-hosted the Admitted Black Student Virtual Event, which was open to the general SSW student community, in the winter of 2022.
4. Funding support and structures established through the Anti-Racism Budget Advisory Group. We worked with the dean and the development department (through December 2021) to plan and create a sustained funding model.
5. The Anti-Racism Budget Advisory Group continued to fund awards for organizational and individual student projects.
6. DEI was a critical developer, supporter and facilitator of what eventually became known as the SSW Senior Management Team (SMT) in mid-March 2020. In dealing with COVID and social crises and their impacts upon SSW, the SMT generated an unprecedented and essential level of transparency among senior management, faculty,

staff and students. This continues to the current time, and we hope it continues throughout the life of DEI 2.0.

Observations and Next Steps

During this past year we made steady progress on all of our objectives and many of our action items. The Senior Management Team was essential in facilitating this progress. We continue to make excellent progress on action steps with a clear office or position responsible for developing new pathways to the MSW program, increasing diversity among our part- and full-time faculty, and changing course evaluation questions. We continue to be challenged with action items that require changes in budget or structures and are under longer-term development. Examples include analyzing our current budget and policies for MSW student financial aid to move towards a more needs-based approach and increasing staff and faculty development opportunities. These more challenging structural changes will require ongoing attention and support in the coming years. The school looks forward to the challenges.

We appreciate the support, shared work, and leadership of former dean Lynn Videka, former interim dean Joseph Himle. We also look forward to continued leadership, shared work and support of current dean, Beth Angell.