

Electronic Connection: First U.S. Social Work Distance Ed Course Catalog Announced

Contributed by Marshall L. Smith, PhD

The Technology & Distance Education Committee of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD), the University of Texas at San Antonio School of Social Work, and the University of Hawai'i at Manoa School of Social Work have announced the creation of the first U.S. Social Work Distance Education Course Catalog. The catalog lists accredited social work courses that are currently offered via distance education. Any CSWE-accredited social work program/school/department or Ph.D. program in social work or social welfare may submit information on a particular course.

Entry of course catalog information for the coming academic year will close at midnight, May 15, 2008, HST (6 a.m., May 16, EDT). However, this is only to amass the first set of information by a deadline. Eventually, course listings can be added or deleted at any time. The "coming academic year," this first time around, is defined as Summer 2008 through, and including, Summer 2009. In future years, the "coming academic year" will be considered to begin in the Fall term and end with the following Summer term.

After this current course catalog project has been launched, a similar on-going catalog of social work education programs that utilize distance education will be created.

The first catalog became available on March 23, 2008 at the following URL:

http://www.esocialwork.net/wiki/index.php?structure_id=69

It is the plan of this catalog to be as comprehensive as possible in listing social work courses at the BSW, MSW and Ph.D. levels that are offered through distance education. Some of these courses will be online; some will not. Some will be delivered via interactive television to a focused audience within a particular state or region. Some will utilize Web conferencing to reach wider audiences. All courses will be from accredited social work programs/departments/schools (except, of course, Ph.D. courses, which do not fall under the accreditation standards of CSWE).

Students wishing to take a distance education course to satisfy a course in their home program curriculum that is either not available during a particular academic term, or only available on their campus at an inconvenient time, will find this resource extremely helpful. In general, the following procedure is suggested before investing time using this new resource to locate a course:

- Discuss with one's advisor the acceptability of enrolling in a distance education course from another accredited social work program to satisfy a specific requirement in one's home curriculum.
- Assuming that one's home program and advisor are open to a student taking a distance education course, locate and clear the specific course with one's home program and advisor.
- Make contact with the distance education contact person identified in the Online Social Work Distance Education Course Catalog to discuss the details of registering for the course and the expectations of students who enroll in this course.
- Share all information learned with one's home advisor before proceeding with registration. Remember, it is the responsibility of the student to insure that a distance education course is acceptable to apply toward one's home curriculum. The final authority for approving such a course for transfer into one's home curriculum is the student's home social work program/department/school.

As always, if you have any questions, I am pleased to consult and help, but the final approval rests with your own social work education program. I hope your venture into social work distance education is a positive and growthful experience.

Send me your reactions, thoughts, and ideas: Doc.Smith@hawaii.edu

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