Dear Students and Members of the SSA Community:

As many of you know, last year students expressed views that their experience at SSA fell short of our stated aspirations of promoting social justice and a more humane society, notably with respect to how we have addressed questions of diversity, difference, privilege, power, inclusion, and oppression in the curriculum and climate at SSA. Students submitted a petition in the spring urging attention to these matters, and in June we held a community-wide forum to hear student perspectives and experiences, so that we could begin to make more open and visible to the SSA community some of these views and experiences. These conversations and the student petition stimulated the SSA faculty and those in leadership roles at the School – me included – to more concertedly reflect upon and begin to take concrete visible actions, so that our School and students are better equipped and supported in assuming their important responsibilities and roles as future professional social workers and as educators. The petition and community forum helped create an important opportunity for us to strive to create a more inclusive and responsive learning environment at SSA: one that builds our capacity to respect, hear, and learn from diverse viewpoints and experiences; one that fosters open discourse for all members of the community and values rigorous, evidence-informed, and pluralistic ways of thinking in our approach to problems of the profession; and one that can build the SSA community. At the June community-wide meeting and at a subsequent meeting with student groups organizing the petition last spring, I noted that that we would initiate a number of actions in response to address these issues.

As one important first step, I have expressed the view that SSA needs to build a more robust and visible organizational and administrative platform to take up these matters in ways that are transparent and coherent to students, and in ways that ensure that we attend to the concerns with continuous commitment, attention, and improvement, woven integrally into the fabric of SSA. Toward that end, I charged a summer ad hoc committee composed of faculty, staff, and students to consider and recommend the most promising models of organizational structure for SSA to take up these concerns, so that we can establish such an enduring institutional platform.

That summer ad hoc committee was comprised of:

- Professor Gina Miranda Samuels (Faculty and Committee Chair)
- Celia Bergman (Dean of Students)
- Nancy Chertok (Director of Field Education)
- Peter Fritch (Student Representative from the Elephant)
- Tamara Johnson (Provost’s Office)
- Professor Waldo E. Johnson, Jr. (Faculty)
This committee worked intensively through the summer and submitted to me a thorough and thoughtful report on September 30. This report offers much to consider as we move forward, not only on the question of organizational platform, but also on matters such as curricular development, pedagogical training, and community building at SSA. I want to express my gratitude for the hard work of the members of this committee.

Since receiving this report, I have followed up with a series of meetings with the committee and its chair, with SSA’s senior administrative team (consisting of all SSA’s associate and deputy deans), and, just last week with the full faculty of SSA who reviewed and discussed the report as well. I am pleased to note that broad support and enthusiasm was expressed in these meetings for the goals expressed in the report. And, as one would expect from a vigorous community of independent thinkers, a variety of viewpoints were also expressed on next steps to best move us forward, with some clear consensus on specific actions.

While ongoing careful deliberation of the faculty and leadership of the School will continue, we will also proceed with a number of immediate and substantive actions flowing from the report and follow up discussions. We reviewed these actions in fuller detail at a community meeting at SSA on Monday, November 23rd (4:30-5:30 p.m.) and will review these actions a second time on Tuesday, December 1st (4:30-5:30 p.m.). We have arranged two times so that as many members of the community can participate within their schedules, and we will hold additional periodic community gatherings throughout the academic year for further conversations. These meetings will offer opportunities for the wider SSA student body and community to weigh in and offer thoughts and questions as we proceed on these matters.

Below is a brief preview of some of the immediate action steps we will or already are moving forward on (particularly for those of you who may not be able to make one of these meetings). We provided and will provide the opportunity to review and discuss these further on November 23rd and December 1st:

- Foremost, and consistent with the recommendations of the ad hoc committee report, we will establish a new standing committee of the School, and, in conjunction, create a new senior administrator role at SSA, whose specific charges will be to take up concerns related to inclusion and diversity in the
curriculum and climate at SSA. The new standing committee will be comprised of approximately four to five faculty members, two to three key staff (including the new senior administrator), and two to three student representatives. The committee will both advise and be advised by the full faculty of SSA. This new organizational structure (standing committee in conjunction with senior administrator) will provide the needed organizational leadership, coordination, and visibility, to enable us to take up these matters in ways that SSA is not presently adequately organized to address. One of the first tasks of the new standing committee will be to begin the search process to identify and bring on board the new senior administrator, whose responsibilities will entail implementing and steering specific initiatives and policies to address these matters at SSA. The report of the summer ad hoc group, which offers many recommendations, will be provided for the use of the committee and its work.

- Second, I have already charged SSA’s Curriculum Policy Committee, which oversees the educational curriculum for the master’s degree programs, to review and revise how we address content on diversity, inclusion, power, and privilege in their current deliberations pertaining to revision of the overall master’s degree curriculum.

- Third, this year we have begun to include student representatives on SSA’s Curriculum Policy Committee to provide the opportunity for students’ perspectives to be heard more tangibly in the context of curriculum revision deliberations and to provide improved communication and transparency to students on the process.

- Fourth, we are now planning for faculty development and training opportunities on matters of difference, diversity, privilege, and oppression, (including opportunities at SSA’s annual faculty retreat), so that instructors at SSA can expand their own pedagogical capacity to address these matters in the classroom.

- Fifth, I have asked the Dean of Students office to initiate a review and revision of student grievance procedures so that due process for student grievances are clarified and spelled out to ensure a fair and impartial grievance process.

- Sixth, a student-run Election and Rules Committee has now completed its work reviewing and substantially strengthening and clarifying procedures for student government elections at SSA, setting the stage for a new SGA election to take place in the coming weeks. Dean Bergman will provide more information on this shortly.

- Finally, we will continue to create opportunities for the SSA community to come together, for students to express views, and to update students about curricular and school developments on these and other matters.

Once we compose the new standing committee of the School and bring on board a new senior administrator whose specific charge it is to take up these issues, we will be much better equipped to implement a variety of initiatives, and to provide continuous attention and improvement for the SSA community and field.
Please know that the faculty of SSA and the leadership of the School are committed to elevating the educational experience for our students on these matters and to doing so in a way that values diverse experiences, open and respectful expression of viewpoints, rigorous, thoughtful and evidence-informed analysis and action, and dedicated service to the field of social work and social welfare. While we – faculty, staff, and students – are continually striving and evolving to reach our highest aspirations, and are “works-in-progress,” my sincere personal hope is that these actions and discussions will enable us to create important “teachable moments” for the SSA community to grow, do even better, and enlighten and educate one another – so we can better step up to the very real challenges of those whom we serve beyond the walls of SSA. I look forward to working with you to move us toward these ends, and I hope to see you soon at one of the upcoming community meetings.

Sincerely,
Neil Guterman
TASK FORCE FOR RADICAL TRANSFORMATION REPORT

Report and Recommendations Submitted to Dean Neil Guterman

September 30, 2015

Members of Task Force: Gina Miranda Samuels (Chair, faculty), Celia Bergman (Dean of Students), Nancy Chertok (Field Director, Office of Field Education), Peter Fritch (Masters student, representative from The Elephant), Tamara Johnson (Director of Faculty Diversity Initiatives, Provost’s office), Waldo Johnson (Faculty), Tasha Keys (Doctoral student, Teaching/Professional Development Doctoral Workshop Coordinator), Dominique Mikell (Masters student, representative from The Elephant), Tina Rzepnicki (Faculty, Deputy Dean of Curriculum), Jesus Palafox Valdovinos (Masters student, representative from the Latin@ Students Association), Marci Ybarra (Faculty)
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Acknowledgements

The task force would like to acknowledge and thank the many students, representing varied perspectives, identities, and group memberships, whose persistence and dedication to SSA and to the profession of Social Work resulted in challenging our school to be better, stronger, and to deepen our commitment to the profession’s values and mission. Your efforts went above and beyond the work required of you to complete your degrees. Thank you. We are also grateful to the faculty, staff, and students both within SSA and across the country who shared their time, and responded so graciously to our requests to learn more about your experiences, struggles and successes. Our report is made stronger by the sharing of those insights and wisdom. We also extend our sincere thanks to Tanya Hines and her good care of us. Her administrative assistance, organizational skill, and good humor was essential in scheduling our meetings and ensuring every meeting was accompanied by tasty beverages and food. And finally, we wish to thank Dean Neil Guterman who responded to The Petition and supported the creation of this Task Force. It is our hope that our work this summer is deeply supportive to your leadership of SSA, to our Profession, and the University of Chicago to build on our strengths and reach higher toward SSA’s greatest potential.
Executive Summary

Introduction

This executive summary presents methods, broad recommendations, findings and the immediate considerations from the Task Force for Radical Transformation to inform actionable steps toward creating positive change at SSA. These recommendations are a result of a two month review of promising models and practices to address what is often termed “diversity and inclusion” within institutions of higher education. In our work and within this report, we engaged more critical perspectives and more action-oriented language discussed in greater depth within the full report (e.g., transformation, radical, social justice, and anti-oppression). This Task Force was formed in response to student voiced concerns and as such, the recommendations are the starting place for action. We view the report as a living document that should remain responsive to a fuller scope of SSA constituents than what is represented on this task force. The report and detailed recommendations, along with supportive documents follow.

Methods

Our task force divided up the work on exploring promising practices and models of institutional governance into four sub-committees: a) Structure, Policies and Mission, b) Community Building as a Model of Governance, c) Curriculum Reform, and d) Training. As part of this work we evaluated promising practices both identified in the literature and those used among existing (inter)national task force and strategic efforts, publically available statements/reports/plans from 30 institutions (See Appendix A) including the well-known “Making Excellence Inclusive” (2005) commissioned study and subsequent paper series by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). Our subcommittee work involved more detailed information gathering through calls to administrators, faculty and instructors in ten of our peer schools of social work and interviews with faculty in other units on campus. We also talked to some non-task force members of the SSA community (students, staff, faculty) to broaden the perspectives represented on the task force. Finally, our methods included reviewing literature on transforming institutional and organizational climate, community-building, curricular reform strategies to include content on minoritized populations, social justice, microaggressions, and cycles of oppression, and training for self-awareness and professional development among students, staff, and faculty. Each subsection of recommendations provides detailed information on methods. All literature is referenced in the bibliography. Finally, teaching resources that were compiled from this process will ultimately be organized into an accessible “resource toolkit” to be made available to all teachers at SSA.

Findings

- SSA and University of Chicago are significantly behind the majority of institutions of higher education in pursuing a formal, comprehensive, and systematic review of our
University and school, and creating a publically available strategic plan to promote social justice, transparency and interconnectedness within our community (See Appendix A). Engaging in a rigorous, resourced, and public process will bring us into alignment with existing commitments to “Inclusive Excellence” across the U.S. and globally.

- The recommendations within this report represent the minimum of needed change to bring us into alignment with schools across the nation. The final section “Going Forward” presents more visionary aspirations for SSA.

- We are underutilizing existing strengths and initiatives at SSA, and should increase awareness, access and opportunities for synergies between SSA’s initiatives and those on campus. As an interdisciplinary school of social work, we are also well-positioned to innovate and lead a novel approach to a curriculum and institutional structure that embodies and models its core values and philosophies.

- There is a strong desire at SSA to open up pathways for communication and information-sharing among not only all students, but among faculty and staff. This is critical to the success of these recommended changes and to engaging the full community in sustaining momentum and energy behind this exciting change process.

- Our review identifies the following characteristics of strong governance models and promising strategic efforts that promote institutional transformation:
  - Have significant support from, and engagement with, leadership (e.g., Deans, department chairs, and central administration). In many cases, these efforts are led by the Provost, President, or Chancellor and are university-wide strategic initiatives.
  - Have wide-spread faculty buy-in and engagement.
  - Have clear linkage to intellectual and educational benefits
  - Engaging and expanding community “diversity” is viewed as part of institutions’ operational processes not as quantified, fixed outcome goal.
  - Have systems of accountability, supports, and evaluations of success.
  - Strategic plans viewed as enriching rather than threatening academic freedom
  - Target second-order changes in institutional structure and climate.
  - Emerge out of a sustained and public commitment to “institutional transformation” (Eckel, Green & Hill, 2001).
  - Have public, transparent and explicit statements of commitment, with identified personnel and resources dedicated to sustaining and supporting a healthy institutional learning environment for everyone.
  - Are deeply and explicitly integrated into the school’s core structures (e.g., curriculum, mission, vision, fundraising, and community-building activities).
  - Strategic plans are viewed as both permanent, long-term commitments but also as “living documents” that must remain flexible and responsive to the changing community within and beyond the institution.
• There are limitations to any of the existing models:
  o Most strategic initiatives have been implemented within the last 5 years. Few evaluations exist of their successes, limitations, or failures.
  o Despite existing plans and strategies, faculty and administrators expressed they are still seriously under-resourced and feel far less effective than desired.
  o Schools expressed serious challenges in effectively delivering social justice and anti-oppression curricula despite the chosen model (integration versus required course versus combination of the two). There are perennial issues in the required course model of over-burdening and marginalizing faculty and adjuncts who teach these courses or lead these initiatives. Severe, unevenness in faculty capacity/skill and buy-in exists within the integrative models.
  o While best-practice indicates a focus on second-order change and process/developmental outcomes, most existing measures and evaluative tools continue to quantify diversity outcomes/first-order changes such as number of faculty hired, diversifying student body, increasing number of “diversity events.” See for example, the AACU’s “Inclusive Excellence Scorecard,” (Williams, Berger & McClendon, 2005). Few measure second-order changes (e.g., changes in structure, climate, processes, or individual/developmental growth among students, faculty, staff and administrators).

**Broad Recommendations**

• That SSA commit to a comprehensive, evidence-based, and strategic process to act upon the concerns and recommendations raised in this report and create public and open methods to update the SSA community on the unfolding of this process.

• To commit to a process that is open, transparent, community-building and engages systems of checks and balances to promote accountability and success.

• Hire a permanent full-time Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion.

• Create a standing committee of students, staff, faculty and other key stakeholders to work in partnership with new Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion.

• Engage independent firm to conduct a holistic organizational needs assessment.

• Resource and deputize existing offices/positions to support and sustain this work.

• Charge the Curriculum Policy Committee to take up curricular reform as its primary task, working in partnership with the Doctoral Program Director. Be proactive in sharing information about the process and in engaging stakeholders throughout.

• Review and revise SSA policies: a) student academic grievances; and b) general faculty, staff and student grievances.
• Develop system for accessing evidence-based trainings and professional development opportunities for teaching, administration and students. These tools must target both first- and second-order change.

• Coordinate with existing efforts already unfolding at SSA and University-wide.

• Create a governance model and organizational structure that promotes interconnectedness and fosters belonging and positive engagement with the school and to the profession among all members of SSA community. This includes providing organizational chart, and identifying staff and administrative roles, responsibilities and contact information clearly within student handbook and the SSA webpage.

Immediate Considerations in Moving Forward

We believe it will be important to engage in both short- and long-term actions. This suggests a need to showcase short-term actions that will sustain the excitement and motivation of the community while pushing forward toward longer-term goals. We would like to identify the immediate actions that could serve in this role beginning this fall, 2015. These are taken up in greater detail within each recommendation section of the full report:

• Sharing the full report from the Task Force for Radial Transformation with an affirmative and action-oriented response from the Dean on SSA webpage (and possibly other statements of support from Dean of Students, staff, faculty, and others)
• Scheduling a Fall Forum for later in the Quarter to engage the full community in a discussion of the report, and perhaps additional meetings among faculty and staff.
• Rewriting the election policies and procedures
• Reviewing and revising grievance policies (academic and general grievance policies)
• Posting organizational chart with roles and responsibilities of staff and faculty leadership with contact information on SSA webpage
• Relabel existing committees with student representation as “standing committees” rather than “faculty committees” and maximize inclusion of PhD and EEP students
• Creating an electronic quarterly newsletter containing all activities/events. This newsletter should link to SSA’s webpage and be of interest to the full SSA community. For example:
  o Announcing commitment of the Dean and the school to address these issues
  o Announcing the Curriculum Policy Committee’s focus on curricular reform and on social justice, power/privilege/oppression, microaggressions
  o Announcing November faculty retreat focus on teaching about power, privilege and oppression, microaggressions
  o Announcing committee members appointed to this work going forward
  o Existing related efforts campus-wide
  o Timeline for hiring new Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion
  o Announcing SSA community events (e.g., Pastora Cafferty Lecture Series) and PDP classes that foster learning around varied approaches/conceptions of social justice, anti-oppressive practices, etc.
- Linking our efforts to the Grand Challenges in Social Work announcement related to issues of oppression, social justice, and diversity and identifying our short and long-term goals in terms of the Grand Challenges
- Featuring relevant faculty research, writing, teaching, staff activities and student initiatives tied to social justice, oppression, diversity
- Announcing city-wide events, trainings, lectures, conferences, and activities related to promoting social justice and anti-oppressive practices
- Announcing achievements of faculty, staff, and students to celebrate our existing diversity and leadership initiatives in the area of social justice, work with marginalized populations, power, and privilege
- Announcing special focus for doctoral teaching workshop on power, privilege and microaggressions, and self-awareness in the classroom
- Links to teaching and classroom researches as a “toolkit” on our webpage

- That SSA develop a faculty-driven system for posting faculty statements and reactions to current social events relevant to the field. Invite administrators, staff, lecturers, instructors, adjuncts, field consultants, alum and students to add their name in support of, or to reflect upon, faculty statements on website after posting.
A. Background Context for Task Force Work

As with many persistent challenges that culminate into acute calls for change, the formation of *The Task Force for Radical Transformation* arose not out of a single event. Rather, its existence reflects accumulated and enduring conditions at SSA. Conditions that mirror broader realities in society and specifically, realities in which minoritized persons with marginalized status tied to class, age, race, sexuality, gender identity, immigration status, religion, nationality, ability, and others still deeply bear upon individual lived experience and opportunity.

Most recently, following The Petition (See Appendix C), student-led grievances, and The Forum held in June 2015, the School was challenged to listen and respond to students’ evaluations of SSA. Are we effective in fostering students’ growth as they learn the skills and professional development so critical to 21st century social work practice? Do we model social work values and ethics in our curriculum, organizational structure, and in how we connect within SSA and to various communities at large? Have we systematically ensured all our students, as well as faculty and staff, are trained and educated as anti-oppressive and critically self-reflexive agents of change; as leaders skilled to both navigate and recalibrate the enduring salience of oppression, power, and privilege that are central to contexts of practice across all levels of social work? This Task Force affirms that SSA indeed has many strengths. The report and its recommendations build on those valued strengths. We would also like to acknowledge that in exploring answers to the above questions, SSA has indeed fallen short. We can do better and in fact, we can be leaders within the larger University of Chicago community as well as within our profession.

Membership on this task force included staff, administration (both within SSA and from the Provost’s Office), students and faculty. This group represents many voices and standpoints. We also know there are many more who were not part of this process. We recognize a diversity of experiences exist at SSA, and thus, a diversity of opinions regarding the nature and extent of the problem at hand. There are likely myriad pathways forward, some of which may not yet be accounted for in this report. To that end, as a collective unit we believe strongly that any next steps must place at the center of that work, creating opportunities for the full SSA community to deeply engage with these recommendations and contribute to the work going forward. It is critical that a fuller spectrum of the community has opportunities to engage and remain informed as we progress.

Finally, pursuing a shift of any magnitude in organizational culture and climate is no small undertaking. This report attempts to strike a delicate balance between its pragmatist and visionary aspirations. The components of this report identify key domains within the organizational structure with immediate actionable steps in this direction, but with an eye toward how we might sustain the change, deepen our commitments and remain flexible to
changing needs and demands both within the school and in the field. We attempt to identify ways of better using existing resources, capitalizing on and strengthening links with University-wide resources, and building collaborations with peer institutions already engaged in this work.

**B. Guiding Philosophies, Principles and Methods**

Language matters. During our first meeting, we discussed the importance of labeling, the power of self-naming, and the varied meanings of words typically attached to this work (e.g., diversity, inclusion). The word “radical” conveys a host of meanings. To those on the margins of power, it may signal hope for real change, affirmation of one’s value, and the decentering of power to adjust for current inequalities. For those in the center, it may conjure fear of disruption/displacement, or even threats of personal (physical, psychological) harm. For many more, it incites ambivalence, perhaps feelings of both hope and fear.

The choice and rationale to engage the word “radical” in the naming of the task force is important to make explicit. Using this word clearly conveys the serious nature of the work, the size of the change effort needed, and the depth at which the change efforts must eventually occur. Change at SSA, the transformation, must occur at the “root” (e.g., the organizational structure). This does not mean all aspects of SSA must change; none of the recommendations call for starting over. In fact in each section, we make deep linkages to what already exists in order to capitalize on many strengths at SSA. Yet it raises the bar for ultimately doing things differently from not only what we have done before, but also from what typically is done elsewhere. The idea of transformation is complimentary to this understanding of radical—a metamorphosis in the life cycle. We believe that SSA is in an exciting moment in its life cycle; the report is a call from the community to the community to courageously embrace this needed growth through several principles that are core to all of the recommendations within. They are as follows:

- Transparency and open communication
- Inclusivity with representation in decision-making/governance
- Accountability through feedback loops and systems of checks and balances
- Community building as a model for governance
- Engagement and interconnectedness
- Accessibility

These philosophical orientations speak to a shift in organizational and governance structures that will be taken up in a more detailed manner within each section.

Most simply, we have been called to practice what our professional values and ethics already preach. Indeed, the recommendations within this report seek to begin the process of better aligning SSA (in structure and in practice) to those professional commitments as well as to reflect the minimum of what already exists within many schools and departments of Social Work, other professional schools, and institutions of higher education across the United States and the world. However, long term, we would like to invite the SSA community and
specifically its leadership within administration and faculty, to consider working toward a larger and more transformational goal. That vision reimagines SSA as a front runner and leader for the broader University of Chicago community, and the world, and requires embodying an institutional climate that is experienced as an authentically open, deeply interconnected, exciting, and truly growth-fostering learning community for all of its members.

Methods

Our task force divided up the work on exploring promising practices and models of institutional governance into four sub-committees: a) Structure, Policies, and Mission, b) Community Building as a Model of Governance, c) Engaging Curricular Reform and d) Training. As part of this work we evaluated promising practices identified in the literature and used among existing (inter)national task force and strategic efforts, the publically available diversity and inclusion statements, reports and plans from 30 institutions (See Appendix A) including the well-known “Making Excellence Inclusive” (2005) commissioned study and subsequent paper series by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). Our subcommittee work involved more detailed information gathering through calls to administrators, faculty and instructors in nine of our peer schools of social work and interviews with faculty in other units on campus. We also talked to some non-task force members of the SSA community (students, staff, faculty) to broaden the perspectives represented on the task force. Finally, our methods included reviewing literature on transforming institutional and organizational climate, community-building, curricular reform strategies to include content on minoritized populations, social justice, microaggressions, and cycles of oppression, and training for self-awareness and professional development among students, staff, and faculty. Each subsection of recommendations provides detailed information on methods. All literature is referenced in the bibliography. Finally, teaching resources that were compiled from this process will be organized into an accessible “resource toolkit” to be made available to all teachers at SSA.

C. Summary of Findings from Review

While the findings below echo concerns voiced recently among students, this section draws heavily from a review of promising models and practices for organizational governance and change to address what is contemporarily referred to as “diversity and inclusion” among institutions of higher education. These findings summarize the efforts already well underway at peer institutions (see Appendix A). Particularly exemplary models and guiding literature are specifically highlighted below:

   a. Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective
   b. Achieving equitable educational outcomes with all students: The institution’s roles and responsibilities
c. Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions.


3) “This actually works: Promising practices from UC campuses that build and sustain a culture of inclusion” A collection of 12 California Universities models for Faculty Equity Advisors

4) University of Oregon IDEAL Framework, Division of Equity and Inclusion.


7) The following noteworthy University Strategic Plans and Diversity and Inclusion Reports
   a. Penn State, “Promising practices for inclusion of gender identity/gender expression in higher ed”
   b. Princeton University, Report of Special Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion
   c. University of British Columbia Strategic Plan and Model
   d. University of Seattle, Intergroup Dialogue Model

Findings

- SSA and University of Chicago are significantly behind the majority of institutions of higher education in pursuing a formal, comprehensive, and systematic review of our University and school, and creating a publically available strategic plan to promote social justice, transparency and interconnectedness within our community (See Appendix A). Engaging in a rigorous, resourced, and public process will bring us into alignment with existing commitments to “Inclusive Excellence” across the U.S. and globally.

- The recommendations within this report represent the minimum of needed change to bring us into alignment with schools across the nation. The final section “Going Forward” presents more visionary aspirations for SSA.

- We are underutilizing existing strengths and initiatives at SSA, and should increase awareness, access and opportunities for synergies between SSA’s initiatives and those on campus. As an interdisciplinary school of social work, we are also well-positioned to innovate and lead a novel approach to a curriculum and institutional structure that embodies and models its core values and philosophies.

- There is a strong desire at SSA to open up pathways for communication and information-sharing among not only all students, but among faculty and staff. This is critical to the success of these recommended changes and to engaging the full community in sustaining momentum and energy behind this exciting change process.
Our review identifies the following characteristics of strong governance models and promising strategic efforts that promote institutional transformation:

- Have significant support from, and engagement with, leadership (e.g., Deans, department chairs, and central administration). In many cases, these efforts are led by the Provost, President, or Chancellor and are university–wide strategic initiatives.
- Have wide-spread faculty buy-in and engagement.
- Have clear linkage to intellectual and educational benefits.
- Engaging and expanding community “diversity” is viewed as part of institutions’ operational processes not as quantified, fixed outcome goal.
- Have systems of accountability, supports, and evaluations of success.
- Strategic plans viewed as enriching rather than threatening academic freedom.
- Target second-order changes in institutional structure and climate.
- Emerge out of a sustained and public commitment to “institutional transformation” (Eckel, Green & Hill, 2001).
- Have public, transparent and explicit statements of commitment, with identified personnel and resources dedicated to sustaining and supporting a healthy institutional learning environment for everyone.
- Are deeply and explicitly integrated into the school’s core structures (e.g., curriculum, mission, vision, fundraising, and community-building activities).
- Strategic plans are viewed as both permanent, long-term commitments but also as “living documents” that must remain flexible and responsive to the changing community within and beyond the institution.

There are limitations to any of the existing models:

- Most strategic initiatives have been implemented within the last 5 years. Few evaluations exist of their successes, limitations, or failures.
- Despite existing plans and strategies, faculty and administrators expressed they are still seriously under-resourced and feel far less effective than desired.
- Schools expressed serious challenges in effectively delivering social justice and anti-oppression curricula despite the chosen model (integration versus required course versus combination of the two). There are perennial issues in the required course model of over-burdening and marginalizing faculty and adjuncts who teach these courses or lead these initiatives. Severe, unevenness in faculty capacity/skill and buy-in exists within the integrative models.
- While best-practice indicates a focus on second-order change and process/developmental outcomes, most existing measures and evaluative tools continue to quantify diversity outcomes/first-order changes such as number of faculty hired, diversifying student body, increasing number of “diversity events.” See for example, the AACU’s “Inclusive Excellence Scorecard,” (Williams, Berger & McClendon, 2005). Few measure second-order changes (e.g., changes in structure, climate, processes, or individual/developmental growth among students, faculty, staff and administrators).
D. Overarching Purpose and Scope of Recommendations

The recommendations have several purposes. First, the Task Force has spent a substantial part of its time this summer exploring governance structures, initiatives and strategic efforts among other schools and universities as well as literature within the specific areas of institutional transformation, curriculum, training, and community building. Based on this review, this report provides foundational recommendations regarding the minimum of what is institutionally required to support change in these areas and align us as on par with existing efforts at other institutions. These recommendations are based upon best practice models that exist at peer institutions as well as within the literature. Second, the Task Force has completed a cursory examination of existing resources and capacity within SSA and the University of Chicago. We have advanced recommendations that are pragmatic and seek to build upon strengths and unique characteristics both at SSA and the University at large. Finally, this report offers a vision for moving beyond these minimum efforts to reimagine SSA as a leader in the field, setting the course for other professional schools and even more broadly, institutions of higher education.

As a task force, we attempted to practice many of the philosophies mentioned throughout this report (e.g., transparency, inclusivity, accessibility, and accountability) to guide both our bi-weekly full group meetings and additional meetings within the sub-groups. The Task Force became an organization on blackboard, using chalk to post ongoing work. Drafts of recommendations, edits and revisions, correspondences with task force, and general communications with other institutions, as well as resources discovered during the work, were either documented and posted directly on chalk or incorporated into the sub-groups' ongoing work documents. The task force chair met and corresponded independently with groups by email and phone, but shared comments or feedback with the full group. Each sub-group engaged outside stakeholders and experts (both outside of the task force as well as outside of SSA/University of Chicago) for their insights through phone calls, skype and email correspondences, as well as on-line research and literature reviews. The use of this additional information is referenced both within each domain of recommendations and in the case of literature, within the reference page. The community building that our task force began and capitalized on should continue; many of the professionals and colleagues we called upon were highly generous offering future support and consultation as we move through our process. We are also are happy share any contact information with those who will be engaged in the continued work outlined in these domains.

E. Recommendations

Addressing Organizational Structure at SSA

The work of the task force centered on key elements of SSA’s organizational structure that seek to deeply and effectively sustain desired change. We believe these recommendations bring SSA into alignment with its mission statement to work “toward a more just and human society” both within and outside of our institution. These recommendations reflect the broader value claims of our profession to social justice, anti-oppressive and anti-
discriminatory practices and policies, and the value of relationships as central to any change process.

In reviewing the promising practices and governance models of other institutions, most target specific subdomains of organizational structures including policies/processes, campus climate, workforce development/training, and education/curriculum. Similarly, we divided our work up into four specific sub-areas of the organizational structure of SSA. We believe these areas are key, not only in responding to the existing call for change, but for its success and sustainability over time:

1) SSA’s Structure, Policies and Mission
2) Community Building as a Model of Governance
3) Curriculum Reform
4) Training

**SSA’s Structure, Policies, and Mission**

“The University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration is dedicated to working toward a more just and humane society through research, teaching, and service to the community. ... SSA prepares professionals to handle society's most difficult problems by developing new knowledge, promoting a deeper understanding of the causes and human costs of social inequities, and building bridges between rigorous research and the practice of helping individuals, families, and communities to achieve a better quality of life...” SSA Mission Statement

One of SSA’s distinguishing hallmarks as a premier school of social work is our understanding and appreciation of the complexities of organizations and attunement to social work practice across multiple levels of action. We also value teaching students to engage in critical thinking. The excerpt of the mission statement above also calls us to reflect upon how our own school governance, policies, practices and habits promote “a deeper understanding of the causes and human costs of social inequities” and help us to achieve, as an organization, a better quality of organizational life at SSA. What feedback loops help us to adjust, improve, and self-correct to embody and practice our expressed values and commitments as a school? Do all levels of our organization work collectively, capitalizing on our complexities toward a common set of goals? Are these processes embedded in a broader value of equity, inclusion and building bridges across and within different levels of practice and work at SSA? Based on a review of promising practices across the nation and contemporary literature, we believe there are important areas on which SSA should focus its change efforts.

**Methods**

Information to inform work in this area was gathered and synthesized from multiple sources to understand a range of best practices of governance and policy-making within institutions.
of higher education. The recommendations that follow emerge from these specific information-gathering methods:

1) Review of SSA’s institutional documents including: Announcements, the Student Handbook, SSA Website, SSA’s most recent Diversity Report submitted for CSWE accreditation process, a list of SSA’s standing faculty committees, their membership and annual reports, and SSA’s organizational chart.

2) Review of the University of Chicago’s Student Handbooks: Student Manual of Policies and Regulations; and the handbooks of Harris, Booth, Pritzker School of Medicine, and the Law School.

3) Review of diversity and anti-oppression documents and websites at other Universities, Colleges, and Departments/Schools of Social Work (See Appendix A). With special attention to Schools of Social Work at: Columbia, Hunter College, University of Michigan; and Smith.

4) Interviews with SSA faculty, students, and staff members regarding staffing for new leadership position overseeing this area of work

5) Interviews with leadership at peer institutions regarding their staffing and governance structures in support of diversity and anti-oppression. These peer institutions included: Columbia School of Social Work, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College – City University of New York, University of Washington-Seattle, and Loyola University.

6) Interviews with Deans of Students at the University of Chicago regarding their staffing and governance structure around existing work in their units. These units include: Pritzker School of Medicine, Booth School of Business, and Divinity School.

Based on a review of the above information, we propose the following recommendations regarding governance and structure at SSA:

1. **Creation of a standing Strategic Planning Committee**

The proposed Strategic Planning Committee should include faculty, staff, and students and perhaps may also include alumni and other stakeholders. We additionally recommend that:

- The Strategic Planning Committee be formed this academic year (appointed fall 2015), as this committee will need to work on the recruitment and hiring of the Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion, the needs assessment, and will author the five year strategic plan

- That student representation on the Strategic Planning Committee either be elected by the SSA student body or appointed by the SSA Student Government Association for the academic year

- That staff and faculty representation on the Strategic Planning Committee will similarly be decided through a vote made by and among SSA staff and faculty members accordingly for the academic year

- Membership must balance coherence across several years with ensuring diverse representation across terms of service for committee members
2. Pursuing a Third-Party Needs Assessment

- We recommend contracting a third-party organization to complete institution-wide needs assessment\(^1\). This assessment should identify multilevel institutional strengths and weaknesses.

- While there are a host of consultants and methods to consider, we strongly urge the consideration of the following:
  
  - Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance
  - Appreciative Inquiry process (see Cooperrider, et al., 2001);
  - Center for the Study of Social Policy’s use of Crossroads;
  - Rankin & Associates Consulting

- Following best practices used at peer institutions, the findings should be disseminated to the SSA community and made available on the SSA website. This report should guide and inform the work of a Strategic Planning Committee responsible for the development of a five-year Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Strategic Plan.

- Institutionalize and streamline all future data collection and dissemination efforts to be used across contexts of work at SSA (classroom evaluations, field evaluations, alum and exit surveys, annual scorecards reporting progress on Strategic Plan)

There are several important benefits of engaging this process, and using an external firm to do so. First, it will provide an objective evaluation of SSA both in current functioning and capacity for alignment between its existing mission, requirements of CSWE, and many of the recommended tenants and philosophies within this report. Second, it can also illuminate new and additional opportunities for growth across multiple systems within SSA not identified within this report. Third, it can inform a more data-driven, balanced, and comprehensive process of action for SSA. Following whatever scope of review SSA decides upon (with guidance from the new Strategic Committee), the needs assessment must focus on strengths and seek to enhance existing elements of our school that already promote our intended outcomes, and identify policies, practices, and habits of acting that inhibit them. This assessment would also include evaluations of the curriculum, recruitment/hiring/retention of faculty and staff, and of the school climate.

3. Creating a Five-Year Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Strategic Plan

The five-year Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Strategic Plan will ideally emerge from the recommendations of the needs assessment, from recommendations made by this task force,

and from the Strategic Planning Committee. Ideally, the Strategic Committee will reach out to other important sub-groups within SSA (faculty, students and staff) as well as other stakeholders (e.g., adjuncts, field staff, alum, funders) in partnership with the Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion.

Drawing from lessons learned at peer institutions, and cautions articulated in their reports, in order for the Strategic Plan’s recommendations to be adequately addressed and sustained, partnering with key offices and administrators within the broader University is critical. Responsibility for implementation of items on the Strategic Plan cannot solely rest on the Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion.

In aligning with best practice models in sustaining organizational change, this Strategic Plan should also:

- Be written as a living document, and remain responsive to the changing needs of SSA and the field
- Be informed by existing best-practices already underway at many peer institutions
- Be both pragmatic and visionary, with both short-and long-term goals
- Be showcased on school webpage with clear actionable timelines and goals
- Include clear methods of evaluation that are process and developmentally oriented across multiple levels of our organization/system
- Promote core values and philosophies in process and outcome. Those proposed within this report include: transparency, accountability, inclusion, community building, accessibility.

As we collectively move forward we will develop new strengths, but also likely new needs will emerge. Thus, the Strategic Plan serves as a dynamic, evolving guide, and document for remaining accountable to a more long-term process of radical transformation within SSA, rather than as a static list of guidelines and goals.

4. Hiring a Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion

Across the United States and globally, institutions of higher education and individual schools and departments have struggled to become more inclusive, and to deeply engage the diversity that exists within the nation (Guthrie, 1998; Love, 1999; Rankin, 2003; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). Challenges persist around ensuring that all students have access to the full scope of educational experiences, to learn from and with one another, and that the educational experiences we provide draw from knowledge/epistememes that reflect the diversity of thought and experience that exist in the world (Goodman, 2011; hooks, 1994; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Wu, 2001; Yoon et al., 2007). As an accredited school of social work, SSA shares with other schools of social work the profound and added charge to commit to the struggle against social and economic inequality, injustice, and oppression based on such variables as race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, age, ability, and immigration status, among others (NASW, 2008).
If we commit to work toward creating an interconnected, equitable, and socially just environment at SSA, and to more deeply embody the professions' value-base, we require leadership to both initiate and sustain these efforts. One of the most common features of existing models is a dedicated office (often both within a unit as well as within central administration offices). Exemplary models often ensure they are staffed with trained professionals possessing expertise. While the University of Chicago has such offices and staff, SSA currently does not.

Early recommendations and discussions about such a position at SSA unearthed concerns about who would fill the position. Strong reactions on both sides were articulated. On one hand, assigning this role to a faculty person would align with existing faculty governance models present at this and many other institutions. There would also be organizational familiarity and relationships upon which to build. The credibility and power, particularly if held by a Full Professor, could be an advantage for mobilizing and motivating change among colleagues. Our discussions with faculty, however, raised serious concerns about the damage to relationships with colleagues for the faculty person who would be tasked with this highly political, and at times likely contentious, role. Further, faculty lack expertise and training for this position. Finally, the demands of such a job, particularly at this moment of SSA’s change process, is a full-time commitment. Based on our conversations with peer institutions, to fully staff this work requires a team of professionals working full-time and exclusively on this agenda. A faculty person would not have full-time allowance for this role and instead, would need to balance this work against existing professional responsibilities and career aspirations to advance research, publications, teaching and doctoral student mentorship. The Task Force seriously considered these and many other issues attached to this position, as well as other models (e.g., hiring a new faculty person, tenured, with administrative experience and expertise). We found the most compelling considerations transcending faculty or staff status to be: possessing administrative and content expertise for the job, credibility and power in work with faculty and within an academic setting, and critical need to allocate full-time effort to the work. Given these considerations, along with a review of existing governance models at peer institutions, we recommend that:

- SSA begin the process of recruiting and hiring a Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion on a five year, renewable contract.
- This new Dean possess a PhD or Doctorate and have prior academic experience but that they are not current faculty and do not have an active scholarly agenda. This is intended to be a full-time and exclusive job, with organizational status similar to other Deans who report to SSA’s Dean directly (See Appendix D for sample job description).
- The recruitment process is led by the Strategic Committee in partnership with the Dean, as well as with involvement and input from faculty, staff, and students.
- The Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion, under the direction of the Dean of SSA, work collaboratively with key stakeholders and actively partner with the University of Chicago’s Office of the Deputy Provost for Minority Education, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA), and community leaders, to achieve the broad goals of the University of Chicago’s Diversity Strategic Plan and SSA’s Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Strategic Plan.
The Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion be assigned staff and a budget with resources to support this work (both from SSA and support from central administration).

The Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Strategic Plan in part guide an annual review of the Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion. Fair review criteria should also include partnering with the new Dean to articulate reasonable and achievable outcomes considering the level of support and resources made available for the work.

SSA conduct a separate review of its overall organizational health and the role of other structures, offices, and positions in achieving, or not, the desired outcomes.

In year three or four of the Dean’s contract, the Strategic Planning Committee in partnership with the Dean of SSA will review SSA’s progress and decide how best to move forward with the existing model and plan, including the Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion position, to revise it, or enter into a new phase of work around new issues.

5. Policy Reform to Create Systems of Accountability

Especially pronounced this year, the decentralized nature of the governance of SSA in part resulted in a number of moments where members of the SSA community expressed feeling silenced, marginalized, and even oppressed. Establishing clear policies that inform processes in general, and specifically those for addressing grievances of students within SSA while protecting such grievants from further harm, seem critical. We believe the first step in this process is a formal and systematic review of SSA’s existing grievance policies and procedures by a team of individuals lead by the Dean of SSA or the Dean of Students (and consisting of faculty, staff, and students). Therefore, we recommend:

- A review and revision of policies: a) student academic grievances; and b) general faculty, staff and student grievances. This work includes posting the revised policies and SSA’s organizational chart along with the roles and responsibilities of SSA’s staff and administrative offices, and their full contact information.

We specifically recommend that these policies are:

- Rewritten to be clear, easily understandable, and internally consistent (both within SSA and with University of Chicago policies).
- Compliant with timelines and processes outlined within Title IX and other legal protections for students against discrimination and bias.
- Direct students, staff, and faculty to the correct administrative entity for a particular concern (i.e., distinguishing between grievances against faculty members versus grievances against other students including as occurred in the case of the 2015 elections). The University of Chicago’s Law School can be used as a model.
- Contain protections for students to prevent and minimize added harm. This should include process for using an advocate/ally/support-person of grievants’ choice during grievance process as well as role (and name of current) student ombudsman.
- Finalized and reviewed no later than end of fall quarter 2015 in order for the new grievance policy to be implemented and shared with the SSA community by the end of winter quarter 2016.

6. Review of the mission of the school and align policies and practices at SSA

As an accredited school of social work, our current mission statement is not fully in alignment with many of the updated tenants within CSWE’s 2015 statements on social justice, inequality, and anti-oppressive practices. As work unfolds across organizational structures at SSA, it will be essential that our own mission statement, both as a symbol and explicit statement, reflect both the enduring essence of SSA’s uniqueness, but also current and future visions of SSA as an accredited school of social work. To that end, we recommend:

- A systematic review of SSAs’ policies and its mission statement as part of the needs assessment.
- Explicitly aligning our (revised) policies as well as our formal and informal organizational practices and habits to Social Work values and ethics and CSWE 2015 requirements of education.
- Revisions should also align with earlier recommended philosophies of transparency, inclusivity, engagement, community building and accessibility. An example of amending SSA’s Mission to social justice is provide in Appendix D.
- Infusing the value of teaching social workers, and specifically of social justice and anti-oppression curriculum, into SSA’s Mission Statement.
- Integrate relevant findings from the needs assessment, and use input from engaging with SSA constituents as this work unfolds.

Community Building as a Model of Governance

Intentional community building as a foundational component of graduate education is well recognized across universities (Kern-Bowen & Gardner, 2010). Increased attention to campus climate and activities that build community often stem from a desire to improve retention and degree completion, enhance life-work balance and decrease student stress (Gelfand, 2014). Newer generations of students may have increased expectations for social activity and support services (Flowers, 2003; Kern-Bowen & Gardner, 2010). However, best practices and extant literature clearly indicate any work on organizational climate is also critical to the educational goals of excellence within institutions of higher education (Milem, Change & Antonio, 2005). These contemporary understandings of campus climate and community building draw from multidimensional models. They identify key domains in both content and in process that schools must consider as their targets for needed change (see Figures 1 and 2 below). Note that in each domain in Figure 1, focus is not on identifying, describing or enumerating incidents of bias or discrimination. Instead, what matters are varied perceptions and attitudes attached to experiencing the school environment. This is also true in Figure 2, where focus is on the internal and external factors (school history, political and social climate, school behaviors, structures and psychologies) that synergistically work to either promote or inhibit perceptions of inclusion and exclusion.
Based on our review of promising models of governance and existing strategic efforts across the nation, the Task Force for Radical Transformation articulates recommendations to engage an overall governance model that deliberately and explicitly fosters a climate with a shared sense of community that is perceived by all. We find this to be a missing, underdeveloped dimension of SSA, and seek to recommend this as a philosophical orientation of governance. In this way, community building is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, we would have increased activities and opportunities for connection, and increased sense of engagement. As a process, we would also consider how our organizational practices and habits foster or inhibit community interconnectedness across typically disconnected segments of our community (not only by personal or disciplinary identity, but also by organizational status as students, staff, faculty and so on). The figure above identifies various domains that we believe SSA should consider in scanning its climate and in understanding and engaging varied perceptions among SSA community members.

**Building an Engaging and Interconnected Community Climate at SSA**

The task force has organized the community building recommendations through the lens of showcasing, promoting, and celebrating scholarship, research, education, and service in congruence with the mission of SSA as well as the social justice mission of the larger profession of social work. This also follows best practice models for explicitly linking diversity and inclusion efforts as critical to achieving the core mission of scholarship and education within Universities (Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005). It would also build on SSA’s values of multidisciplinarity and of social work practice across multiple levels of action. To that end, we strongly recommend a holistic and multisystemic conceptualization of community building and the many forces and factors that shape any institution’s climate. Thus, the factors of institutional climate identified within Figure 2 below would necessarily
be targets for evaluation within the needs assessment and for immediate work at SSA.

**Figure 2. Factors that Shape Organizational Climate and Targets for Change**  
(Amended from Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999)

![Diagram showing factors that shape organizational climate and targets for change]

Going forward, we believe a needs assessment would be critical in guiding SSA to more consciously engage learning, knowledge, inquiry, and practice in ways both advance and critique social justice praxis. While the above model in Figure 2 outlines key factors shaping any institution’s climate, a comprehensive needs assessment would likely unearth SSA-specific domains of target as well. There are also ways of using these models to begin change around divisions we already know persist and to open up conversations about ways in which our school, even unintentionally, conveys exclusion. For example, in considering our historical legacy and symbols, what message of exclusion and inclusion do the banners of SSA’s founders convey when placed as the only visual in the entryway of our school? How can we convey and embody our existing “structural diversity” more explicitly and prominently? How can we better connect students across degree populations (masters and doctoral), and programs (full- and part-time)? How do we engage in community forums that reach across student-staff-administration-faculty statuses? Stronger mechanisms for
reaching across siloes of initiatives and programs at SSA are also critical. Given these considerations, we recommend the following:

- That the Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion take up community building and climate as part of the portfolio to specifically plan strategies aimed at demonstrating institutional commitment and progress (See Appendix C, Job Description).
- That the needs assessment evaluate climate using multidimensional framework.
- Initiatives across SSA programs and degrees should be designed to maximize inclusion of A.M., PhD, EEP, full time and part-time day students.
- Initiatives should be designed to advance and develop leadership capacity and skills in these areas among not only students but SSA faculty and staff.
- Work for this strategic effort in general must be spread across the full community and not over-burden or use same small sub-group of persons, or overtax SSA members with minoritized identities and statuses. Similarly, investment in skill and knowledge must occur before persons who lack such skill and competence are placed in positions of leadership.
- That SSA create a web-based method for timelier communication to students, faculty, staff and administrators in response to issues and events. We recommend a revision of the webpage in general to be used intentionally as a showcasing of our mission and commitments in action.
- Create a prominent link on SSA’s web-page to community-wide efforts in all domains recommended within this report. The link should then connect to a very interactive, energizing and visually engaging collection of activities, announcements, newsletters, “shout outs” and other achievements or events occurring in our community and lead by our community members.
- Better use of “SSA news” to be relevant to full community or to reimagine this as the newsletter.
- That SSA develop a faculty-driven system for posting faculty statements and reactions to current social events relevant to the field. Invite administrators, staff, adjuncts, field consultants, and students to add their name in support of, or to reflect upon, faculty statements on website after posting.

Sustainability. While new ideas regarding effective community building should arise from the needs assessment, and from the Strategic Planning Committee, the strategic efforts at our peer institutions make clear that these efforts must be integrated into the core activities of the institution, and must include active fundraising to finance sustaining the work. Considering this, we suggest the following:

1. **Creating a named strategic initiative** to underscore SSA’s institutional commitment to anti-oppressive and multidisciplinary approaches to advancing social justice. This may also create new platforms to fortify existing strengths. Potential outcomes might include increased faculty engagement in fund raising and strategic efforts, increased public relations for SSA faculty and students, increased visibility of SSA within the University Community and beyond, attracting donors and furthering community partnerships at local, regional, national or international levels.
Reorganizing under a newly named initiative could assist with minimizing one-off events.

2. **Community Building Grants**: Borrowing and adapting efforts at Northwestern University and other graduate schools, SSA should develop donors (and budget) to institutionalize SSA’s commitment to anti-oppressive practices, social justice, ameliorating inequalities and remaining on the cutting edge of science, knowledge, and skills that promote effective change toward a more “just and humane society” (SSA Mission Statement).

Events to promote social justice and anti-oppressive practice (including science, scholarship, and teaching) could include:

1. Annual showcase of faculty and student activities, research, publications and Collaborations as exemplary models. This will provide the opportunity to highlight existing efforts but also potentially inspire new ones.
2. Host a Fall or Winter Forum (symposium) on related topic.
3. Make “Third Thursdays” a yearlong series of monthly gatherings for social support and networking. This would be a social event with dual agenda of networking and building sense of community (e.g., pub gatherings, faculty/student dinners, meet-ups for PhD and A.M. students). Ideally gatherings and networking events would intentionally build connections across disciplines and affinity groups within a relaxed and informal context.
4. Quarterly brown bag events with PhD and A.M. students accessible to the EEP and full-time program students.
5. Publicize and promote the Pastora Cafferty Lecture Series.
6. Promote The Center on Race, Politics, and Culture: 20th year at UC initiative. Encourage SSA to develop proposals for funding projects (speakers, mini-conferences, workshops, etc.) that align with CRPC’s theme: *The State of Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity in the 21st century.*
7. Re-think town-hall format to normalize and routinize pathways of communicating directly to administration, SSA leadership, faculty, and staff.

**Concerns with implementing recommendations:**

We recognize that not every graduate student, faculty, or staff has the time or desire to engage in activities beyond their work, coursework, field and other requirements. Certainly, all of these events are not mandatory, but should be relevant to, and draw interest from a broad spectrum of the SSA community. However, in responding to the concerns raised in The Petition (Appendix B) and in our conversations with faculty, staff, and students, we are accountable for creating the dynamic, resilient, and engaged environment for which so many have articulated a desire. Success in this area requires not only the commitment of leadership at SSA, but the commitment of the community. Success in in improved school climate through community building will promote success in the other recommended domains of this report, and is critical to sustaining a lived experience of that change and success. These issues are again taken up in the final section of this report: “Going Forward.”
Additional Questions and Considerations for Community Building Work

1. How are current and proposed SSA initiatives addressing community climate, social justice, and anti-oppression?
2. How might we move to the use of shared calendars: What are the advantages and downfalls of this?
3. What can we learn from the University of Chicago’s Climate Surveys completed and ongoing, and existing data from SSA surveys?
4. What collaborations already exist between the University and surrounding communities?
5. Is there a way of building more community initiatives through the Programs of Study?
6. What training can be provided to faculty around building classroom community?
7. What training can be provided to staff/administration around community building?
8. What orientation activities can be included that lead to building a school-wide sense of community?

Engaging in Curriculum Reform

Methods

The curriculum sub-committee collected data from several sources to inform the recommendations. We focused our review on both social work programs and other professional schools (education, law, and medicine) who were addressing similar issues with respect to the creation, revision, and delivery of high quality educational programs. A multi-pronged approach was used: we searched web-sites of relevant programs, schools, and universities to gather initial information about how students are educated around issues of race, class, gender identity, sexuality, ability, religion, immigration status and other marginalized identities, intersectionality, privilege, power, oppression, microaggressions, and social justice. The online search was valuable for discovering the general philosophies and principles that guided programs. It also helped us to understand the administrative structure and content of educational programs, including key personnel to contact for further information. This search also turned up many useful resources for teaching. In addition, we made email contact and conducted phone interviews with a number of administrators and faculty responsible for curriculum implementation and evaluation. Finally, we engaged in a cursory review of the literature base on the pedagogy (teaching of children) and andragogy (teaching of adults) of advancing socially just and anti-oppressive education and practices. For this work, we define education to include both classroom teaching on content (e.g., microaggressions, social justice, role of power/privilege, oppression) and on learning skills for social work practice across micro-meso-macro levels of action. We consider both classroom and field placement to be the primary sites of educating and training our students.
Our recommendations, based on this work are:

1. **That Curriculum Policy Committee (CPC) continuing the efforts of the Task Force around curriculum reform with special focus on social justice, power, privilege, cycles of oppression, inequality, and microaggressions.**

If this is the charge of CPC, we strongly recommend the CPC:

- Develop a set of philosophies and principles (4-5 maximum) that both draw upon SSA’s Mission, Social Work Values and Ethics, and also SSA’s unique interdisciplinary tradition. Examples of philosophies and principles might include concepts like: power and privilege, the cycle of oppression, intersectionality, self-awareness, social justice, critical theory.
  - To inform this work, we strongly recommend the committee consider existing models at peer institutions (e.g., Michigan’s model of articulating its core principles and philosophies, UW-Seattle’s ideas of social justice praxis, the Brown School’s manual for self-awareness workshop, and UNC’s teaching resources on inclusion)
  - We strongly recommend the committee draw from the literature base on andragogy (adult education) particularly for professional (rather than disciplinary) education

We also recognize the ongoing work of the CPC from last year to restructure the curriculum more broadly. We envision these recommendations as integral and complimentary (rather than displacing or superseding) that work. Other key partnerships must include the Doctoral Program Director and Chair of the Doctoral Committee, Sydney Hans, to coordinate these efforts and consult. This would necessarily include the training of doctoral students on teaching within the Thursday Doctoral Workshops (See “Training” section of report page 31).

2. **That SSA create a more structured curricular model that merges an integrative approach with adding a single required core course that all students would take.**

- Collaborating with the Doctoral Program to align our teaching philosophies across Masters and Doctoral curricula
- Strategically organizing the required course to occur during the 1st year, and ideally in the first quarter. This should also be strategically linked to orientation activities, exposing students to foundational concepts to be used throughout their educational experience at SSA
- Other considerations include retaining the cohort structure for this course, as well as creating a rigorous training and transparent selection process of the faculty and instructors who would be responsible for teaching the required course.
Training all faculty and instructors (not just those teaching this core course) in the core philosophies of the curriculum. Consider how training will occur for adjunct faculty.

Measures to regularly evaluate student knowledge and skills for practice as well as faculty and instructor knowledge and skills in teaching

Why a mixed integrative and required core course model? We conclude that there is a critical need for our own curriculum to add structure to the “diversity course” requirements. There are too many courses; not all courses equally or critically address these issues to the depth needed. We find it unacceptable that some students could complete their two years at SSA and avoid being deeply exposed to key content on social justice, privilege/power, cycles of oppression and learning effective methods of engaging human diversity in their professional practice. Our conclusion is that in reworking a mixed integrative model, everyone would take the same required class. This course would serve as an umbrella course to teach the principles outlined in our revised curriculum. Students would be introduced to these core principles as a lens that they then experience throughout their two years here in the context of different courses and different professors (thus the integrative element of our recommendations and reinforcement of the value of exposing students to a diversity of thinking through our interdisciplinary faculty). This would retain our value of instructors teaching to their strengths, without risking that our students lack a course that exposes them to a core set of principles and knowledge in the area of social justice and anti-oppressive practice. The evaluative component must then also exist across all courses to ensure teaching is inclusive of these principles in ways that are relevant to the course.

There are many similar and different approaches to teaching social justice and “diversity” among our peer schools (see Appendix E) as well as in education, counseling psychology and other professions. Several campus-wide initiatives also exist at peer institutions (e.g., Princeton, UW-Seattle). There are many places to make our own principles distinct from existing models. We believe that making our own principles and mission explicit (as other schools have done quite visibly on their webpages) will help to identify what is distinct about SSA as well as to showcase our leadership in this area both within the University of Chicago and the field of Social Work.

Several schools have already agreed to consult with us depending on how our future work unfolds. We believe such partnerships and collaborations also build community and collegiality between SSA and the many other Social Work schools who share this commitment and mission. Certainly all of these partnerships will be distinct and will take shape as the work emerges.

Finally, it is important to make maximum use of existing teaching supports that are already positioned and resourced to have impact in this area. To that end, this work should include partnering/consulting with University of Chicago’s Center for Teaching and Learning (currently more focused on doctoral education), as well as the Racial Justice Pedagogy Reading group on campus.
3. That SSA identify more robust methods for evaluating our curriculum and teaching, including on-line evaluation methods and mid-quarter evaluations. We also recommend periodic use of peer-teaching reviews.

- Create new teaching evaluations, with relevant measures to evaluate teacher skill/knowledge and student skill/knowledge across key domains
- Require mid-quarter evaluations and potential for peer-teaching reviews
- Develop on-line system of evaluations (instead of in-class paper evaluations)
- Develop system of response when teacher evaluations are unacceptably low

We recognize the need to improve upon our teaching evaluations, and the lack of access to training and support when the need for improvement is identified. We must have additional (and improved/restructured) items on the course evaluations that measure both student learning and instructor competence/skill in these domains. Having this data will help the Deputy Dean of Curriculum to target areas for additional training and professional development.

To improve efficiency and use of in-class time, we suggest moving to an on-line system that is linked to receiving the grade postings only after students fill out their evaluations. There are other models of evaluating that are more student-driven (e.g., "Youthtruth" used in K-12 settings). This student-centered philosophy also informed our recommendation for the universal use of mid-quarter evaluations and teacher-driven methods of peer-review.

4. That the Deputy Dean of Curriculum’s office be more robustly resourced to support the deployment and management of this curriculum.

To this end, we recommend:

- Adding a staff position in an administrative role. This person would also manage access to training of all new instructors/faculty as well as existing faculty both junior and senior. One possibility is to hire an existing instructor who possesses credibility and competence in these areas of teaching.

- Possibly partnering with the provost's office for financial support to faculty and instructors to receive special training when issues arise

- That the Deputy Dean of Curriculum’s office develop methods to evaluate these principles and competencies in teaching as they hire and supervise all instructors (both full-time and part-time instructors and adjuncts).

- That the faculty and SSA Dean consider teaching in general, but specifically in these areas, as an important dimension to discuss and value in evaluating new faculty hires. Through interviews with the Deputy Dean of Curriculum, this can be discussed with candidates, but the faculty should collectively assess this as well.
That SSA create an easy-to-access, on-line teaching resource from SSA web-page linking to both campus-wide, and Social Work/SSA specific teaching supports:

- We suggest a thorough vetting of high quality training and supportive teaching resources to meet the needs of a diverse faculty body (e.g., need for training efforts and teaching supports that are not solely geared toward white/heterosexual/upper-middle class instructors).
- The training have evidence of effectiveness. All of this must include an independent evaluative component (in addition to student self-report).
- That an SSA teaching “toolkit” be created, routinely updated and made easily available to the SSA community

5. That the Deputy Dean of Faculty Development (DDFD) expand beyond research, to include training and supporting our tenure-track faculty to become exemplary teachers.

- We recommend training and supports that are attuned to faculty diversity representing a range of disciplinary backgrounds, social identities, teaching styles, and intellectual perspectives but retain common focus on the teaching of future social workers.

- We recommend that the DDFD collaborate with the Provost’s office to create and make available to faculty, senior lecturers and full-time instructors an application process to receive course release or summer salary support to redesign an existing course or create a new one that will meet the criteria of an “exemplary” class to teach content on social justice, critical self-reflexivity, power/privilege, intersectionality, etc. This should be considered an “award” and showcased on our School’s webpage.

We fully recognize this will be a substantial culture shift; to expand “faculty development” to include the development of exemplary teachers at a research institution. But we believe that effectively responding to ongoing and urgent student and faculty concerns regarding our curriculum and its shortcoming requires this shift. Indeed, our peer institutions have already done this (see for example UC-Berkeley, University of Michigan, Hunter, UW-Seattle, Smith College, and UNC-Chapel Hill, Washington University). There are many teaching supports that already exist online, at peer institutions, and at the University of Chicago. We should both use these as well as consider developing cutting edge and novel approaches to 21st century social work education in this area. All of these efforts should be made publically available and showcased on our webpage.

6. That transparent and inclusive processes accompany this work. This includes active and diverse student involvement, and creating open/ongoing avenues and venues for input and feedback loops to and from the broader SSA community.

- That methods of being proactive in announcing these efforts and ongoing updates be devised this fall and used regularly to promote open avenues of input and information
sharing. This includes stakeholders in the broader community: adjuncts, field and task supervisors, field liaisons, alum, etc.

- Specifically regarding student participation on the Curriculum Policy Committee, we recommend involving 2nd year students who have had a year of familiarity with the curriculum and are in a better position to provide informed feedback after 1 year of courses. One option would be to use application process.

For application: Have opening statement about the presence of identity questions on application like race, gender identity, sexual identity and how they will be used. For example: *these are labels that are often placed on us, and we recognize the limitations of each of these labels. We also recognize the need to make sincere efforts to balance the standpoints from which committee members might speak and as such, despite the limitations of these labels, we ask you to indicate identities that you wish to share on this application.* (Or something like this) And then ask a few demographic questions.

Possible questions to also have applicants respond to (in a comment box with very limited word count allowance):
- Why are you interested in the curriculum at SSA?
- What do you like or value about SSA’s current curriculum?
- What do you dislike or think is missing in SSA’s current curriculum?

Other recommended considerations related to the curriculum:

1. Use of faculty meetings and retreats for ongoing discussion and growth of our curriculum, creative teaching methods, new content emerging in social work and related (or seemingly unrelated) fields.
2. Use of workshops and doctoral teaching seminars to more broadly reach both PhD students, faculty, lecturers, instructors, and adjuncts around their teaching. (See training section).
3. Consider formalizing “lead teacher” models (already happening at SSA for some core courses). Perhaps pilot peer-reviews in this context.
4. Hold professional development workshops for “Teaching at SSA” including field liaisons and supervisors on issues of critical self-reflexivity, microaggressions, intersectionality, power/privilege, etc.

*Training*

It is paramount that SSA creates a climate and culture that uphold the values and ethics of the social work profession to ensure that these and other SSA-specific values are at the forefront of our endeavors. One aspect of improving the organizational climate at SSA involves training community members to acquire new skills and behaviors to apply in their current work environments. This also helps to ensure students who leave SSA have an experience where anti-oppression and social justice (among other core values) have been modeled by the institution they attend. In this way, students receive experiential grounding
and ideally, will then model these behaviors themselves as professionals in their new working environments with clients and colleagues (Goodman, 2001). While SSA administrators, faculty and staff are in critical positions to act as a teachers and role models in this area, not all SSA employees or appointees currently possess the skills or knowledge to serve in this important role. One way of supporting this organizational growth is through training. Training may be particularly effective for improved organizational performance as past research suggests that changes at the organizational level have the most significant effect on diversity outcomes (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006).

A second domain of training involves the very specific skills related to teaching. Through engaging in our curriculum (including fieldwork), SSA students must acquire the knowledge and skills for practices that are socially just and for interrupting cycles of oppression, microaggressions, and social and economic inequalities (CSWE, 2015). Yet their success in meeting these required competencies rests on the ability of SSA as an organization to provide educational experiences largely through teachers (in classrooms and in the field) who are equipped to teach such skills to a highly diverse group of students; teachers who themselves must be critically self-aware of their own identities and statuses as they engage students around social justice praxis within and outside of the classroom (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994; Kern-Bowen & Gardner, 2010; Maher & Tetreaut, 2001; Marzano, 2007). While some of these issues are also taken up in the curriculum reform recommendations, our work included attention to additional training considerations at SSA to supplement the preparation and modeling of social work values and ethics across all levels of action and practice: administration and management, research, teaching, policy, advocacy, and work with individuals, families and communities.

Methods

We approached the task of researching training in three different ways. First, we conducted an online search of national models of training, including training at the University of Chicago, and conducted some direct interviews. Second, we explored trainings specifically on microaggressions in the classroom and related trainings offered at other institutions. Third, we explored both schools of social work as well as other professional schools to evaluate the range of approaches in addressing “diversity training” for teaching and for structural change within the larger institutional context. Below are recommendations that begin to address the needs of faculty, administrators, staff, and students (Master’s and Ph.D. levels).

Classroom Management and Teaching

Similar to the University of Chicago, some institutions have teaching centers on their campuses. To varying degrees, these centers offer training resources to assist with developing teaching and classroom management skills. Unfortunately our research revealed many websites to be outdated and unmanaged, thus limiting an otherwise potentially helpful resource. However, we have collected several promising resources and supports for teaching that will be compiled into a teaching toolkit this year. This process did contribute to the recommendations that follow at the end of this section.
Microaggression Training

Microaggressions are commonly referred to as the "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults... intentional and unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership (Sue, 2010, p. 3). Microaggressions are a subtle daily fact of modern social life (Sue, 2010). Still, they have a profoundly draining and negative affect on both classroom learning and the overall institutional environment, particularly for underrepresented and minoritized students. The issue of microaggressions between faculty and students and within and across student groups has been a recurring theme at SSA as evidenced by our recent town hall meeting and a number of individual reports by students to faculty members and SSA's administration (See Appendix B, The Petition). Perhaps less discussed, but no less present or pervasive, are the same everyday microaggressions that faculty and staff experience within SSA. It is critical, for the health and well-being of our organization and to a shared sense of community and belonging that we directly acknowledge the presence of microaggressions at SSA, and become skilled in recognizing, interrupting and preventing their deleterious effects within the classroom and across the institution for us all. Our research in this area suggests that we are behind many other institutions who are already taking action. Below is a list, with hyperlinks, to such training. (See also Appendix A):

- University of Illinois
- University of California System (UC System)
- University of Minnesota
- University of Michigan, Staff and Student Life Diversity-Inclusion Series
- University of Wisconsin

The University of California system is most noted for taking a systematic approach to training on microaggressions. In response to a 2012 campus climate survey which found reports of discrimination and/or insensitive language and behavior to be commonplace at UC, the UC system held a three-day workshop focused on faculty, staff, and graduate student training to support recognizing and addressing microaggressions in the classroom.

Other institutions have implemented microaggression training on a smaller scale such as providing workshops to faculty specifically focused on recognizing and interrupting microaggressions in the classroom. As noted earlier, much of this training is coordinated by a university-wide organization or outside professionals. Irrespective or where such training originates, most workshops include concrete skill development on teachers’ and students’ abilities to recognize when a microaggression has occurred and promising practices for their negotiation and prevention. There are a number of individuals and some organizations that have facilitated microaggression training at Universities across the country. As such, locating and contracting for such services should not be a barrier. All efforts, however, must include an evaluative component.
Recommendations

As outlined above, we determined that training is critical for several key constituencies at SSA. The needs for each population require different training which would be more deeply informed by the needs assessment. However, we offer some initial thoughts below.

In general, promising models that create organizational change in this area suggest the following overarching recommendations are critical:

- That SSA develop a structure that supports easy access to evidence-based trainings for faculty, lecturers, instructors, adjuncts, staff, administrators and students.
- That trainings must remain sensitive to the diversity within our community and extend beyond Eurocentric or monolithic assumptions (meaning trainings that assume a white, heterosexual, male teacher, social worker, or assume the same identities of students).
- That the training considered include both knowledge based cognitive training, as well as more experiential/developmental trainings.
- That SSA take the lead in hosting (through hiring a professional) one or two trainings for students around specific skill development areas but also provide information about accessing other existing trainings and resources beyond SSA.
- That in the short term, SSA commit to an initial training (through hiring of a professional) of its employees on microaggressions and anti-oppressive practice and include administrators, staff, faculty, adjuncts and fulltime instructors, field liaisons.
- That SSA commit to a long-term strategy that includes developing a budget for training all new SSA employees (i.e., staff, faculty, lecturers, instructors, adjuncts, field professionals) on microaggressions and skills related to anti-oppressive practices
- That trainings are extended to field liaisons and task supervisors.
- That SSA develop a “teaching toolkit” and other resources accessible through a link on the school’s webpage that would be frequently updated and expanded for SSA faculty, instructors, and field liaisons.
- That SSA connect to existing supports and teaching resources on campus.
- That all training engage an evaluative component.

Some additional considerations for specific constituent groups include:

SSA Faculty, Lecturers, and Full-time Instructors

- Integrate an anti-oppression and microaggression education training session at the annual faculty retreat and also during faculty meetings when possible. Bring in external experts who are trained in this area instead of relying on existing faculty or University employees.
- The Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion would provide diversity and inclusion updates and/or present to the faculty, or make easily available, effective practices and resources for teaching at faculty meetings.
- Develop SSA community norms of attending and hosting campus events related to social justice, microaggressions, and anti-oppressive practices:
  - Annually attend the national speaker session that is open to all SSA community members (and open to the larger University community) to provide education and training around issues of diversity, inclusion, microaggressions, anti-oppression, etc.
  - Attend the specialized session for faculty and administrative staff conducted by the annual speaker.
- Training for all faculty on new “core principles” of the curriculum (per recommendations in curriculum section).
- Develop tools to evaluate and measure pre-post developmental growth and continued needs over time.

**SSA Adjunct Faculty**

- Hold annual retreat and integrate an anti-oppression and microaggression education training session. Bring in external experts who are trained in this area instead of relying on existing faculty or University employees.
- Develop SSA community norms of inviting adjuncts and instructors to attending campus and SSA hosted events related to social justice, microaggressions, and anti-oppressive practices:
  - Annually attend the national speaker session that is open to all SSA community members (and open to the larger University community) to provide education and training around issues of diversity, inclusion, microaggressions, anti-oppression, etc.
  - Attend the specialized session for faculty and administrative staff conducted by the annual speaker.
- Training for all instructors and adjuncts on new “core principles” of the curriculum (per recommendations in curriculum section).
- Develop tools to evaluate and measure pre-post developmental growth and continued needs over time.

**SSA Staff and all Deans (SSA Dean, other Deans, Associate Deans, and Deputy Deans)**

- Design an annual full-day professional development and diversity training retreat and integrate training session for management and leadership skills and knowledge related to critical self-reflexivity, anti-oppression, power/privilege, microaggressions,
and related topics. Bring in external experts who are trained in this area instead of relying on existing faculty or University employees.

- Develop SSA community norms of attending and hosting campus events related to social justice, microaggressions, and anti-oppressive practices:
  - Annually attend the national speaker session that is open to all SSA community members (and open to the larger University community) to provide education and training around issues of diversity, inclusion, microaggressions, anti-oppression, etc.
  - Attend the specialized session for staff conducted by the annual speaker
- Develop tools to evaluate and measure pre-post developmental growth and continued needs over time

**Ph.D. Students**

- During orientation include training around the foundational principles in the curriculum (described in curriculum section) to include content on microaggressions, anti-oppression practices, power/privilege, and critical self-reflexivity.
- Integrate critical self-reflexivity, anti-oppression and microaggression teaching training into the Thursday Doctoral Workshop and require advanced level Ph.D. students to attend
- Integrate the foundational principles in the curriculum (described in the curriculum section) within research training on conducting research and scholarship that is critically self-reflexive, anti-oppressive, socially just, and attuned to issues of power, privilege.
- Offer an anonymous online exit interview for PhD students with questions pertaining to their overall experiences, classroom and research/advising experiences, and sense of community and school climate.
- Develop SSA community norms of attending and hosting campus events related to social justice, microaggressions, and anti-oppressive practices:
  - Annually attend the national speaker session that is open to all SSA community members (and open to the larger University community) to provide education and training around issues of diversity, inclusion, microaggressions, anti-oppression, etc.
  - Attend the specialized session for students conducted by the annual speaker.
- Develop tools to evaluate and measure pre-post developmental growth and continued needs over time
**Master’s Students**

- During orientation include training around the foundational principles in the curriculum (described in curriculum section) to include content on microaggressions, anti-oppression practices, power/privilege, and critical self-reflexivity.
- Once a quarter, hold a session (perhaps on a Saturday to not conflict with class, work or field) that addresses microaggressions and anti-oppression topics in the classroom, in social work clinical, administrative, policy, community, advocacy, and research settings.
- Review current student and alumni evaluation measures to ensure there are questions addressing their experiences with and needs for training relative these issues.
- Develop SSA community norms of attending and hosting campus events related to social justice, microaggressions, and anti-oppressive practices:
  - Annually attend the national speaker session that is open to all SSA community members (and open to the larger University community) to provide education and training around issues of diversity, inclusion, microaggressions, anti-oppression, etc.
  - Attend the specialized session for students conducted by the annual speaker
- Develop tools to evaluate and measure pre-post developmental growth and continued needs over time

**F. Going Forward: Beyond the lexicons and pursuit of “inclusion and diversity”**

Committing to this work is a long-standing pledge that transcends recommendations, tasks or checklists to complete within a set number of years. The spirit of this report seeks to convey that fact. It is a call to the community from the community to both catch up to other efforts nationwide and to go beyond. It requires a strong and public commitment not only from SSA’s leadership but from the full community—that this matters to us and is an urgent priority. It also requires, both vision and action to build mutually reinforcing structures and habits that ultimately cultivate a dynamic, interconnected, and resilient learning community as our modus operandi (Nieto, 2010; Smith & Lindsay, 2014). This is far more than what is conveyed within the language of “diversity” and “inclusion.” Those vocabularies link to actions that risk assimilating new into old; alone they do not require second-order change or any change at all. Our work this summer suggests that valuing “diversity” (in many forms) and “inclusion” are essential necessary foundations; the vehicles through which real change occurs. But alone, they are insufficient conditions for true institutional transformation. That transformation only comes through a deeply collective reimagining of SSA, and the University, in the context of its past, its present, and its future (see Figures 1 and 2).

There are ways in which we could also make deeper connections to national and global social movements in the profession, most notably [Social Work’s Grand Challenges](#) defined as
ambitious but achievable goals for our profession (Uehara, et al., 2013). Several of these are particularly relevant to the issues raised in this report: End Racial Injustice, Reverse Extreme Inequality. While these two are far narrower than the recommended scope of concerns in this report, our efforts should link up to movements in our profession, as well as any overlapping efforts within the professions and disciplines of our SSA colleagues that call for social justice and equity (see for example Social Work Policy Institute, 2014, APA statement against colorblindness). Engaging in these larger movements help to sustain and enhance our own efforts and foster interconnectedness within a broader community committed to collective action for excellence in the academy.

Finally, these aspirations and the changes for which they call, particularly in curriculum reform and training, are not antithetical to the long-standing values of academic freedom. The 1940 statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure\(^2\) and more recent updates by the Association of American Colleges and Universities\(^3\) on academic freedom and academic responsibilities articulate these freedoms as applying to both the classroom and to research. Well known are the protections this affords professors, particularly those with tenure, to research, publish and teach scientific findings and facts may be unpopular or even in opposition to the politics or conventions of society and their Universities. Less known is that these same principles also protect the rights of students to learn the full scope of available knowledge. Many academic units, like SSA, must also balance these rights with requirements from their accrediting bodies regarding the minimum of content and competence to which schools must teach. Academic freedom, in policy or practice, has never meant that faculty (or students) cannot be bound to a minimum set of required criteria or content for guiding teaching and student learning. Going forward, it will be important for SSA to engage in discussions and actions that live up to a practice of academic freedom that balances individual freedoms with the responsibilities and commitments of an accredited school of social work. We can pursue the pluralism of ideas and truths; the purpose of universities as a place to both discover and critique ideas and knowledge and to provide opportunities for our students to do the same. Student concerns this year make clear, however, that many feel as though their rights to access and learn very basic knowledge and skills required by CSWE have been suppressed. This report calls SSA to teach and model core principles and values of the profession at a minimum. But this includes engaging a critical and multi-disciplinary perspective on these same core principles, ethics, and value claims. Such an approach to knowledge and skill development opens up freedoms for scholarship, science, teaching, practice and learning. Pursuing this challenge is deeply anti-oppressive, freeing, and literally depends upon the enduring engagement of all SSA community members.

\(^2\) Available at [www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm)

\(^3\) Available at [http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/academic-freedom](http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/academic-freedom)
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Harvard University (2011). Building an inclusive community, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: The GSAS Bulletin.


The Petition (2015). From good intentions to meaningful actions: A student led call for social justice at SSA. Petition Submitted to SSA administration by SSA students.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University or College System</th>
<th>University-wide, Multi-year, Strategic planning process</th>
<th>PUBLIC ASSESSABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY ON LINE</th>
<th>Has Comprehensive Webpage</th>
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<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>NO (Statement only)</td>
<td>NO (campus climate survey for women. Not publically available)</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>Princeton</td>
<td>Many Voices, one future: An Inclusive Princeton</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>UW-Seattle</td>
<td>Diversity Blueprint</td>
<td>YES (Goal attainment)</td>
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<td>Portland State</td>
<td>U Belong initiative, IDEAL Framework and document, and Diversity Action Plan</td>
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<td>Case Western</td>
<td>Annual diversity reports</td>
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<td>UM-Michigan</td>
<td>Series of reports following 2003 Affirmative Action law suits, currently engaged in a 1 year planning process that followed multi-year work since 2003.</td>
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<td>timeline</td>
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<td>University of IL Urbana Champaign</td>
<td>Recipient of one of the Diversity In Higher Education Awards, Beginning in 2009, conducts impact reports</td>
<td>Somewhat within impact reports. Also within Environmental Scan of all UI system schools</td>
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<td>University of North Carolina</td>
<td>Recipient of one of the 2015 “diversity in higher education” awards</td>
<td>Posts Strategic areas NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Penn State</td>
<td>Has ongoing strategic plan process into 2020. Recipient of one of the Diversity in Higher Education Awards</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>John Hopkins</td>
<td>Launched a 12 year strategic plan: Diversity and Inclusion 2020</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Limited. Has link “what we are doing”</td>
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<td>Northwestern</td>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion White Paper</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Swarthmore College</td>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report</td>
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<td>Victoria Univ. Melbourne, AU</td>
<td>Social Inclusion and Equity Plan, 2010-2013</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>U Mass-Boston</td>
<td>Mission and Diversity Strategic Plan (bullet points posted)</td>
<td>Summary with bullet points NO</td>
<td>Limited: link to events &amp; sexual harassment training</td>
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<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Transforming Maryland</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>UW-Madison</td>
<td>“Forward Together…”</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>NO, but does have policies on equity posted</td>
<td>POLICIES ON EQUITEY and advisory group NO</td>
<td>Limited Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>NO, but School of Social Work has <strong>Strategic plan</strong> that includes “living our commitments to diversity and advancing social justice” publically posted.</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>NO, but has <strong>public statement</strong> responding to town hall grievances and resulting initiatives for diversity, inclusion and LGBT student resources</td>
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<td>Yale</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>1999 conducted task force, no public strategic process followed. 2015 issued $30 million dedicated to “diversity.”</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>Boston University</td>
<td><strong>Strategic Plan Outline</strong> and PDF report from President</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith College</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>Duke University</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
<td>Has <strong>general strategic plan</strong> that integrates intercultural and diversity missions. And specific Task force report for <strong>Equity and Accountability</strong></td>
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<td>SUNY</td>
<td><strong>SUNY diversity task force</strong> Work is currently underway</td>
<td>Not known if it will be made public</td>
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<td>UC-Berkeley (Cal. State Systems have state plan)</td>
<td><strong>Pathway to Excellence, Regents Statement 4400</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Yes, <strong>Campus Climate Survey Results</strong></td>
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<td>Harvard</td>
<td><strong>Faculty Climate Survey</strong> (per Task Forces on Women) Just made announcement of new diversity office Fall 2015 in medical school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanford</td>
<td>Re-affirmed earlier set of statements and commitments. No plan</td>
<td>NO</td>
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APPENDIX B: The Petition

From Good Intentions to Meaningful Actions: A Student-Led Call for Social Justice at SSA

To the Leadership of the School of Social Service Administration (SSA):

As current and former SSA students, we are calling for institutional self-reflection and change. We are dismayed by the historical neglect of issues of race, power, oppression, and privilege in the SSA curriculum and structure as it impacts students, resulting in a school climate that does not allow for honest, challenging conversations or training opportunities in these areas. We are primarily concerned with the lack of training for faculty and staff in anti-oppressive practice and managing difficult conversations in the classroom; the ongoing occurrence of microaggressions in the classroom; and a lack of transparency and accountability in addressing these microaggressions and other student grievances within the administration.

These are grave concerns given the widening inequality gap and the structural oppression that impact us and our clients daily. We are lacking the tools, support, and space from our institution to engage in conversations about how our identities, power, and privilege impact our work to make lasting social change. As a result, in the field we are unsure of how to navigate our privilege professionally and how to advance the interest of our clients by changing oppressive systems. Having one-on-one conversations with students who pose these concerns is ineffective and irresponsible because it restricts the strategic, institutional response necessary to address the root of our institution’s ineffectiveness: SSA currently is not structured as an anti-oppressive organization.

While SSA’s institutional rhetoric affirms anti-oppressive values, institutional practice falls short.

Our mission statement reads: “The University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration is dedicated to working toward a more just and humane society through research, teaching, and service to the community.”

The NASW Code of Ethics outlines the need to educate students about cultural and ethnic diversity and oppression, as well as the expectation that social workers promote social welfare and take social and political action to do so (see the preamble as well as Standards 1.05(c), 6.01, and 6.04(a)).

These ethical standards are also expressed in the CSWE’s Core Competencies that all social work students are expected to develop while at SSA (see specifically EPs 2.1.4, 2.1.5).

In its current state, we do not believe that SSA is adequately preparing social workers to fulfill SSA’s mission or the NASW ethical standards nor develop the CSWE Core Competencies. To address this, students and alumni have co-authored a delineation of SSA’s institutional problems and priority interventions for their resolution. In summary, we demand that SSA:

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4 See the attached timeline of this history.
5 See the list that follows
- Collaborate with students and a third-party, applied research organization\(^6\) to create a 5-year strategic plan to understand and address SSA’s structural oppression.

- Hire a full-time staff member (Anti-Oppression Coordinator) on a 5-year contract to coordinate the implementation of the 5-year strategic plan, who regularly reports to the student body\(^7\). On the hiring committee for the Anti-Oppression Coordinator there must be a student representative elected by peers.

- Make an institutional commitment to transparency on who at SSA holds responsibility for addressing student grievances about bias in the classroom and what accountability measures exist for ANY teaching staff.

**As a preliminary step towards accomplishing these goals, we request a response within one week of receipt of this letter to schedule a meeting that includes key stakeholders (Dean, Dean of Students, Dean of Curriculum, Dean of Admissions, Director of Field Education, and Master’s and doctoral students and alumni from SSA; the Provost of the University and the Director of OMSA) to further detail the demands listed and provide input on a plan of action. This meeting should be held by the end of June, 2015. If a response is not sent or does not include a meeting date, The Elephant will file a complaint with the CSWE for SSA’s failure to meet several of their educational policies and accreditation standards.**

It is vital that these demands are met in order to ensure that social workers have the capacity to ethically and justly serve their clients and community. However, these points should serve as a springboard for an ongoing commitment to social justice at SSA, and are not intended to be exhaustive.

*This letter was informed in part by statements made by the following institutions on the Grand Jury decisions in the cases of Mike Brown and Eric Garner: St. Louis Students in Solidarity, Columbia School of Social Work, Smith School of Social Work, NYU Silver School of Social Work, Berkeley School of Social Work, Portland State University School of Social Work, NASW, Undoing Racism Internship Project, and Georgetown Law School.*

**In Solidarity,**

The Elephant Student Association  
Latin@ Student Association  
African American Student Association

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**A sampling of reasons people signed the petition:**

"I'm tired of being looked at to 'speak for my race' in class."

"Too often have I felt silenced or witnessed peers tokenized and marginalized in the classroom..."

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\(^6\) For example, The Center for the Study of Social Policy is engaged in carrying out the work of becoming an anti-racist organization. See http://www.cssp.org/about/racial-equity-agenda

\(^7\) This would include supporting students to promote anti-oppressive programming at SSA, including coordinating curriculum efforts, incoming student orientation, outside training, and more.
“Issues of race, power, oppression, and privilege need to be in the front and center of both the curriculum and day-to-day culture of SSA...”

“... An adjunct HBSE professor didn’t know what ‘heteronormative’ meant and refused to allow a conversation about queer theory contributions to developmental psychology... the administration’s lack of response despite weeks of conversations.”

“Because we need to dismantle institutionalized racism in every sector...”

“...SSA needs to do more to prepare students to FIGHT for our profession’s values, not just believe in them personally. We’re not here to just help people cope with living a deeply (and increasingly) inequitable society-- we’re here to change it.”

“... As a 1st year, when I asked for attention to be paid to the failure of some professors to consider diverse learning styles, I was given a brochure for university counseling services and the office of disabilities.”

“... Social workers should stand for social justice and against the status quo...”

“... It’s time for SSA to enact socially just, accountable, and transparent social work administration, pedagogy, and practice to further the aims of social justice.”

“Because in 2 years of coursework, 8 of the 11 SSA instructors teaching my classes have, at least once, terminated a discussion because it dealt with an issue of race that they did not feel competent to address.”

“The actions (and inactions) taken by this institution- whether through its staff, faculty or curriculum, have created a space that many experience as exclusive and unsafe... We are a profession dedicated to social justice but that means nothing when we fail to enact these principles in our daily lives. SSA needs to hold themselves accountable to the social work profession, larger community and most of all to its own students. SSA, you are responsible.”

“...because when asked to describe my social identity, I was corrected. Because I was told that I must have "done something to myself to hide my accent" to make myself sound intelligent.”
APPENDIX C: Sample Job Description of Dean of Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion

Draft Position Description
School of Social Service Administration

Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion

The University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration (SSA) is dedicated to working toward a more just and humane society through research, teaching, and service to the community. As one of the oldest and most highly regarded graduate schools of social work, SSA prepares professionals to handle society’s most difficult problems by developing new knowledge, promoting a deeper understanding of the causes and human costs of social inequities, and building bridges between rigorous research and the practice of helping individuals, families, and communities to achieve a better quality of life.

Under the direction of the Dean of SSA, the Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion will provide leadership in all aspects of the School’s efforts in creating and sustaining an inclusive, equitable and socially just environment at SSA including: education and training of students, faculty, full-and part-time lecturers and staff in anti-oppression and anti-oppressive social work practice; curriculum policy and development; community building and outreach; and recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students, particularly those from under-represented populations.

The Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion will also work collaboratively with the University of Chicago’s Office of the Deputy Provost for Minority Education and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs as well as community leaders to help achieve the broad goals of the University of Chicago’s Diversity Strategic Plan.

Responsibilities

In this newly created position, the Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion will:

- Serve as senior-level advisor on social justice, equity and inclusion to the SSA Dean, Associate and Deputy Deans, Dean of Students, and SSA Student Government Association;
- Oversee the implementation of a third-party needs assessment of SSA’s current governance structure, policies, curriculum, training, and faculty/student/staff supports;
- Head an SSA Social Justice Strategic Planning Committee, a committee of student delegates, faculty members, staff, and administrators who will collaboratively develop SSA’s five-year Social Justice plan based on the external needs assessment;
- Provide on-going leadership and direction for a broad scope of activities to promote Social Justice within SSA, based on the goals of the Social Justice Strategic Plan;
• Oversee efforts to increase equity and inclusion in the student, faculty and staff ranks of SSA by serving on the faculty-chaired master’s and doctoral admissions committees and the faculty hiring committee;
• Oversee the development of trainings for students (including new students at orientation), faculty, part-time lecturers and staff on anti-oppression and anti-oppressive social work practice;
• Work closely with Dean and Deputy Deans of the School to identify best practices around the teaching of anti-oppressive social work practice;
  • Work with the Director of Field Education and the Deputy Dean for Curriculum to develop effective feedback tools for measuring information on topics of equity and inclusion in classroom instruction;
  • Work with the Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Curriculum to study, implement or revise school policies in order to promote equity and inclusion;
• Work with Associate Dean for External Affairs to identify grants, gifts, scholarships and other funds to support diversity and inclusion programs;
• Build authentic and collaborative working relationships with external diverse communities and stakeholders to build bridges within SSA and the greater community.
• Work with Deputy Dean for Faculty Development to develop mentoring programs for underrepresented faculty;
• Serve as a resource to SSA student affinity groups.
• Oversee the activities of a Program Coordinator who assists the Dean of Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion in meeting these objectives.

Qualifications

Successful candidates must possess a doctorate or PhD in social work, clinical or counseling psychology or higher education administration; at least 10 years prior experience in a higher education setting, preferably at highly selective institutions; and experience with strategic planning, working with faculty, staff, students, community members, and senior-level administrators, and with high-quality, evidence-based diversity/cultural competence trainings.
APPENDIX D: Sample of Amended Mission Statement Revised to tie to Social Justice

SSA Mission Statement

The University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration is dedicated to working toward a more just and humane society through research, teaching, and service to the community. As one of the oldest and most highly regarded graduate schools of social work, SSA prepares professionals to handle society's most difficult problems by developing new knowledge, promoting a deeper understanding of the causes and human costs of social inequities, and building bridges between rigorous research and the practice of helping individuals, families, and communities to achieve a better quality of life and interrupt cycles of oppression.

The School and its culture exhibit six unique hallmarks that distinguish us as one of the premier schools of social work leading the field into the future.

1. SSA's interdisciplinary focus:

SSA harnesses the power of interdisciplinary work. This is reflected in our diverse faculty, who are drawn from a multiplicity of disciplines. Our intellectual pluralism is one of the things we value most about our School. Both our research and teaching are infused with this interdisciplinary spirit and we are interested in, and continue to foster, ambitious collaborations across the University, Chicago, nationally, and internationally, to catalyze real world change.

2. Faculty scholarship and research:

Our faculty are actively involved in cutting-edge scholarship and research that informs and shapes the field. Faculty are well-versed in both the major issues of the day (often involved in the actual framing of those issues) and the methodologies of research required to explore those issues. They are pioneers, discoverers, and change agents. They ask tough questions and pursue knowledge with rigor because they believe in the transformative power of ideas. They bring the insights gained from their scholarly investigations into the classroom, encouraging critical questioning, and ensuring that students have up-to-date knowledge of trends in the field.

3. Person-in-environment:

Our curriculum is built on the assumption that all clinical social workers need to understand and appreciate the complexities of organizational theory and practice, the policies that govern human services, and how to advocate for change that advances social and economic justice in those
systems. Similarly, students who are preparing for work at larger system levels need to know and understand the needs of those who seek our services, and how to assess, intervene, and evaluate those services. Our core curriculum gives equal weight to micro and macro practice and the concentrations continue to be informed by issues at multi-system levels. Our organizational structure and administrative policies likewise spring from an appreciation of organizational theory and the need for effective feedback loops in a healthy system.

4. Students develop skills in critical thinking:

Effective and ethical practitioners must be skilled in raising questions about assertions made by theoreticians, researchers, supervisors, and colleagues. They must be able to analyze the purported rationale behind those assertions and assess the nature of evidence supporting them, while also understanding the politics of knowledge production: that power and privilege may elevate some theories and data while silencing others. We strive to produce professionals who engage in empirically-based, anti-oppressive practice, and who understand the critical importance of garnering rigorous evidence that informs practice.

5. Chicago provides the context for field work and other learning opportunities:

Chicago and its surroundings provide a superb context for learning in the field of social work as one of the nation’s most diverse cities. Chicago experiences all of the significant problems of the modern metropolis: poverty, violence, crime, dysfunctional schools, inadequate health services, drug use, family breakdown, social exclusion, and community disruption. Our students are able to witness, learn from, and contribute to the solutions of these conditions.

6. Commitment to social and economic justice (Sample Statement)

SSA joins the social work profession in a struggle against social and economic inequality, injustice, and oppression based on such variables as: race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability, immigration status, and others. We recognize the malicious consequences of racism and other forms of systemic oppression. We are committed to work toward becoming an anti-racist and anti-oppressive institution by diligently questioning and challenging systems and common practices within and outside of SSA and building critical self-awareness of our impact on the surrounding community. SSA shares with the social work profession a profound commitment to serving oppressed and at-risk members of our society. We strive to teach a curriculum that seriously considers the interests and experiences of marginalized populations as we critically explore intersectionality and cycles of oppression. Lastly, we are committed to developing a transparent, accountable, and inclusive organizational structure in which all faculty members, staff members, and students are valued.
## APPENDIX E: Table of Schools and Curricular Models of Teaching Social Justice in SW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Programs</th>
<th>Position of Persons Contacted Regarding Curriculum (Mostly Deans for Curriculum/Academic Affairs)</th>
<th>MODEL: Required Course (RC), Integration (I), or Mixed (M)</th>
<th>Web-based review (W) Email (E) Interview (I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC – Berkeley, School of Social Welfare</td>
<td>Assist. Prof., Co-Chair Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, E, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan, School of Social Work</td>
<td>Professor as Assoc Dean for Educational Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, E, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-NC, School of Social Work</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof as Assoc. Dean for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC, School of Social Work</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof as Assoc Dean of Academic Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, E, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT – Austin, School of Social Work</td>
<td>Professor as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, E, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW-Seattle</td>
<td>1 faculty &amp; 1 adjunct who teach required courses Email with Senior Lecturer as Associate Dean for Professional Development</td>
<td>X (with option to major)</td>
<td>W, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington University</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof. as Assoc. Dean for Diversity Senior Lecturer as Lead Instructor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W, E, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW-Madison</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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