

**ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND
SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

EDUCATION FOR MACRO INTERVENTION
A SURVEY OF PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

In a recent *ACOSA Updates* bulletin (6/25/12), the Chair of the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration, Sondra Fogel, speaks of hearing a “growing and alarming conversation about the state of macro practice.” That exchange, she states, is widespread among academics and community-based professionals. It concerns “the demise of, or lack of interest in, or lack of support for community/administration/macro practice and scholarship in social work education . . .”

Hers is neither a recent nor an unrecognized uneasiness. Social work was slow to include a macro element in its curriculum structure. Not until 1962 did the Council on Social Work Education’s Curriculum Policy Statement acknowledge community organization as a legitimate practice method on equal footing with casework. That policy change was driven by Harry L. Lurie’s incisive analysis of the “community organization method” in the 12-volume CSWE curriculum study of 1959, led by Werner W. Boehm (Lurie, 1959).

The reason for the retarded trajectory has been attributed to “insufficient political power to open the doors of the professional enterprise to another specialty, and insufficient conformity to the dominant casework model” (Wenocur and Reisch, 1989, p. 233). It isn’t as though macro social work hadn’t emerged in practice to that point. It had emerged and receded.

In an earlier period, grassroots activism and political campaigns were a vibrant aspect of the emerging social work field. Settlement house work and then political reform efforts during the Progressive Era had a significant impact at the system level. But beginning with the 1920s, when psychoanalysis made its indelible mark on the profession, the broader aspects of practice were shunted aside in favor of casework treatment fixed on individuals. True, the Jane Addams heritage was drawn on regularly for ceremonial and celebratory occasions, but the grand lady of social change was then safely closeted away until the next special occasion. Johnson (2004) describes social work as “standing on the legacy of Jane Addams,” but “sitting on the sidelines.” (p. 319)

Following the landmark 1962 curriculum change, macro programs began to expand, especially community organization, during the Johnson presidential years and the 60s upheavals. The uptick was temporary and a substantial closing-down followed. Fisher and Corciullo (2011) document that trend. In the 1980s there was a clear decline in Masters programs offering community organization. By the mid-1990s, only 2.9 to 4.5% of social work graduate students were community or planning practice majors, with the focus among them on traditional community development and planning rather than social change.

Fisher and Corciullo go on to state that this area became “a marginalized subfield in social work” (p. 359). The profession reverted to what Specht and Courtney (1994) described as “worship at the church of individual repair” (p. 12). Those authors and other professionals despaired because the early Mary

Richmond/Jane Addams (micro/macro) relative equilibrium in the field went awry to the detriment of the profession and the citizenry it aspires to serve.

A result of this distorted emphasis is a paucity of prepared professionals to deal with emerging critical social problems. As stated by Mott (2008), "There is a massive shortage of people with the full range of knowledge, skills, and experience needed to tackle immense challenges facing low-income neighborhoods." Those competencies are concentrated in the macro component of the social work professional repertoire. Logic and ethical responsibility mandate that the field commit itself to meeting this challenge and others by rebalancing its training configuration to reinforce the macro aspect. Mizrahi et al. (2006) make that case: "It is essential that schools of social work recruit and prepare professional practitioners skilled in organizing and planning to play a role in improving the social conditions of functional and geographic communities." (p. 1) This report will mark out dimensions of the problem and means of realizing that goal.

The Survey--Overview

Returning to Sondra Fogel's statement on concerns about macro practice, she requested that ACOSA members indicate to her their experiences with these problems and their suggested means to tackle them. It happens that the author recently conducted a survey of the membership that addressed these identical points. The survey and its results serve to respond directly to the Fogel inquiry with organized data. The survey was sponsored by ACOSA, whose Chair at the time, Tracy

Soska, provided consultation and administrative assistance in implementing the project.

The information presented here was derived from that survey of the ACOSA membership conducted in 2010-2011. An email questionnaire was sent to 400 plus members (in three rounds) and returns were received from 172 participants. The purpose of the project, initially, was to examine a wide range of aspects of social work education in the macro area (community organization, administration and policy practice). The presentation here is more circumscribed in scope and deals pointedly with two questions in the survey, one dealing with problems of support in the field as identified by the respondents and another question that asked for suggested solutions to these problems.

The study relies heavily on qualitative responses of participants. These were subjected to a content analysis to develop categories and then to tally within them. Quotes from responses are given liberally in this report to convey both the content and the flavor of comments. The substantive content of responses is presented with scrupulous accuracy. There are, however, modifications in grammar and minor aspects of wording in order to facilitate readability and coherence in the presentation.

The two sub-inquiries in the study will be reported on in sequence.

The Problem Inventory

A key question in the survey asked ACOSA members to comment on the “level of support” in their schools (or departments) for their macro area. Those who

indicated a low level of support were asked to describe in open-ended responses “how is this manifested.” These comments clarify or illustrate Fogel’s concerns about backing for the macro area in social work education; they document the various problems related to support.

There were 52 participants who responded with open-ended observations along these lines and some gave multiple indications of problems (88 in all). The problems they specified were tallied and reported under three categories: Frequently named problems (there were 12 to 18 mentions under this category); Occasionally named problems (there were 2 to 8 mentions under this category); Infrequently named problems (these were 1 mention responses). All were spontaneous and un-cued rather than checklist-guided responses by participants. The number of responses identifying each problem is indicated in parenthesis following each problem statement listed below.

References to “schools” will be shorthand form for either schools or departments in which respondents were situated. A portion of respondents in the survey indicated positive experiences with support in their situations. Accordingly, the problem index identifies real difficulties and issues that exist in an array of social work educational settings, but is not meant to be a universal description of conditions in social work education. When there were reported problems in school environments, these data describe the form they took.

Frequently Noted Problems

Many faculty in social work schools lack interest in or oppose macro courses and programs (18)

Many school colleagues were said to be disinterested in macro curriculum content. Macro faculty are a minority in social work schools, either a handful or often a meager one or two. They have to rely on faculty associates to influence curriculum in favor of macro interests, affect the culture of the school, and attract students to the macro program. The open-ended comments indicated that this backing and cooperation is often missing.

One respondent notes that many faculty have a clear clinical bias that guides their actions. Another indicates hearing disparaging remarks about his field. A third relates that his colleagues tell students: “You will never get a job, or it is a mistake not to get your LCSW—so go clinical.” We are informed that currently many faculty are conservative in outlook and lack strong social justice commitments that were seen in the past. Some faculty colleagues want to eliminate the macro program altogether. The tenor of the comments is reflected in the following statement:

I don't fully understand the [degree of] lack of support, even though I know the majority of the faculty is now narrowly clinical. A few powerful full-profs do not think a macro concentration helps with R1 status. Some disapprove of macro as a remnant of the 60s. Others think only clinically-oriented intervention research is legitimate.

Respondents noted that some faculty who look askance at the macro curriculum, at the same time do have an interest in broad issues of policy analysis (rather than in policy practice).

There is little or no hiring of macro faculty (16)

Lack of macro interest in the school is detrimental to faculty hiring.

Responses describe the hiring situation in discouraging terms: “There have been no hires of macro faculty” or “There's a loss of tenure line positions in this area.” In

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some cases, the macro program is sustained through irregular hiring practices like, “the appointment of dedicated and experienced adjuncts.” While this keeps the program functioning, it prevents the build-up of a regular and continuing relevant faculty core. In some instances, macro hires are given mainly administrative rather than teaching roles in the school. Some respondents indicate that even in the presence of expressed student interest, hiring lags or is non-existent.

The school curriculum structure is primarily clinical (12)

A number of respondents indicate that clinical perspectives dominate their programs. For example: “Our MSW program is ‘Direct Practice with Individuals and Families’, we do not have a macro concentration or specialty.” Some state that curriculum revisions favor development of micro social work and others report that the macro program was recently dropped. They say that this absence of a strong macro presence dampens attraction of students for the program.

In some instances, direct opposition rather than faculty disinterest is at play. This description documents that and also sheds awkward light on macro faculty performance in their area of expertise.

There was a bitter fight some years ago to convert the school from a social justice orientation to a clinical school, for ‘practical’ reasons. Frankly, the clinical people out-organized us. They were very nasty—and very skilled organizers.

Occasionally Noted Problems

Licensure requires many micro courses and leads to little macro content (8)

Licensing requirements in most states have a decided clinical thrust. The purpose is to assure that social workers are qualified to provide therapy and similar services to individuals and families. Schools, therefore, give a high level of attention to courses that have that purpose, to the detriment of other courses. One respondent addressed his concern about licensure as follows: “[With new licensing requirements] many students are afraid they will be unable to obtain employment and, therefore, I believe we will lose more students in this concentration.”

Macro students feel that their employment options will be constrained because they will not be qualified to work in the much larger clinical arena if they are not able get macro jobs or if they want to switch emphasis. Macro faculty see this as a very large impediment. One said: “[Clinically-bounded] licensure is the death of macro practice and is tragic for the future of social work.”

Macro courses are neglected or marginalized (7)

Teaching macro courses does not seem to carry the same weight as teaching courses in other areas of the curriculum. The issue is stated cryptically: “We do not in my opinion [as a school] pay enough attention to the quality or the content of our macro courses.” Another respondent laments that faculty members seem to believe that “anyone,” rather than qualified professionals, can teach macro courses. There is also lack of support for the development of new macro courses, and in particular at the Ph.D. level. In some cases, interested students who are not concentrating in macro intervention become discouraged about exploring the area because they are not able to take anything beyond a first course.

Students are not encouraged to choose a macro program or are deflected to clinical practice (6)

From responses we learn that there are meager efforts to channel students into the macro field. “There are few macro faculty who can generate student interest or provide students with adequate guidance into future careers in macro practice.” There emerges a picture of little or no recruitment of students into the area. They are told there are few jobs and are given little information about this as a career option.

Being in a clinical environment and holding a minority place within the student body fosters little self-generated attraction for the macro option by students. The structure of the curriculum, in some cases, prevents students from learning about macro practice until after they are required to choose their concentration. Beyond this, we are told, faculty sometimes dissuade students who show a leaning toward macro not only explicitly but also in indirect disapproving ways (a frown or guffaw can have an impact). One respondent put it this way, “There are subtle ways of causing students to second guess their decisions to select the social change concentration.”

Administrators of schools do not value the macro curriculum or provide adequate resources and finances for it (5)

Given the micro/macro demographics of social work, it is not surprising that a substantial number of deans have career experience essentially in service to individuals and families. This, respondents tell us, influences the standing of the two orientations in schools. One respondent states: “The dean has a clinical background

and lack of understanding of macro work and macro research.” Another spells out implications: “There’s little support by the administration re hiring, financing, supporting students, and field assignments.”

Other comments disclose that macro is not a priority for the dean, that the dean does not place value on macro practice, and there is no school support from endowment funds for local community-based research projects and partnerships.

These characterizations obviously do not apply to all schools. Some responses, indeed, laud deans and administrators for their explicit support of macro endeavors. There exist strong macro programs in some schools, such as the University of Michigan, Hunter, Pittsburgh, Maryland, and the University of Connecticut, among others.

There is lack of student interest in or knowledge of macro (4)

As already indicated, the absence of macro courses and programs results in lack of student interest. Some students are overwhelmed by the scope of macro practice. And many students come to the school with clinical training in mind as a pre-condition. The current times, a respondent noted, may skew students away from social concerns: “Today’s college student is increasingly individualistically oriented.” Nonetheless, alongside these comments are others from schools signaling real student interest despite deterrents like licensure and faculty indifference. For example, students are reported to have requested more courses and experiences in community practice and been ignored.

In another section of the original survey, respondents were asked to estimate the level of student interest in macro programs over the past 2 to 3 years. The

majority of respondents (52%) indicated that interest is higher or much higher now. Slightly over a third (36%) thought it was about the same. A minority (12%) assessed interest to be lower or much lower. The responses suggest that lack of student interest is not the critical factor in explaining low macro student counts. Some faculty and administrators who attribute limited numbers of macro course offerings to apathy by students are likely to be mistaken or could be using this as justification for neglecting this area of the curriculum.

Field placements are lacking or problematic (3)

Macro field placements are an issue in some schools. One problem involves placing students who are in generic first year programs in enough appropriate settings. A respondent puts it this way. "There are too few first year generalist practicum settings focusing on macro practice." In addition, it is said that practicum policies and procedures require too large a percentage of time in one-on-one direct practice activities. Macro experiences, therefore, get short shrift.

As an aside, from familiarity with this issue, the author would add that often field supervisors lack macro practice knowledge or experience. Generalist placements by CSWE standards are expected to constitute an even balance of micro and macro experiences, but infrequently achieve that. Field instructors often have difficulty in recognizing field activities as macro in character, such as participating in board meetings, advocating for clients, etc.

Because there are fewer trained social workers in the macro area than in the micro area, qualified supervisors are in shorter supply. The difficulty is articulated as follows: "There is too little innovative thinking about how to provide practicum

supervision for macro-oriented field settings without an MSW on staff.” This involves, in particular, cutting edge or advocacy types of organizations. In past efforts to deal with this drawback, practitioners from another agency have sometimes been enlisted to fill in or a faculty member was assigned this role.

There is emphasis on large federal grants that downplay macro research interests (3)

Some respondents tell of being pushed aside academically because the “top priority” of the dean is for faculty to seek high-stake grants from sources that emphasize mental health and other individually focused research efforts. Since many schools are suffering from a budget crunch in these bleak economic times, scanning for the best funding opportunities is a reasonable stance. The consequences, however, play out unevenly in social work schools. A respondent states:

At this time, macro research is not seen to be as valuable [by the dean] as other sorts of research. We are located on a medical campus, where health research funded by NIH grants is the top priority.

Another respondent indicates, likewise, that there is a university-wide emphasis on large NIH, NIMH grants in his situation. Obviously, this results in ever increasing competition for the same limited pool of funds, with diminishing returns for the efforts expended.

There is limited integration of macro with micro in the curriculum (2)

In many schools, the main way a cross-section of students are exposed to macro theory and perspectives is through generic courses that all students are required to take. Some respondents indicate that there are faculty who resist this

approach. To wit: “There’s lack of faculty buy-in for infusing macro content in the foundation courses”—despite the fact that this has been a clear expectation of CSWE.

Infrequently Noted Problems (each mentioned 1 time)

CSWE standards focus on micro competencies. This causes schools to concentrate on and devise a large number of courses related to that component of the curriculum.

Schools show little interest in giving support to scholarship development in the macro area.

Research courses emphasize evidence-based practice (clinically oriented), which results in a heavy or total preoccupation with clinical considerations in the research curriculum.

The clinical area has clearer requirements and a firmer standing. This becomes a strong draw for students.

There are few jobs formally defined as macro social work in the region.

These comments were essentially from the one third plus of survey participants who indicated weak or moderate support for macro programs in their schools and chose to make open-ended statements about problems they had encountered. The listing points to areas requiring attention and amelioration. Based on the author’s life-long tenure as a practitioner and academic in the field, the problems enumerated ring true as significant and ongoing areas of challenge and stress for many macro faculty members. They echo what one hears informally at national conferences in the corridors and coffee shops and mirror what is expressed

in Sondra Fogel’s call and the literature in the field reported earlier. A respondent in the survey captured the outlook of many distressed colleagues: “Macro practice has always been a stepchild—that hasn’t changed.”

Survey participants, in another question, were asked to look beyond an accounting of problems and suggest purposive actions. The next section sets out their recommendations.

The Inventory of Recommended Actions

All respondents were asked to indicate, relative to macro practice in social work education, “What can ACOSA and/or the profession can do to increase support?” There were 104 usable replies to this question. As with the previous item, respondents frequently gave two or more responses to the query. Upon analysis, the responses of ACOSA members fell into seven categories of recommended actions to deal with macro education problems. By far, the largest number of responses concerned *increasing the visibility and advocating for a stronger place for macro practice*. This was followed by a call to *provide more and better educational resources for macro faculty*.

Somewhat less mentioned, in declining order of frequency were: *frame organizational changes and actions within ACOSA, increase member exchange and networking, enhance macro scholarship, resolve student issues, and manage licensure matters*. These will be treated consecutively in the discussion that follows.

Raise the visibility of macro practice and advocate for a strong place for macro within social work institutions and the public (107 mentions)

This was clearly the strongest and most forceful recommendation coming out of the survey. Members felt that their area has been shunted into a background position, having little presence and holding limited status or power. As might be expected, the focus of this concern was the social work educational complex—the Council on Social Work Education and schools of social work. The concern extended beyond to NASW, to the general public, and also to allied professional groups and disciplines, as well as scholarly bodies within the profession. Details on recommended actions follow.

Council on Social Work Education (42 mentions)

CSWE is the chief policy making force in social work education and has a powerful influence on tangible factors like curriculum structure and more intangible matters like the saliency attached to components of social work education. For this reason, respondents said things like, “Focus on CSWE--the message for the importance of macro practice has to come from the top,” or, “advocate for a greater presence in CSWE-sponsored events.”

Respondents made a plea for CSWE to be more proactive in providing relevant materials to faculty and staff in schools. It should pick up on the need “to educate deans and chairs about the macro side of social work and its importance and value to the profession.” They also pushed for making accreditation standards more favorable to macro practice, in part, by eliminating disadvantaging factors, like putting so much emphasis on clinical courses that this leaves little room for macro courses and electives. Also, a strong case was made for giving a boost in carrying forward work that went into delineating macro practice competencies. This refers to

ACOSA work led by Dee Gamble to develop community intervention competencies, augmented by efforts by the Association of Social Work Managers to produce those encompassing administrative functions.

On structural matters, there was an appeal to “take back the CSWE Board,” to institute a “Macro Practice Commission,” and to have stronger involvement with the board of the *Journal of Social Work Education*. Also, it was said, macro faculty should endeavor to publish more articles in the Journal. This could be facilitated by the Journal making an effort to reach out more to macro teachers and scholars, including doing a macro special issue every year to bring that content before its full readership. Also, CSWE should be urged to be more accurate and consistent in the way it lists community organization. Currently, “it’s listed as a field of practice—community development.”

Respondents spoke to including at least one macro specialist in every site visit, encouraging more macro field placements in the generic first year in order to reach the 50/50 micro/macro guideline of CSWE, fostering the hiring of more macro faculty, and including a special lecture on macro practice at the Annual Meetings.

Schools and Deans (15 mentions)

CSWE has a national policy role, but individual schools institute local policies and implement programs at the ground level. It’s natural that the next largest number of recommendations was aimed there. Typical of the responses is this statement: “Communicate to deans and directors the necessity of infusing macro content into existing programs in a substantive manner, with a strategic plan, hires, curriculum development, and field and administrative support.” ACOSA was asked

to “push deans and faculty to have the curriculum respond to macro-oriented needs in the community.”

It was suggested that macro enhancement in schools be promoted in part through national bodies like NADD (National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work) and BPD (Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors). Some specific areas mentioned, overlapping some of the above, included upgrading macro field placements, expanding post-masters education in macro, and giving more attention to integrating macro and micro content, especially in foundation generic courses.

National Association of Social Workers (10 mentions)

NASW has no decisive role in carrying out formal professional education or in instituting educational policy. But it does provide a climate and a professional context influencing the programs of schools and the perspectives of CSWE. For this reason, respondents recommended that NASW be enjoined to support the kinds of programs and actions previously recommended. The need for action was set forth by one respondent as follows “The current NASW campaign to increase the visibility of social work is very clinically oriented. Macro practitioners are included mainly in historical terms by way of people like Jane Addams and Harry Hopkins.” One responder proposed a national conference in Washington, DC, co-sponsored by both NASW and CSWE, to highlight and revive interest in the macro component of social work. As an aside, it would be useful for this event to call attention to the experience of the (present) President of the United States as a community organizer. The

President might be invited as a keynote speaker—a role that could intrigue him by calling into play grassroots experiences in his early professional life.

The General Public (10)

Also, by way of context, views of the public may influence and support social work, including the particular kinds of programs social work education mounts. A problem in this connection was framed as follows: “NASW’s recent media program is a step, but I still find most ‘people on the street’ don’t have a clue what we do outside the clinical realm.” Also, “ We have a long way to go in developing societal understanding of the profession’s breadth and the range of capabilities of social workers.”

It was recommended that we “keep the issue in the public eye” and conduct “national educational programs regarding how macro practice can strengthen communities and civil society.” A range of specifics came forth: arrange appearances on TV of people in community organizing and community research—and also do press releases; have mainstream articles and interviews showing how macro practitioners impact people at the community level; make contact with elected officials and heads of government agencies laying out these functions.

Related Professional Groups and Disciplines (7 mentions)

Respondents stated that ACOSA should seek to gain visibility with other professional groups and disciplines--“to interface better so our community-based work is known and social work is not seen as simply casework.” We need to relate to these groups, they said, because “we have a common cause in macro areas and there is strength in numbers.” There was concern that if the macro area does not establish

itself as a visible player in broader areas of intervention, other fields will step in and replace us in the work.

Groups identified for contact included the National Association of Social Work Managers, the Alliance for Children and Families, Community Learning Project, and also related disciplines like Community Development, International Development, Adult Education, Rural Sociology, Community Psychology, Public Health, and other social work specialties, such as Child Welfare.

Social Work Scholarly Organizations (6 mentions)

There was concern that the macro area was not sufficiently involved and recognized relative to the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) and Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE). Here, visibility will depend in large part on the participation of individual ACOSA members and macro faculty in the activities of these groups. It will be contingent on individuals conducting high quality research and making a mark in teaching and curriculum development in doctoral programs.

These proposals to raise the visibility and status of macro intervention modes of practice in social work were the most frequent and wide-ranging recommendations coming from ACOSA members. They alone would constitute an ambitious and demanding action agenda for ACOSA. But there were additional action recommendations, important and interesting, that compete for consideration. These appear in descending order of frequency.

Provide Teaching Resources for the Membership (31 mentions)

Members seem starved for good materials to aid them in their teaching and other aspects of their academic work. The need springs in part from the isolation faculty members feel: “I think macro people are often the only person on faculty within their teaching area. This means there is less opportunity in a program for collaborative sharing of teaching ideas.” Therefore, “It would really help to have an updated source of both syllabi and creative exercises/activities that others have used to engage students.”

An array of materials were noted, including course outlines, exercises, assignments, case studies, conceptual approaches, and teaching methods. There were requests for articles and bibliographies and also for aids to field placements, including materials that can be used with field instructors. Some respondents wanted an upgrade of the website for these purposes, including more frequent use of website “blasts.” In particular, respondents called for appropriate research materials for macro, including evidence-based research, and also macro content geared to generic courses. They called for handouts for students on macro jobs and how to look for them.

Respondents wanted content for use with faculty in addition to use with students. “If some curriculum ideas could be posted online, it would make it easier to present to colleagues who are not macro instructors and do not understand the challenges.” These materials, it was stated, would also be valuable not only in the classroom, but “to make the case at curriculum review meetings.”

Frame Organizational Changes and Actions Within ACOSA (23 mentions)

There were varying views of ACOSA and its impact on members. There was an upbeat position: “ACOSA is a lifeline for me. I devour every tool, resource, newsletter—everything I can get my hands on . . . Thank you for being there.” And a downbeat one: “I hardly know you exist, frankly. You need to be ‘out there’ and market the value of your organization. I only know of you through a colleague who has a leadership role.” The large majority of members fall between these polls in not offering a general attitude on the organization. The naysayers asked that ACOSA keep them more informed about purpose and programs.

A wide and thought-provoking range of recommendations was made about actions ACOSA might take. This is the list:

Continue the good publications

Recruit more younger members, including recent PH.D.s, and students

Promote macro scholarships

Promote more incentives for students, like Child Welfare Title IV Funds

Include more policy focus to broaden the base

Develop student recruitment materials

Appoint liaisons to schools

Engage in more aggressive advocacy

Identify a cadre of national consultants to advise schools on macro issues

Keep doing what you do well

Encourage dual degrees

Prepare job information for students

Secure funding to support ACOSA and macro education

Help schools with no macro concentration to develop one

Involve members--many check committees on the application and are not called

There was a proposal to enlist ACOSA more actively in promoting the macro competencies. Specifically, “EPAS helped define competency areas, but ACOSA can take them to the next level with advanced knowledge, skills, benchmarks by specializations, i.e., community and organizational development in ethnic communities, locality development in rural areas, policy advocacy, etc.”

Two additional comments are of interest: “I believe that current changes in the environment will create a new need for grassroots organizers and ACOSA should work to address this.” Also: “ACOSA over the years seems to have shifted to the right and emphasized administration over CO. But work at the grassroots—especially among those disastrously affected by the abandonment of the social contract—will enhance the odds that the purported goals of the profession will indeed come to fruition.”

Increase Member Exchange and Networking (17 mentions)

As noted, macro faculty have a sense of isolation in their school environments. Consequently, respondents suggest that means be provided for contact and communication with fellow faculty in other schools. Typical comments were: “I am interested in being able to network and talk to other macro social work educators,” and, “I think we need more ways to support and encourage each other—the newsletter is just one great means.” Members ask ACOSA to continue

present support and expand through programs like more regional meetings and pre-conference training institutes. Several asked for ACOSA to clarify the nature of the organization for members as a way of promoting involvement and dialogue.

Enhance Macro Scholarship (12 mentions)

There was a clear interest in advancing macro scholarship: “Support good research, high quality publications, and other forms of knowledge dissemination.” More specifically, it was said that there is a need to foster more Ph.D. graduates who can teach and do research in the macro area (as it is hard to find such people). Research issues were a focus, with calls for more institutes and special sections at conferences dealing with macro-oriented research to offset the micro emphasis of most research in social work. One respondent suggested that “ACOSA leverage with SSWR to become a recognized caucus and bring our people to the table of quality researchers.” On another plane, a respondent proposed creating opportunities to connect ACOSA members to global community development scholars and to encourage partnerships with them. In addition, a concerted course of action was proposed to advance macro research interests:

We need to tap top funding sources for community and other macro research. Perhaps ACOSA could have a group that coordinates connections to the Feds and others and we could sponsor multiple types of research at multiple schools. I think we have tons of really good work going on throughout the nation and with international links. We need a voice through ACOSA at every decision-making table at our own social work national organizations, the foundations, and the feds re program direction and funding.

Resolve Student Issues (9 mentions)

Respondents observed that many students coming into schools do not have a clear image of the macro area and the variety of roles it encompasses. Hence:

“ACOSA should have some sort of brochures and media for use with students that provides a sense of how many different options a macro social worker has.

Something like this would really help students who have met few macro social workers and are looking for some career role modeling and guidance.”

In contrast, it was stated that some students come with a firm macro commitment and are put off by having “to sit through a bunch of foundation classes about the life span, psychotherapy and other things they will never use.” Unless these students get a better distribution of content in the curriculum, it was stated, they are likely to shift to schools of policy, planning, and business.

It was also recommended that graduates receive assistance on the how-tos of seeking employment. This becomes a problem for some graduates and requires aid in developing job search skills. This comment clarifies: “LCSWs know how to look under ‘Social Work’ in employment sections of papers. Macro SWers have to look under ‘Analyst,’ ‘Researcher,’ etc.”

Licensure

While there was a clear concern about licensure matters, there were no strong solutions offered. It was recommended to press hard for macro courses not being diminished in number because of pressures to expand the clinical offerings. Also, some respondents suggested efforts to establish alternative licensing in the macro area, perhaps a license for community-administrative-policy practice.

Summary of Findings

Responses of participants have been enumerated in detail, giving the substance and tone of comments. This will be a brief summary and integration of the main currents.

Identified Problems

Respondents spotlight faculty who lack interest or oppose macro programs and courses and also school administrators who do not value or provide adequate resources for the area. This apparently leads to little or no hiring of faculty with macro backgrounds. To a large degree, students are channeled into the micro area or steered away from macro. Scholarships for them are often in short supply.

Also, the school curriculum is primarily clinical, with macro courses neglected or marginalized. There is often lack of integration of macro with micro courses, especially at the first year foundation level where macro content gets minimalized. The field instruction side is affected in that there are not enough placements with macro components or instructors with necessary skills.

Difficulties in the research realm include an emphasis in schools on large federal grants that downplay macro concerns. Widely offered courses dealing with evidence-based research and practice have a disproportionate micro emphasis. On a more general level, macro scholarship is given short shrift.

CSWE is pointed to as a prime source of difficulties because of its focus on clinical competencies and its preoccupation with micro courses. Since CSWE is the critical entity promulgating curriculum structure and content, it is a key target for

affecting change—as will shown in the next section. State licensure is another factor causing schools to have an incongruence of macro-micro content and involvements.

Action Recommendations

There was a strong sentiment for increasing the visibility of the macro area and advocating for its greater status and importance in the field. The major institutions identified as key to attaining this objective are CSWE (in particular), schools and departments, and NASW. These emerge as the core target groups of an action program. Additional targets are the general public, related professions and disciplines, and social work scholarly organizations.

ACOSA is requested to provide a range of teaching resources to the membership and promote member networking and exchange. It is also asked to boost its organizational functioning in a variety of different ways (recruit younger members, secure funding, promote macro scholarships, etc.)

Respondents recommended actions to increase macro scholarship by supporting quality research and seeking out funding opportunities. They also noted that students should be given guidelines on macro professional roles and methods of seeking employment. Finally, they requested help in dealing with the suffocating impact of licensure.

Conclusions and Action Steps

The findings of the survey support and give substance to Sondra Fogel's sense of disturbing conversations going on in the field. They take those conversations from the level of intangible grumbling and griping to a systematic set

of concrete difficulties and dysfunctions. The survey also brings forward means to alleviate the problems.

Given the disquieting nature of the findings, ACOSA ought to view this situation as critical and give it the highest priority. It would be advisable for the ACOSA Board to appoint a Special Commission consisting of representatives from the Board and the membership and also from CSWE, NASW, and NADD to take remedial steps. This documentation of the truncating of social work's mission to address human problems on a community and societal scale is clearly a concern for the profession generally, rather than only for faculty and practitioners associated with ACOSA. The NASW Code of Ethics, Section 6.01, reflects this forcefully:

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

Social workers are enjoined to pursue these goals individually, but the profession from the start has established mechanisms and roles to tackle them also by organized means through specialized professional roles.

The scope of the problems identified and of the proposed remedies is expansive and will be a challenge for the ACOSA organization alone to confront. It has a limited infrastructure with no staff, an absence of equipment or facilities, and a small budget. It would be advisable for the Special Commission to adopt the alliteration style of the real estate field and prioritize, prioritize, prioritize strategic options. Perhaps financial assistance for actions should be sought from foundations

and public bodies, as well as from CSWE and NASW. Perhaps the profession, through joint sponsorship of CSWE and NASW, should call an urgent national conference to address these matters.

The pattern of intervention modes in social work is clearly out of balance, with community and societal approaches to human and social development in the shadow. Historically, we have had social workers giving macro intervention a prominent place in the profession, with people like Jane Addams, Harry Hopkins, Frances Perkins, Florence Kelley, Whitney Young, and Wilbur Cohen, and their associates, doing important work. But the place of this type of social activist and policy advocate has diminished over time. Survey results highlight the extent of decline in the contemporary period, and also mark out avenues for robust corrective action.

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