

FIELD DIRECTOR CONSORTIUM MEETING MINUTES
4/16/09

Members Present: Jennifer Anderson-Meger (in place of Connie M. Fossen); Sandy Kohn; Linda Noer; Jeanne Wagner; Mike Wallace; Jennifer Borup; Mary Weeden; Chuck Zastrow; Sandy Peterson; Nicole Schneider; Joan Groessl; Amy Fischers; Nick Smiars; Ruth Fangmeier; Judy Dwyer and Jay Wolterstorgff (by phone)

I. Field Education Conference (July 9-11 2009 @ Temple University)

II. North American Network of Field Educators and Directors (NANFED) – This group has a new website. Sandy Kohn will talk with the Coordinator of this organization and get more information about their mission and activities.

III. Field Stipends/Scholarships – The following are past, present and future resources for stipends and scholarships for social work field education students.

- a. Women and Jail Project – UWM-Milwaukee
- b. Agape Community Center - Milwaukee
- c. IV-E funds – federal child welfare grant
- d. Veteran's Administration - national
- e. Hartford HPPAE grant in gerontology
- f. Scholarships through endowments and alumni gifts to schools and colleges
- g. Americorps
- h. Federal Work Study

Sandy Kohn is interested in forming a workgroup to develop a list of potential funding sources for students.

IV. Field Placement Agreement and Field Placement Code of Conduct - review and feedback

- Madison adopted the Code of Conduct in their Program
- UWM is also intending to adopt these documents, or components of them, in their program.
- After some discussion it was agreed that the Code of Conduct and Field Standards Agreement will be adopted on a school by school basis, and not Consortium-wide, since some programs have already developed similar documents or prefer to use the

NASW Code of Ethics as a whole document instead of highlighting specific standards.

V. Field extending beyond semester parameters - There was discussion about students starting field early or ending past the end of the semester dates.

- a. Risk Management @ UWM System informed Sandy Kohn that liability is not an issue for students who are continuing in field in-between semesters and they consider the practicum a six-month course.
- b. UWM has students pay \$15.00 toward a student umbrella professional liability insurance policy through Marsh to cover their practicum for the entire year.

VI. Ann Bilder – UW Senior System Attorney – Ann stated that most work is done for the Board of Regents and specific legal work for campuses that do not have their own legal department. They also do work that affects the entire UW System. Areas they cover include:

- a. Early identification of non-academic student issues and the legal implications of counseling out or recommendations for dismissal
- b. Master Affiliation Agreements (MAA's)
 - i. There was discussion about the use of Master Affiliation Agreements with field agencies. Jennifer Borup @ River Falls was told that MAA are **not** necessary.

Ann reported that there is a lot of interest in the legal implications of the field placement and MAA's are strongly recommended for all agencies that supervise student interns. These Agreements have inherent liability protection for the student, school, and university.

The MAA sets forth and makes clear our expectations and the agency's expectations of the requirements and the legal relationship between the school and agency.

Concerns were expressed about smaller agencies that may be reluctant to sign a MAA due to the daunting nature of the legal document. Ann recommended that although the risk may be small, it is still recommended that MAA's are facilitated for all placements. There is no law that requires

an Agreement, but it is a good protection for the student, school, and agency program.

c. Student Issues and Liability

Chuck Zastrow shared a recent incident where a student, with a pending criminal charge, had an outburst in class using profanity toward another student. The student has subsequently dropped the course, not due to the class behavior, but related to his pending criminal charge which will prevent him from completing his field placement. Chuck wanted to know what he can “legally” share with staff, especially in regard to the sharing of criminal convictions. Ann questioned the need to disclose criminal background information to the class. FERPA does not cover personal observations or things the student reports, but is not in the record. Disclosure of student behavior is not protected by FERPA. This issue is covered in UW Chapter 17-18 “Non-Academic” Behavior section.

There was discussion about specific behavioral issues that are actually considered “academic misconduct.” This is backed up by a Supreme court case with a medical student where this student was dismissed due to poor hygiene and poor “bed-side” manners. The Court deferred to the academic program for the setting of standards and expectations for the profession.

Documentation – It is important to document important events such as advising, student complaints, disciplinary meetings, issues related to behavior in the classroom or field practicum. Include the date, time, persons present, what was said and by whom and any verbal or written agreements that were made.

There was a recommendation to develop a consistent policy and procedure across the UW System to document student misconduct issues. It was recommended that this recommendation be discussed with UWM legal to discuss this issue and attempt to get a policy implemented.

Personal Notes – The issue of personal notes was discussed. In the case of a lawsuit, personal notes cannot be destroyed at this time. They can be destroyed by the writer at any point in time if there is no pending complaint or lawsuit. The issue of having these notes in the student file was discussed to make the information available to other faculty and staff.

- d. Student background checks and implications for the school – Student Background checks are not required by System and it is recommended that agencies do their own background checks.
- e. Student Admission Procedures – Be careful not to use race and gender as criteria for admission. Also, be careful with point systems to ensure that the process does not raise legal issues.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: 10/01/09 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.