

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Smith College School for Social Work is to advance the aims of the profession through education for excellence in clinical social work practice and through the development and dissemination of knowledge.

The School for Social Work views clinical social work practice as concerned with the interdependence between individuals and their environments and the use of relationships to promote healing, growth and empowerment. Clinical social work appreciates and responds to the complexities of the human condition in its global context: its strengths, possibilities, resiliency, vulnerabilities, limitations and tragedies. Clinical social work expresses the core values of the profession, including recognition of client self-determination, the importance of relationship, the inherent dignity of client systems and growth and change in the client system. In addition, clinical social work includes a commitment to the pursuit of social justice, anti-racism work, and culturally responsive practice. It rests upon a liberal arts base and integrates evolving theories and research-informed knowledge about individuals, families, groups, communities and the larger social systems in which they are embedded.

In its educational practices, the School promotes critical thinking and self-reflection to help students expand their knowledge in the substantive areas of human behavior and the social environment, social work practice, research, social policy and practicum learning to prepare competent and effective practitioners and leaders in clinical social work. The School prepares students to apply the professional code of ethics.

The School prepares students for the evaluation and dissemination of evolving theories, research and practice models.

The School shares with the social work profession its historic commitment to serve oppressed, disadvantaged and at risk members of our society and to struggle against inequality and oppression related to: race, ethnicity, immigration status, class, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age and ability. It is committed to implementing a curriculum that addresses the concerns, issues and interests of these populations. Through all of its programs, the School joins Smith College in its commitment to promote social justice, service to society and greater appreciation of individual and cultural diversity in a multicultural community. In recognition of the pernicious consequences of racism, the School works to identify and challenge the overt and covert aspects of racism.

The School implements its educational mission through its master's and doctoral degree programs both of which include intensive block practicum learning internships, required individual research projects and its Program of Continuing Education, including its certificate programs. Through its publications, including Smith Studies in Social Work, the Clinical Research Institute, faculty and student publications and conference presentations, the School also contributes to the development and dissemination of knowledge relevant for social work. In its affiliation with a liberal arts college, the School places a priority on the process of teaching and learning. The School maintains relationships of mutual respect and influence with its affiliated agencies, major professional organizations and other representatives of the social work practice community to aid in curriculum renewal and to contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.

- voted and affirmed November 2018

Anti-Racism Core Principles

Prioritize intentional action over standard logistics: Prioritize purposeful action over standard "Smith SSW ways" or quick institutional responses. The goal is to bring awareness to the intention of organizational practices, center the formation of equitable practices and assess the impact of our practices, policies and actions on Black faculty/staff/students, faculty/staff/students of color, indigenous faculty/staff/students and those holding other marginalized identities.

Ensure accountability at the individual, program and institutional levels and that there are meaningful processes for repair and reparation: In a complex organization like the SSW, we understand that there will be occasions when actions at the organizational, programmatic or individual levels may cause harm. It is essential that SSW take responsibility for creating and sustaining processes of accountability, for the impact of our policies, decisions, actions and words on the experience of Black faculty/staff/students/alumni, that of other folks of color, indigenous folks, and folks with identities that have been marginalized. In recognition of our interdependence, SSW is responsible for ensuring that there are processes for repair and reparation following harm. We are responsible for account-giving of our history.

Center communities that have been marginalized for their strength, knowledge and beauty: SSW must draw on the knowledge, strength and beauty of Black communities, communities of color, indigenous communities and other communities that have experienced marginalization, in an authentic and central way to inform School vision and mission, policies, clinical social work curricula, practices and decision-making. By prioritizing the knowledge and experience of these communities, SSW can work toward decentering whiteness as the default.

Ensure that Black faculty and staff and faculty and staff of color are hired and retained at all levels of power in the organization: The hiring and retention of Black faculty and staff and other faculty and staff of color at all levels of the organization is an important way to ensure that the knowledge and strengths of communities of color are centered within School mission, policies and practices and that Black students and other students of color have access to role models and professional networks with whom they share identities. It is an important way to create and support a learning environment that continually works to decenter whiteness and promote action-oriented anti-racism practices.

Stay open to and actively engage with change: Organizational policies and practices must be reviewed continuously to ensure they are responsive to the needs of our learning community. The work of creating change is a collective responsibility and must also be taken up by those with power and privilege. Change must happen collaboratively and must center the lived realities and experiences of Black faculty/staff/students/alumni, other folks of color, indigenous folks and folks with identities that have been marginalized.

Statement on Philosophy of Inclusion

The social work profession serves diverse communities and individuals that include a wide spectrum of identities, backgrounds and experiences. The assumption of the faculty of Smith College School for Social Work is that social work is most effective when engaged in by a diverse and inclusive workforce.

We thus believe that our learning community must also be enriched by the same diversity our profession serves.

In keeping with our mission, we comply with all applicable federal non-discrimination statutes. We welcome all students regardless of identities, backgrounds and experiences, who are able to meet the educational standards of the School and the profession. We believe that the responsibility for respecting difference and the active inclusion of all members of our learning community is shared by each of us at the School, individually and collectively.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Smith College is committed to maintaining a diverse community in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences.

Smith College does not discriminate in its educational and employment policies on the bases of race, color, creed, religion, national/ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, disability, or service in the military or other uniformed services.

Smith's admission policies and practices are guided by the same principle, concerning applicants to the undergraduate program who identify as women, and all applicants to the graduate programs.

The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

The Office for Equity and Inclusion
College Hall 302
Northampton, MA 01063

Floyd Cheung
Vice President for Equity and Inclusion
Phone: 413-585-2121
Email: fcheung@smith.edu

Religious Accommodation

Students in an educational institution who, because of their religious beliefs, are unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which they may have missed because of that absence, provided that the make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon the School. The institution shall not charge a fee of any kind for making this opportunity available to students. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to students availing themselves of the provision of this section.

Council on Social Work Education Professional Competencies

The Smith College School for Social Work its curriculum and policies are guided by the Council on Social Work Education's nine professional competencies:

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice
- Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- Engage in Policy Practice
- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities