

08/22/18

Dear Committee,

Social Work Education, training and skill building is very critical as we all embark on this journey and embrace our work in all of the communities that we serve. Classroom instruction, seminars and the field training is an integrated process that cannot work independently. Our students at both the bachelor's level and master's level are entitled to a quality education coming from a multi-cultural set of lens. We are very fortunate in that we live in a state that is very rich in culture and diversity. We have many wonderful opportunities to work in almost any setting. We have a number of Native American students in our classrooms and many of these same students possess a desire to have a field instruction experience that allows them to practice from a multi-cultural experience that they have learned in the classroom setting. Our people deserve this! Other students that are non-native also come to our agencies requesting to be considered as a practicum student allowing them to work side by side with us with our Indian population. We welcome this experience for them. Many of them will tell us that they have not received any education with regard to our Native populations. We don't have a specific curriculum for this. I have taught at both NMHU and NMSU and students are hungry for this specific learning. As a native instructor, I feel I owe them this opportunity beginning with the historical experiences of our people. Even though it is not part of the curriculum as of yet, we have an ethical responsibility to at the very least, provide our students with an introduction. I am willing to be part of this learning experience for the students. I believe this learning should begin at the very onset of the Social Work student's entry into the program. I don't believe we should wait until they begin their master's program. In this manner, the students are better prepared to enter the field during their field years and also following completion of the program. Many of our students go on to work with the State of New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department and they don't have any introduction into the Indian Child Welfare Act and they are expected to follow the federal guidelines. Many students that are graduating do not know anything about the Indian Child Welfare Act, thereby placing them in a situation where they are unable to make well informed decisions. This is not the fault of the students! We are humbly requesting that we embark on this journey together to best prepare our Native and Non-Native Social Work students for field work that becomes a positive experience for them and results in improved outcomes for all.

Thank you! Caroline Dailey