

Submission Date: January 31, 2020

Program/s in this review: Children’s Behavioral Health OEC, Conflict Resolution OEC, Human Services AAS & BHS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): The BHS in Human Services and the AAS in Human Services are nationally accredited by the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE). Accreditation is current through October 2023 and was achieved without any recommendations or stipulations.

Campuses where the program is delivered: BHS, AAS and both OECs are delivered at the Anchorage campus. The AAS degree is also delivered at the MatSu campus. The Department of Human Services has obtained input from the MatSu campus.

Members of the program review committee:

Yvonne Chase, PhD	Assistant Professor	ANC
David Moxley, PhD	Professor	ANC
Jo Ann Bartley, PhD	Associate Professor	ANC
Lynn Paterna, MS	Associate Professor	ANC
Seta Kabranian, PhD	Term Faculty	ANC
Deborah Bannan, PhD	Assistant Professor	MatSu

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

Human Services is one of the fastest growing career fields in the United States today. In an age of turbulent social change, there is considerable need for the educated and skilled human services professional. Human service needs within the state are considerable, and there is strong demand for human service professionals. The field of human services is a broadly defined one, uniquely approaching the objective of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of multicultural service populations. In many agencies, human service workers are the first point of contact; others provide the necessary care management for people coping with serious social issues.

The UAA Department of Human Services is in a unique position to support several other programs. Students in Early Childhood are considering a transition to the HUMS BHS program from the Early Childhood AAS. Some students transition from the HUMS AAS to the Social Work BSW program; others apply for the MSW in Social Work or the Master’s in Public Health after completing their BHS in Human Services. Still others come to Human Services for one of the certificate programs (OEC in Children’s Behavioral Health and OEC in Conflict Resolution) Students enrolled in the AAS and BHS programs frequently seek to broaden their background and knowledge in the human services field also by obtaining the certificates. The Minor in Human Services also attracts students from several disciplines, including business majors, liberal arts, and education. The challenge in reviewing data on the HUMS Minor is, as with any Minor, students are not required to declare their Minor, so the program is only aware of those students who notify the department or seek advising on the requirements for the Minor. Based on the program review committee’s examination of existing data, some 40% of students

taking human service courses may be pursuing a minor in the department. While the prioritization report noted a sense within programs that minors are often afterthoughts, it has been our experience that students make a conscious effort to include a Human Services Minor in their program of study.

Effective in academic year 2016-17, Human Services became the academic arm for the Center for Human Development, offering career pathways for research specialists, and offering for credit courses for the myriad of training programs the CHD offers across Alaska. The UAA Center for Human Development is funded primarily through a variety of federal, state, and private grants and contracts. For their courses to carry academic credit, the courses have to be within an academic arm of the university. The courses are now listed with the HUMS prefix and Department faculty teach those courses.

Workforce demand and employment opportunities with an AAS or BHS continues to be high. Students are often recruited by their field placement agencies prior to completing the program. In a recent survey of Human Services graduates, most indicated they are working in a field that is directly related to Human Services, and that they obtain employment within three months of graduation. Other occupations listed include judicial assistant, eligibility technician, and direct support specialist. These job titles illustrate the challenges of tracking human service graduates in the workforce. Graduates in such occupations benefit from an education in human services given its access, flexibility, and focus on pre-professional job classifications within community service agencies. In addition, UAA human service graduates also fill highly demanding professional positions.

Students who complete the AAS in Human Services find that the job market is waiting and ready for them, and some agencies will grant release time for them to complete their BHS degree. The articulation of the AAS with the BHS forms a foundation of human and social service career trajectory within Alaska. The addition of two occupational endorsement certificates further strengthens this career pathway.

Employers describe human service graduates as job ready as a result of their agency experience in their field placements. Partnerships have been developed with these field placement agencies over the years and approximately 45 agencies and organizations in the Anchorage and MatSu areas accept human service students each semester.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

In reviewing the IR data from 2013 through 2019, it was immediately noticeable that the data are inaccurate. Enrollments have decreased as have enrollments for the university as a whole. The completion of the AAS degree has gradually declined in numbers. However, a change in admission requirements occurred that will affect AAS numbers, potentially for several years. The Human Services degree is linked in a 2 + 2 format, since the creation of the BHS degree. Students were required to complete the AAS in Human Services prior to being accepted into the BHS program. This requirement established a barrier for students with an AAS degree in a related field who wished to transfer into the BHS program, as well as those with military funding who were required to have a plan for a 4-year degree. The change now allows students to declare Human Services as their major and be admitted directly into that the BHS. They will be reflected in the data as BHS students, although they will be encouraged to apply for their Associates Degree when they have completed that portion of the

requirements. The BHS student numbers will gradually increase as this change in admission impacts the totals over time as the Department continues to offer the AAS for those students who wish a workforce credential in human services that can complete more quickly and at less expense.

In reviewing the Credits for the AAS degree have gradually decreased, from 66.6 to 64.4, and are now closer to the 60 credits that accreditation requirements demand. The semesters per degree have also decreased, from 7.8 to 6.3 bringing students into the national average. However, the majority of UAA students are commuter students, employed fulltime, have family responsibilities, particularly young children, and work on their degrees part-time. In addition, most human service students are non-traditional students who have been in the workforce for several years and enter the program either to initiate a new career or augment their educational credentials. The data reflects the fluctuation in numbers, based on the composition of each year's student graduates. The years per degree, while reflecting some variation, average at 5.1 years, which is a strong indicator of student retention and persistence.

Baccalaureate data only reflect the number of degrees awarded, and that number has increased slowly but will be increasing in greater numbers as the change in the BHS admission procedure takes effect. AAS degree graduates in the seven-year period from 2013 through 2019, totaled 275. BHS graduates for that same time period totaled 104. Each of those graduates represent an additional capacity strengthening the human service workforce in Alaska.

Data for the occupational endorsement certificates (OECs) varies by year and is difficult to predict. The main reason is that students may work on the certificate without seeking a degree, and if they are enrolled as a degree seeking student, they do not need to indicate their plan to complete a certificate in advance. Most students who complete OECs do so after they realize that they have completed most of the requirements, are usually missing only one or two courses, and decide to complete the certificate at that point.

Enrollment trends over a 7-year period indicate that enrollment in in the OECs remains constant, except for two years (2017 & 2018); and the BHS enrollment is only down by eight students. The greatest decline has been in the AAS enrollment, from 260 to 128. However, the data will continue to reflect low numbers as students continue to be admitted directly into the BHS degree program. The program does generate considerable academic credits indicating that in addition to majors there is a group of students taking HUMS courses as electives or as part of a minor. These data suggest that the department offers a broad scope of academic and career opportunities for students.

As for course pass rates, even with some fluctuation over a seven year period, the rates for both AAS and BHS students have increased; to 87.9% for AAS students and 93.3% for BHS students. These increases reflect the considerable investment HUMS makes in student retention and persistence, which includes advisement.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

Specialized accreditation process and status

The Human Services Department was founded in 1981, first starting with the AAS program, and was initially housed in the Social Science Division of Anchorage Community College. In 1987, the University of Alaska, Board of Regents merged the state's thirteen community colleges with the statewide university of Alaska. Human Services was initially placed in the College of Arts and Sciences, and in 1988 was re-established as a stand-alone department in the College of Career and Vocational Education. In 1996, Human Services was transferred to its present home in the College of Health and Social Welfare (now the College of Health). The Department began offering the BHS in the fall of 1998.

The AAS and the BHS degree programs are each nationally accredited by the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE). Both programs are accredited through October 2023. Among the program strengths identified by CSHSE in the October 2018 re-accreditation:

- A diverse and qualified faculty and staff [Every faculty member in the department has practice experience.]
- Purposively aligned program to the CSHSE standards and the field of Human Services
- Feedback from the Department's Advisory Committee is utilized
- Current with emerging trends in the field
- Superior assessment plan
- Strong policy and procedures for addressing a student's fitness for the profession
- A strong field experience component that includes a practicum specialist position that oversees field placements
- Standardization of course syllabi in which course objectives are aligned to the standards

Status: During the accreditation cycle, the Human Service Program has the responsibility to maintain active CSHSE membership each year of the accreditation cycle to remain in good standing. Student Achievement Indicator data that is made public must remain current (2 years or less). Program representative contact information must also remain current. Finally, program and student achievement indicator links on the CSHSE website must be updated when any changes occur.

Currency of the curriculum

The entire Human Services curriculum was updated prior to the 2018 reaccreditation and is in the CIMS system. The Department has launched new courses within the existing AAS and BHS programs. With a strong emphasis on substance abuse and trauma, a course on clinical approaches to Substance Abuse Treatment (HUMS A354) is now a requirement at the AAS degree program and a new course focused on administrative and leadership skills (HUMS A464) has been added to the BHS curriculum. Minor revisions have been made in other courses in the current academic year.

Innovative program design

A new course model has been introduced into the Human Services curriculum with substance abuse courses. The model, utilized in the last three summers, involves student enrollment in an online course that ends in a 2-day conference where professionals in the field of substance abuse and trauma present. The conference is open to community members and attracts professionals who need CEU's for their professional license. Funding from the State Department of Health & Social Services provided a breakeven point for the first year's conference. Years 2 and 3 were profitable and planning is now

taking place for a fourth year conference in the summer of 2020, as part of a “Human Services Summer Institute” that will also include two courses using this model: a course on Substance Abuse and a course on Human Trafficking. These two courses will be part of the First Annual Human Services Summer Institute, which will also include a course on writing and communication in Human Service practice settings. The State Department of Health & Social Services has purchased videos of the conference presentations to supplement the e-learning of state employees. To ensure currency and innovation, the departmental chair works with the Alaska Commission on Behavioral Health Certification, and the Alaska Office of Substance Misuse and Prevention. There is a strategy within the department to strengthen the substance use treatment core competencies across the AAS and BHS curriculum. The department is also working to coordinate academic degree programs with Alaska requirements for substance use certification.

The Department’s program evaluation course (A420 – Introduction to Program Evaluation) has transitioned to a community engagement model. Each semester, based on the student enrollment, one to three agencies involve students in real time mini-evaluation of some aspect of their programmatic portfolios. This provides the students with “hands-on” experience in program evaluation and the agencies are able to utilize the results of the evaluations to apply for additional funding.

The human service curriculum is incorporating state of the art practices in the use of e-portfolios within the Integrative Capstone course. This enables students to incorporate their research projects into a common framework. Students in the program evaluation course are also using e-portfolio for their evaluation projects.

Availability and indications of quality of distance offerings

All the Human Services courses have distance capability. The courses are either in a distance format or have the capability using Zoom (video) to connect students who are unable to be on campus due to distance. Online courses can be assessed for quality using data readily collected during program operations. The indicators of quality include faculty presence and interaction, student performance (grades), student participation, course objectives and student feedback. Distance courses are included as an integral part of the Department’s assessment plan. Prior to fall 2020, each course will be reviewed by the faculty using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

As more programs are moving their curricula to online platforms, CSHSE, the program’s accreditation body is currently considering special guidelines for reviewing programs that offer more than 50% of their program in a distance format. When those guidelines are available, Human Services faculty will engage in a strategic planning process to assure the 2023 accreditation conditions will be met. Nonetheless, the department is moving forward with its plans to blend on campus classrooms with online formats and thereby extending access into other areas of Alaska.

Program Student Learning Outcome Assessment

Human Services utilizes a continuous improvement model, rotating the courses that are included in a detailed assessment each academic year, while focusing on program innovations as the field of human services expands. Accreditation is an important aspect of assessment. It provides programs with the tools and requirements to meet standards of excellence and to “look back from the future” as needs

of at-risk populations continue to increase. The augmentation of substance use treatment content across the AAS and the BHS is an example of this continuous improvement model.

The scheduled assessment review on the selected courses provide faculty an aggregation of data for each student learning outcome (SLO) through the academic years (AY). As curriculum updates are made, the scheduled list of courses are revised accordingly. An addition to the department's assessment process involves the development of a rotation schedule where select courses are reviewed each academic year. Assessment measures are tied to specific program outcomes and an assessment rubric has been added. Students complete the rubric as they finish each semester of their field placement and their faculty field coordinator completes the same rubric.

On campus and distance courses were part of the most recent assessment. Student performance increased in both types of courses. While students appreciate the flexibility that online courses present, they also miss the interaction provided by on campus classes. Several online courses in the spring 2020 will include final student presentations done through Zoom and one community event and / or invited speaker where the students can choose to participate. Several courses blend online and on campus delivered content.

Student Success Initiatives & Student Accomplishments

Employing high impact practices improves student success and fosters long term positive impact on the industry and communities by providing trained professionals able to undertake job roles and responsibilities integral to social and human services. These practices include academic advising as an integral part of the program, courses with a community engagement component, community based research and evaluation, internships in government and non-profit agencies and organizations, use of e-portfolio, and a writing intensive course as part of a summer institute. The department is planning on enriching the writing intensity of its curriculum, and on advancing research utilization.

While most human service graduates are working in the field, many also continue with their education. One recent graduate received a full scholarship support for undertaking a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

There are three nonduplicative programs within the UA system: (1) UAF offers an AAS with a focus on rural human services. This degree program has an articulation agreement with the BSW program in Fairbanks. The program is not accredited, but the UAA Human Services BHS program has agreed to accept students who complete the AAS degree at the University of Alaska / Fairbanks into the UAA Human Services BHS program. (2) The UAA Human Services degree programs are the only nationally accredited programs in Alaska. The high demand courses have been scaled into certificate programs, and a new certificate in substance abuse & trauma is being considered, especially for professionals in the community. Students are often offered positions in the agencies where they are doing their field placements. The non-traditional, para-professional becomes a greater focus for the human services degree. The State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development studies reveal that graduates with an AAS and BHS degree are hired into degree related careers at remarkably high rates. Job growth in community and social service occupations project growth in jobs increasing by 11% - 18% from 2016 to 2026, which is faster than the average for all occupations, adding 371,900

jobs nationally. (3) The Bachelors of Social Work program. The UAA/ BSW program and the UAA Human Services program are sometimes seen as competing for the same student population, which is not the case. The Human Services Department is increasingly engaging students who are nontraditional, come from impoverished backgrounds, and wrestle with life course issues relating to trauma. Students seeking a BSW are often planning to continue their graduate education to prepare for clinical roles. The BHS program attracts non-traditional students and emphasizes training individuals who can take on challenging outreach and engagement roles in high need communities.

5. Summary Analysis

Human Services is one of the fastest growing degree programs in the country. The UAA Human Services Department began with the AAS program in 1981 and in 1998 initiated the BHS. There continues to be a high demand for “skilled generalists,” individuals who can support the at-risk population through all the job categories mentioned earlier in this report. More human services degree programs across the country are seeking national accreditation and the national accrediting body has recently approved accreditation standards for masters programs in human services.

The Department recommends strong support for expansion and growth, with an increased focus on non-traditional students. Expansion plans include the addition of a post doc fellow, which has been funded, and a search for a new faculty member who will likely bring additional expertise on trauma informed practice into the curriculum. A summer institute each year will allow students to earn a minimum of 12- credits if they enroll in all of the offerings and they can use Institute credit for their fulfillment of electives further streamlining the curriculum. Summer conferences that engage the community, offering CEU’s for licensed professionals and creating an ongoing revenue stream for the department; expanding faculty participation in grants; and developing emphasis areas for students who wish to meet the requirements for specialty certifications (e.g., substance abuse counselor, reentry specialist), and a more regionally oriented academic program which would include University of Alaska / Southeast.

The Department understands the pent up demand for human service education across Alaska, and is advancing a student marketing and enrollment strategic planning with an application for funding by UA’s TVEP funding. The Department has identified seven groups whose members require considerable support into and through human services education, but who nonetheless will fulfill workforce needs at pivotal points in the Alaska human services systems. Members of these groups often go overlooked as potential students, and the Department is moving forward with their engagement. These groups are: (1) military personnel, (2) veterans, (3) people in recovery, (4) people in re-entry from incarceration, (5) experienced workers seeking career changes, (6) seniors in search of meaningful professional work, and (7) high school students whose interpersonal and emotional competencies indicate high fitness for a human service career. The Department is in process of refining this strategic plan and is working closely with its advisory committee to ensure relevance and effectiveness of marketing plans.

One of the most significant innovations the Department is offering involves the blending of degree oriented credit and continuing professional education that brings students and seasoned professionals into sustained dialogue about practice in substantive areas of practice. That the Department was one of the first academic units to respond to the Opioid crisis in Alaska is an outcome of this innovation. The continuity in the annual summer conferences in trauma and substance use is

reflective of the investments the Department is making in advancing human service practice in Alaska. The fourth installment of this conference will occur the summer of 2020.