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College of Health Sciences
and Professions

MEMO

Subject: Proposed Alignment of Department of Social Work in the College of Health Sciences and Professions

Date: April 4, 2011

To: University Curriculum Council

From: Randy Leite, Interim Dean-College of Health Sciences and Professions
Ben Ogles, Dean-College of Arts and Sciences

This memo is written in support of a proposed relocation of the Department of Social Work to the College of Health Sciences and Professions. The proposed relocation is being brought forth after consultation with and among faculty in the Department of Social Work and the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

Realignment of Social Work in College of Health Sciences and Professions

Following last year's academic restructuring, the College of Health Sciences and Professions has developed a more explicit focus on issues of health and well-being including physical, emotional, and social health. This focus aligns closely with the focus of teaching and scholarship in the Department of Social Work.

The College of Health Sciences and Professions includes a number of academic programs that would align well with social work programs and faculty interest. These include:

- Child and Family Studies
- Community Health/Public Health
- Long-Term Care
- Food and Nutrition
- Nursing
- Gerontology

Beyond these academic programs, the College includes the Appalachian Rural Health Institute, Kids on Campus, Speech, hearing, and physical therapy clinic operations that all offer potential collaborations to support Social Work faculty scholarship and teaching.

Benefits of Realignment for Social Work

The College of Health Sciences and Professions is also perhaps better positioned than any other college to offer Social Work support in pursuing programmatic directions in which the faculty are interested. In meetings with the Social Work faculty, interest was expressed in developing a strong undergraduate program relationship with the regional campuses and in exploring an online

or blended MSW program. The College of Health Sciences and Professions is actively engaged in both regional and online education. Additionally, because of the success the College has achieved thus far in these areas, considerable financial and human capital resources are available in the College to support Social Work initiatives. As the Social Work faculty focus on expanding their enrollments, the College of Health Sciences and Professions offers strong infrastructure, financial, and human resources support for such endeavors.

The College is also extensively involved in clinical education and clinical service delivery, both important components of social work education. The College is developing a clinical education support structure that will relieve the Social Work faculty of various administrative support functions associated with their clinical education activities. The College also operates two clinical delivery operations and can offer support to Social Work in terms of efficient management of its own clinical services through the Psychology & Social Work Clinic.

Finally, several faculty in the College of Health Sciences and Professions are engaged in scholarship focusing on outcomes associated with various social service delivery methods, measures of social and emotional well-being, and assessment of social health in rural populations. This suggests the availability of various senior faculty who may function as mentors to Social Work faculty who are early in their careers. Such interdisciplinary links will be a hallmark of the College of Health Sciences and Professions and will be reflected in practice across the College.

Benefits of Realignment for College of Health Sciences and Professions

An alignment of Social Work in the College of Health Sciences and Professions would create a stronger focus on social and emotional health issues in the College. This is an area of attention that is generally perceived as an important element in a college focused on all dimensions of health and well-being. Aligning Social Work in the College would represent the addition of a unit that would be central to such a focus.

Additionally, the Social Work faculty represent strong potential partners to faculty in community/public health, child and family studies, nursing, food and nutrition, and exercise physiology; all of which attend to community health, social interventions, and emotional/mental aspects of health and well-being. There appears to be several potential areas of shared research interests and opportunities to explore greater curricular alignments that would potentially enhance other programs already in the College.

The Social Work faculty also represent a considerable resource in support of the College of Health Science and Professions' growing commitment to community health outreach and community-based participatory research. As the College explores models for delivery of a wide range of community health services, the addition of the Social Work program would create an opportunity to explore the possible inclusion of social and mental health services in community delivery models.

Similarly, an alignment with Social Work creates an opportunity to broaden the College's involvement in clinical education and clinical service delivery. In doing so, an alignment creates

opportunities to explore strategies for enhancing the efficiency of clinical service delivery. Social Work clinical services might also contribute to a broader rehabilitation clinic model currently under consideration in the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

Finally, the interest of the Social Work faculty in developing expanded offerings on the regional campuses and to exploring a possible online graduate program represents a potential revenue generating opportunity for the College and a possible alignment with other College programs offered in similar fashion. Preliminary information suggests that these are potentially fruitful directions for Social Work faculty to pursue and that they would also enhance efforts in the College to develop a broad range of health-related programs offered through alternate delivery methods.

Impact on Students

The proposed realignment will create opportunities to reassess Social Work curriculum and program delivery models. It is believed that a move to the College of Health Sciences and Professions will facilitate a broadening of delivery models for Social Work programs to include regional campus partnerships and online course delivery, thus extending programs to a wider range of students. It is also anticipated a move from the College of Arts and Sciences will allow a review of undergraduate curriculum to assess whether various courses included to meet Arts and Sciences requirements should remain a part of the program. It is believed the above directions will strengthen the viability of Social Work undergraduate and graduate programs at Ohio University. Because of the resources it is already generating, the College of Health Sciences and Professions is well-positioned to offer support for these endeavors.

A move to a new college might also create opportunities for curricular alignments with other programs that might lead to changes in program requirements in those programs. Sharing of curriculum, collaborative teaching, and possible interdisciplinary courses might be incorporated into one or more programs.

Impact on Current Faculty

Because many of the faculty in the College of Health Sciences and Professions share some affinity with Social Work faculty interests, it is believed the proposed move will result in greater mentorship of pre-tenured faculty. Social Work faculty will also be incorporated into the interdisciplinary collaborative culture being developed in the College following its restructuring last year. This should create additional opportunities for scholarship. Finally, faculty will gain access to increased support for clinical education activities and clinical delivery services because of the growing infrastructure in the College of Health Sciences and Professions to support these activities.

Faculty in the College of Health Sciences and Professions have been exploring opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and research. An alignment of Social Work in the College would potentially offer faculty a wider range of possibilities for such endeavors.

Process

Process

Both Dean Ogles and Interim Dean Leite met with Social Work faculty and staff to discuss a possible relocation. Social Work faculty were encouraged to provide input to both deans and to offer suggestions regarding relocation models that might be pursued. Faculty in Social Work also met informally with faculty in the Department of Social and Public Health. The Social Work faculty voted unanimously to support a realignment in the College of Health Sciences and Professions. Faculty in the Department of Social and Public Health voted to support an alignment of Social Work in their department.

Should a relocation proceed, Social Work faculty will be fully engaged in the planning for such a move. The integrity of Social Work programs and attention to accreditation and other issues will be a primary focus of relocation planning. Units in the College of Health Sciences and Professions will spend time exploring possible opportunities that a relocation of the Social Work program to the College of Health Sciences and Professions might provide. A relocation will occur in such a way as to assure that all resources currently associated with the Social Work program will follow them to the new college.