



Review of the Social Work Diploma Program Final Report

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Submitted by:

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Executive Summary

Background

The two-year Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program is intended to produce graduates who will have the knowledge and skills needed to:

- *Practice generalist social work with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, while maintaining a strong sense of professional values and ethics*
- *Provide leadership in social change processes, using team work, community development and conflict resolution skills*
- *Be a self-directed, self-motivated, and life-long learner with a questioning mind and a familiarity with inquiry approaches to learning*
- *Be self-reflective, self-aware and open to clinical supervision to continue learning*
- *Create and influence the future of social work practice at a political, social, and professional level by responding to and anticipating the changing needs of society*
- *Meet the professional practice requirements as identified by the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada (ASWNC), the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE)¹*

Since its inception in September 1982, the program has gone through a number of changes, from its origins as a Social Services diploma. It has been offered in Fort Smith and Inuvik and is now located at the North Slave Campus of the College in Yellowknife. Indigenous and northern content have been added to the program, including specific courses such as First Peoples of the NWT and Culture Camp and integration of such content into other courses. Graduates receive credit towards a Bachelor of Social Work degree at the University of Regina or Yukon College.

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to determine how well the Social Work Diploma Program meets the needs of its students and employers in the NWT and to develop recommendations to improve the program so it better meets the needs of students and employers and to support decision-making.

Overview of Methodology

The evaluation was conducted using an appreciative inquiry approach and multiple lines of inquiry. Data collection methods included interviews, focus groups, surveys, literature review, document review and review of university and college websites.

¹ http://www.auroracollege.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/ProgramInfoDisplay.aspx?id=107&tp=PRG
downloaded December 7, 2017

Findings

Strengths of the Program

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program has a number of strengths including:

- Preparing students so they are able to be a licensed Social Worker under the Social Work Profession Act of the NWT (2012)
- Providing preparation for one of the jobs most in demand in the NWT. Social work is anticipated to be one of the top three jobs in demand for diploma graduates.
- Having a curriculum that takes into account the NWT context and is appropriate for the NWT Indigenous population. The program is flexible about the time allowed to complete the program. It includes a number of Indigenous-specific courses which are relevant to social workers practicing in the NWT.
- Having a diverse student population that is representative of the population of the NWT. On average, more than half the students are Indigenous.
- Providing post-secondary education within the NWT, which gives students from the NWT an opportunity to get their education closer to home
- Although not required for a diploma program, meeting many of the CASWE standards, particularly with the field practicum, professional staff and student development.

Some of the factors that have contributed to these strengths are:

- The qualifications and quality of the social work faculty. All instructors have an MSW and have practiced in the NWT. Almost everyone interviewed commented on the dedication and quality of the instructors
- The qualifications and quality of sessional instructors. Almost everyone interviewed commented on the quality of the sessional instructors
- The inclusion of Elders in the programming
- The availability of an Indigenous counsellor associated with the program
- The availability of the library
- The availability of adequate housing for full-time students coming from outside of Yellowknife.

Changes Needed in the Program

Develop a BSW Program

Almost every review participant spoke to the need for a BSW program. There are several reasons this is needed:

- Employers are increasingly requiring at least a BSW for entry-level jobs
- Students want to remain in the NWT to pursue their post-secondary education
- It would support having a program that is relevant to the NWT
- It would solve the issue of students having to take third and fourth year courses in their first year of post-secondary education

The development of a BSW program could be more cost-effective if it is done collaboratively with other programs that already have (nursing) or will be developing a bachelor degree program. The programs could share the general liberal arts courses provided in the first two years, thus creating cost efficiencies.

The development of a BSW program would support having more stringent admission requirements. This is needed to ensure that the program accepts those most likely to succeed in the program. This should translate into higher graduation rates. It may also be necessary to be a bit less flexible in the extensions granted to students to complete the program. It is necessary to recognize the complex lives of students and provide them with adequate support to ensure their academic success.

Having a BSW program that is provided in collaboration with other Aurora College baccalaureate programs will require improvements in the facility such as more meeting space, a cafeteria for students, more elder space and more classroom and office space. In making needed changes to the Social Work program it is recommended that Aurora College continue the program connection to Elders as well as the focus on the, land, cultures and languages. ECE is already engaged in long-term planning for a new campus, with no date for when it might actually occur. One option is to retrofit the current space so that it better meets the needs of the programs it houses. In planning the campus it is important to consult with the users of the campus including faculty, students and Elders associated with Aurora College. A new campus, when it is built, should continue to be located in or near Yellowknife because of the availability of field placements, but located where cultural activities can easily occur.

Create an Advisory Committee

The creation of an Advisory Committee would allow the program to meet the following CASWE standard:

The academic unit provides partners with opportunities to participate in policy formulation, program development and program evaluation.

An Advisory Committee could include representatives from partner post-secondary institutions, employers and organizations that provide field placements. Such a committee would provide the opportunity for broader input into the program. It also would provide the opportunity for partners to have a better understanding of the program and what it has to offer.

Improve Program Reporting

For past several years, in part due to changes in reporting requirements, Aurora College has not provided reports to the Department, its primary funder that sufficiently demonstrate the strengths of the Social Work Diploma program, indicate problem areas and provide information regarding how those problem areas should be addressed. This leaves the College and the program vulnerable and unable to demonstrate the good work that is being done.

The program keeps its own statistics which cover a number of elements that could support comprehensive reporting: gender; ethnicity; community of origin; enrolment status; reasons for withdrawal; years to complete; and employment status, further study status, and professional license status following graduation. The College is in the process of developing a new data collection and storage system for student records. The system should include the fields currently being collected by the program. It should also ensure that the system can easily generate reports that can be accessed by both the program and the College.

In the meantime, the program should continue to keep its Excel spreadsheets and share them with the College administration. The numbers generated by the program frequently do not agree with Aurora College statistics. These numbers need to be reconciled as part of the sharing process. The College needs to provide adequate supports to the program to ensure that the data being collected is complete and accurate.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerge from the conclusions.

1. That Aurora College develop a BSW program that builds on the strengths of the existing Diploma program. Staff from that program should be tasked with developing the baccalaureate program. Following are three options for development.
 - Develop it in collaboration with the University of Regina. This would be the easiest and most straightforward option, given the existing relationship. It would likely be a program similar to that provided by Yukon College, with minor adjustments to reflect the NWT context and structures. It will maintain the ease of transfer of credits to the University of Regina and Yukon College.
 - Develop a relationship with a new university that already has a BSW program. University of Victoria might be one option given that the nursing program already has an established relationship. Collaborating with a university other than University of Regina would likely require more time and resources.
 - Start a new stand-alone program that has some affiliations with other universities to support ease of transferring credits. This would likely be the most time-consuming and costly option.

The BSW program should incorporate the strengths of the existing Diploma program with strong emphasis on the NWT context. It should consider more stringent admission requirement and less flexibility in providing students with program extensions in order to support a higher graduation rate.

2. That Aurora College, with the University of Regina, develop a transition plan that supports Social Work Diploma students who wish to obtain their BSW without leaving Yellowknife. This plan should be put into place for the 2018/19 academic year. Having ten students currently interested in beginning a BSW program provides a solid base for providing courses that would allow them to move towards that goal. This will also support the program in moving towards development of a permanent BSW program.
3. That an Advisory Committee be formed to help guide the planning, transition and implementation process. The committee should be comprised of key stakeholders including Aurora College administration, the Social Work Diploma program staff, program students, University of Regina, community partners, Elders and ECE.
4. That ECE consider retrofitting the current building until such time as a new campus is created.
5. That Aurora College support the program in continuing to collect administrative data on its Excel spreadsheets until the new administrative database for student records is completed. The existing data should be imported into the new database, ensuring that the same fields occur in both databases.
6. That Aurora College improve their reporting to government regarding the Social Work program by providing them with annual reports that break down costs by program and provide an overview of each program that includes: successes achieved by the program, issues faced and how they are being addressed, the number of applications, admissions, enrolment and graduation; the gender, ethnicity and community of origin; the number going on to a BSW program; and the number who have moved into employment, breaking it down by full-time in field, part-time in field, full-time in other field, part-time in other field and unemployed.

Introduction

Background

The two-year Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program is intended to produce graduates who will have the knowledge and skills needed to:

- *Practice generalist social work with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, while maintaining a strong sense of professional values and ethics*
- *Provide leadership in social change processes, using team work, community development and conflict resolution skills*
- *Be a self-directed, self-motivated, and life-long learner with a questioning mind and a familiarity with inquiry approaches to learning*
- *Be self-reflective, self-aware and open to clinical supervision to continue learning*
- *Create and influence the future of social work practice at a political, social, and professional level by responding to and anticipating the changing needs of society*
- *Meet the professional practice requirements as identified by the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada (ASWNC), the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE)²*

Since its inception in September 1982, the program has gone through a number of changes, from its origins as a Social Services diploma. It has been offered in Fort Smith and Inuvik and is now located at the North Slave Campus of the College in Yellowknife. Indigenous and northern content have been added to the program, including specific courses such as First Peoples of the NWT and Culture Camp as well as integration of such content into other courses. Graduates receive credit towards a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Regina or Yukon College.

Purpose and Scope of the Review

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and employers in the NWT and to develop recommendations to improve the program so it better meets the needs of students and employers and to support decision-makers.

Although a history of the program will be provided, this review will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017. It will cover all aspects of the program including courses, student support, and staff support.

Key Review Questions

The following review questions were used to guide the evaluation:

² http://www.auroracollege.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/ProgramInfoDisplay.aspx?id=107&tp=PRG
downloaded December 7, 2017

1. How has the Social Work Diploma program evolved throughout its history and what was the rationale for changes to the program over time?
 - 5-year application, acceptance, enrolment and graduation trends by age, community of origin, ethnicity, and gender
 - 5-year attrition rates
 - Preparedness of students for employment and/or further education
2. How relevant is the Social Work Diploma program in terms of current labour market demand, employment trends and program objectives?
3. To what extent does the Social Work Diploma program meet the needs of students?
 - Student satisfaction
 - Leads to adequate transfer opportunities to BSW program
 - Links to employment
 - Barriers to/supports for student success
 - Extent to which the Social Work Diploma program met expectations
 - Changes students and employers would like to see addressed
4. To what extent does the Social Work Diploma program meet the needs of employers?
 - Satisfaction with skills and knowledge levels
 - Extent to which the Social Work Diploma program met expectations
 - Changes employers would like to see
5. What factors contribute to or detract from the Social Work Diploma program being a high quality program that meets the needs of students and employers in a northern context?
 - Meeting educational standards of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education
 - Overall quality of the program
6. How does the curriculum compare to other northern Social Work Diploma programs as well as to best practices?
7. How efficiently have the Social Work Diploma program's resources been allocated?
 - Areas where efficiencies could be improved
 - Whether more resources are required
 - Potential for sharing resources and costs with other programs or agencies
8. What changes are needed to support the Social Work Diploma program meeting student and employer expectations as well as standards and best practices?

Review Methodology

Data collection included a document review, interviews, focus groups, surveys, administrative data pull, literature review and a website review. The following table outlines provides an overview of the evaluation participant groups, the methods used to reach them and the number reached.

Review Participant Groups	Method	Number Invited	Number Responded
Current Students	Focus group	24	10
Past students*	Survey	45	21
Employers/field supervisors	Survey	50	19
Field supervisors	Interview	6	6
Faculty (former/current)	Interview	4	4
Nursing faculty	Interview	3	3
Administrative Staff	Interview	2	2
Elders	Interview	3	2
Government partners	Interview	3	3
Experts	Interview	3	3
Other colleges/universities	Website	8	n/a

*Included both students who graduated and those who did not. 16 - graduated. 5 – not graduated

The surveys, interview guides and focus group questions are provided in Appendix A along with a list of the documents reviewed:

A literature review explored trends in other colleges and universities regarding similar social work programs, best practices in such programs, employment trends for social work graduates focusing on northern Canada , and a review of current and forecast NWT labour market demands was conducted as part of the preparation of this detailed review plan. The bibliography is attached in *Appendix B*.

Strengths and Limitations of the Review Process

Every review process has some strengths and limitations. The following are the key strengths and limitations of this review process.

Strengths

- Use of multiple lines of inquiry allowed for comparison of findings across sources and methods.
- The consistency in the findings across the lines of inquiry provided confidence in those findings and allowed us to draw stronger conclusions. There were few inconsistencies.
- The Steering Committee contributed to a participatory process that is more likely to result in the evaluation findings being understood and accepted by key stakeholders.
- The program annual reports provided an excellent source of information, laying the foundation for exploration through other methods.

Limitations

- Statistical data from different sources is inconsistent. Data kept by the College, shows different enrollment and graduation rates than the data kept by the program.
- The results of the survey of past students are likely skewed in a positive direction since it is probable that only the most successful past students responded.

Summary of Findings

This summary of findings is organized by the issues addressed in the review questions. It draws on all the sources of information including input from the Steering Committee for the review.

Detailed Description of the Program

This section provides context for program, looks at the evolution of the program, outlines some of the trends in student enrolment and provides information about the current course content.

Context

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma program is currently located at the Aurora College North Slave Campus in Yellowknife, the largest community in the Northwest Territories. As indicated in Figure 1, the context is complex.

Figure 1: The Context



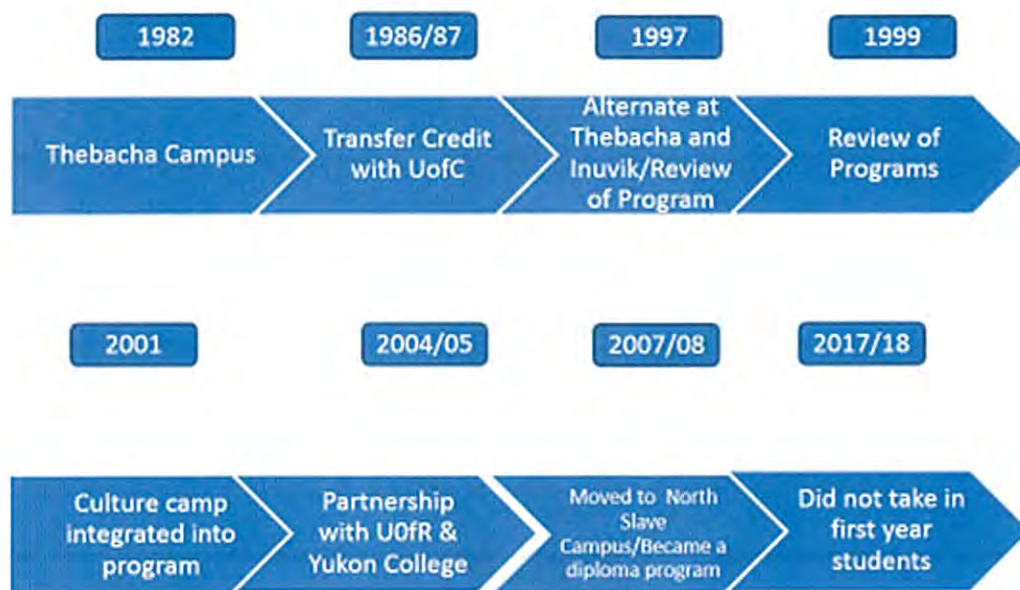
About half of the population of the NWT is comprised of Indigenous peoples, and it is important to take their histories into account. The histories include pre-contact when the population was comprised only of Indigenous peoples who lived off the land with their own cultures and traditions. Colonialism introduced new and sometimes destructive factors including the residential schools that were designed to destroy the Indigenous cultures. This is recent history and affects the current population. The Social Work Diploma program incorporates the current 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (TRC)

principles and Calls to Action into its curriculum³. The reconciliation principles are attached in Appendix C. Many of the TRC Calls to Action directly or indirectly address social workers who work in the fields of child welfare, justice, health and education. The program is designed to produce social workers who understand the northern context and what it means to work in small, isolated and largely Indigenous communities.

Both Yukon College and the University of Regina recognize the Aurora College program and provide for transfer credit that allows students to complete a BSW. The program moved to the North Slave Campus in 2007. In 2017, the College made a decision to eliminate the program. This decision was deferred until the completion of a Foundational Review of the College, which is looking at the governance and operations of Aurora College.⁴ The Foundational Review is occurring concurrently with this review of the program.

Evolution of the Program

Figure 2: Evolution of the Program



As indicated previously, the program began as a Diploma program in 1982 situated at the Thebacha Campus of Aurora College in Fort Smith. In 1986, transfer credit was arranged with the University of Calgary. In 1997, provision of the program alternated between the Thebacha and Aurora Campuses. In 2001, the program entered into partnerships with the University of Regina and Yukon College. The program is overseen

³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Principles of Reconciliation

⁴ Government of Northwest Territories (June 19, 2017) Aurora College Foundational Review Terms of Reference

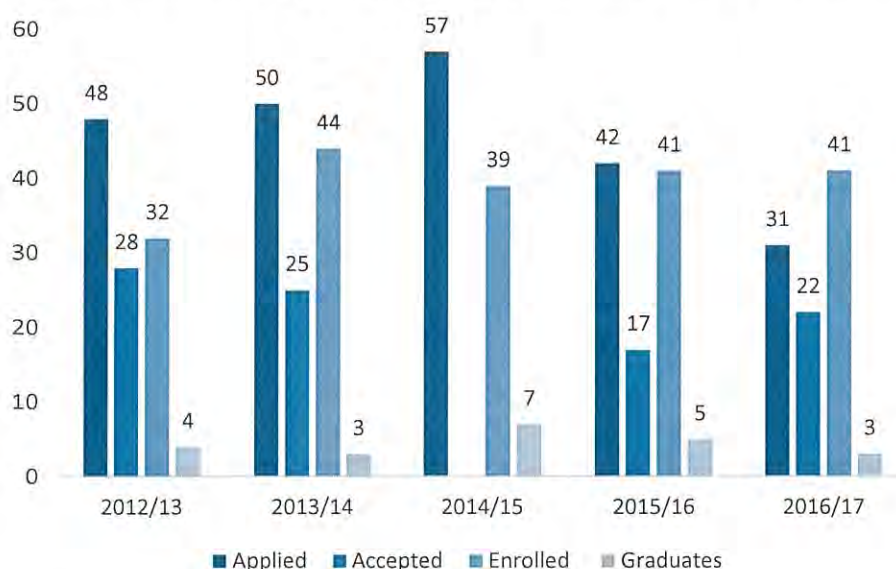
by the University of Regina and students can receive a Certificate in Social Work from the University of Regina and a Diploma in Social Work from Aurora College.

The Social Work Diploma program is currently located at the North Slave Campus of the College in Yellowknife. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) provides funding and the legislative context for College operations through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).

Trends

As shown in Figure 3, the number of students accepted annually into the program has varied from 16 to 28. The number enrolled in any given year is often more than double the number of accepted students, despite dropouts, because many students take longer than two years to complete the program. This still allows for classes that do not exceed 25 students. The number of graduates each year has been quite small, ranging from two to a maximum of six. This year, because the future of the program is uncertain, many students are working to graduate. There will likely be more than 15 graduates for this academic year, 2017/18.

Figure 3: Numbers Applied, Accepted, Enrolled and Graduated



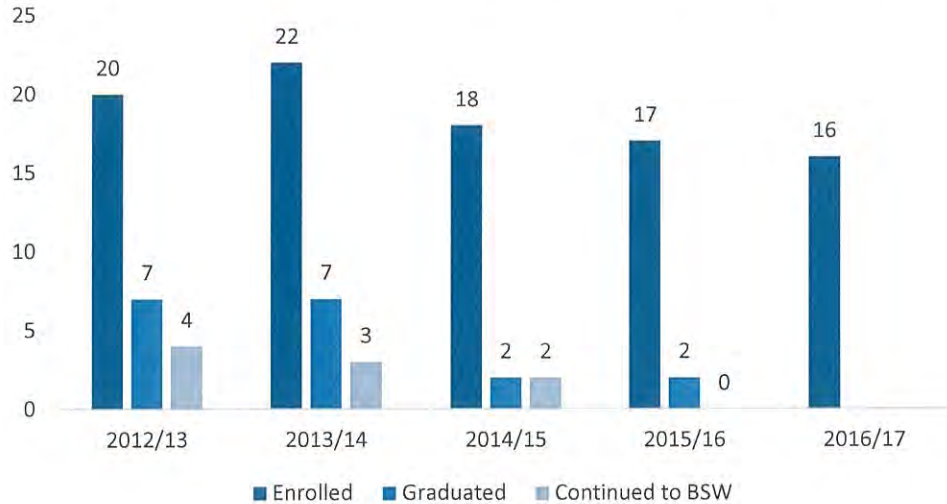
Source: Aurora College Stats

Note: 2014/15 combined accepted/enrolled

The enrolment and graduation rates are somewhat different based on the statistics kept by the program, as shown in Figure 4 for the years 2012/13 (32 compared to 20), 2014/15 (44 compared to 22), 2015/16 (41 compared to 17) and 2016/17 (41 compared to 16). Graduation numbers are also inconsistent for the years with the program statistics showing lower numbers some years and higher numbers in other years compared to College statistics. Nevertheless, both sources indicate very low graduation rates, which is of concern. It is partially the result of the length of time it takes for students to complete the program because many students are part-time as well as the high number

of withdrawals each year. While most of the students are able to complete the program within two to three years, some students take as long as four years.

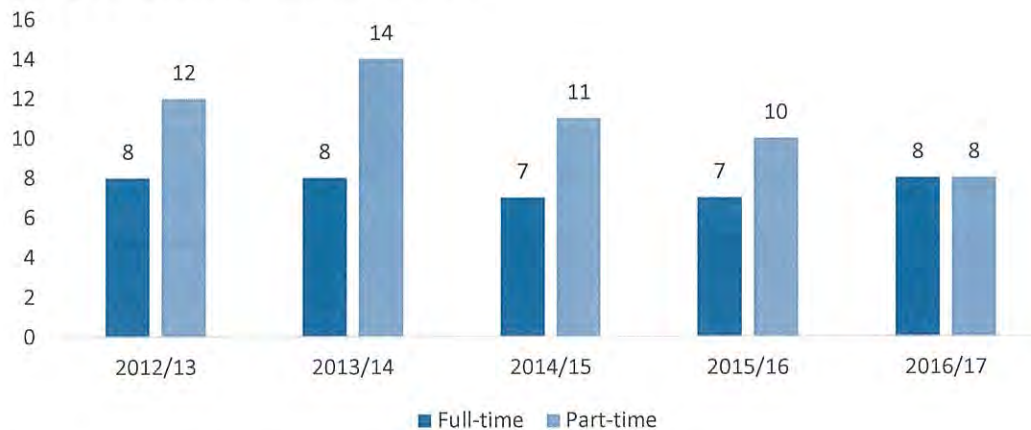
Figure 4: Numbers Enrolled, Graduated and Continued to BSW



Source: Social Work Diploma Program Statistics

Program statistics provide more detail regarding the enrolled students including reasons for withdrawal, whether a student is full-time or part-time, their gender, community of origin and ethnicity. Figure 5 shows that for most years the majority of students attended part-time.

Figure 5: Enrolled Student Status

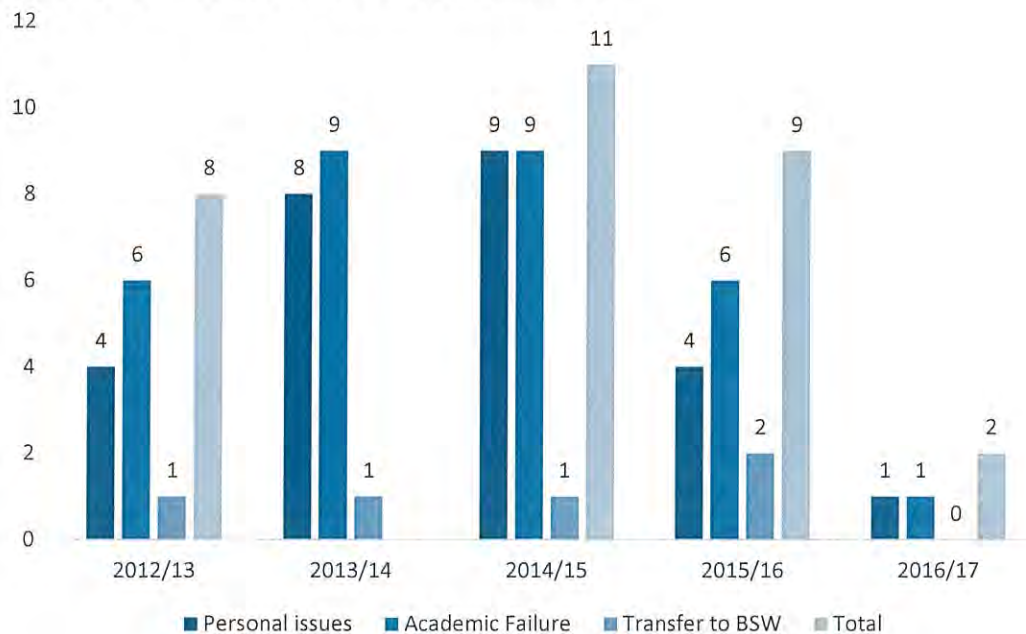


Source: Social Work Diploma Program Statistics

Based on interviews with the faculty, this is usually because students have family responsibilities and need to work as well as go to school. The cost of living in Yellowknife is also quite high, requiring students to work to cover living costs.

There is substantial attrition of students each year, with a number of students dropping out. Based on survey results and interviews with faculty, a few do so to pursue a full BSW at another institution. Most withdraw for personal reasons or academic failure. The numbers of reasons for withdrawal identified in Figure 6 exceed the total because each student respondent to the survey may have cited more than one reason for withdrawal. The vast majority withdraw for personal reasons or academic failure. According to the program faculty, many students return to continue the program once their issues are resolved.

Figure 6: Reasons for Student Withdrawal



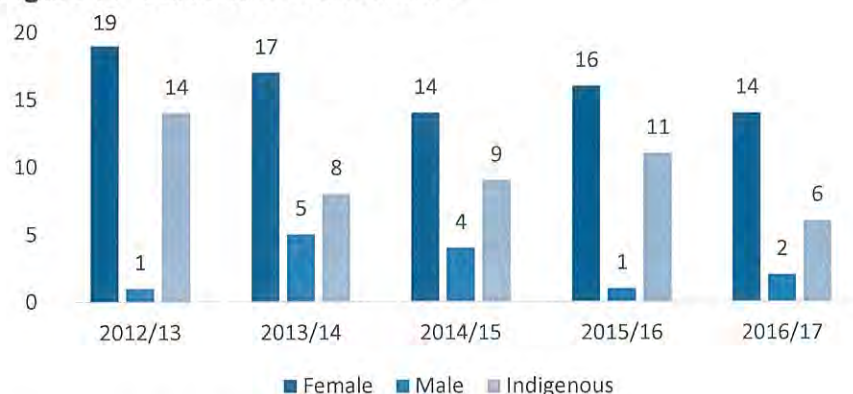
Source: Social Work Diploma Program Statistics

Personal issues related to withdrawal might include family crisis, death of a family member, grief, family violence, substance abuse, homelessness or not having sufficient income. Of concern is the high number of students withdrawing because of academic failure.

Both current students, past students and instructors indicated that withdrawal from the program is due to academic failure is frequently linked to having personal issues as well, it is difficult to know whether it is also linked to students' lack of academic readiness to undertake the program. Faculty indicated that students often expect a first-year work load in their courses and find they must take third- and fourth-year courses. This would be challenging for any student. Most interviewees also indicated that the academic demands of high schools in the different communities vary, with smaller communities not able to provide the same academic quality as the larger communities. This means substantial variation in the preparation of student undertaking the more demanding third- and fourth-year courses which are required in first and second year of the Diploma program.

As with most social work education programs in Canada, the majority of students are women, as shown in Figure 7. The number of Indigenous students is quite high, ranging from 36% to 70%, with no particular trend from year to year.

Figure 7: Student Characteristics.



Source: Social Work Diploma Program Statistics

Relevancy of the Social Work Diploma Program

This section looks at NWT labour market trends for social workers, responses from employers of social workers and relevance of the curriculum in a northern context.

Labour Market Trends

The Conference Board of Canada⁵ forecasts that while the NWT economy will continue to grow until 2020, from 2020 – 2030 an expected contraction of the gross domestic product (GDP) will limit the creation of new jobs.

New job growth is more likely to occur in the natural resources sector. However, an aging population headed towards retirement and worker out-migration will result in job openings. The resident labour force does not have the skills to fill the openings that will occur. There are labour market disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people caused by differences in education opportunities, resulting in limited opportunities for Indigenous workers to qualify for occupations requiring a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.⁶

The labour market projections indicate that there will continue to be a need for social workers in the NWT. For university graduates, social work will be in the top ten jobs in demand and in the top three for diploma graduates.

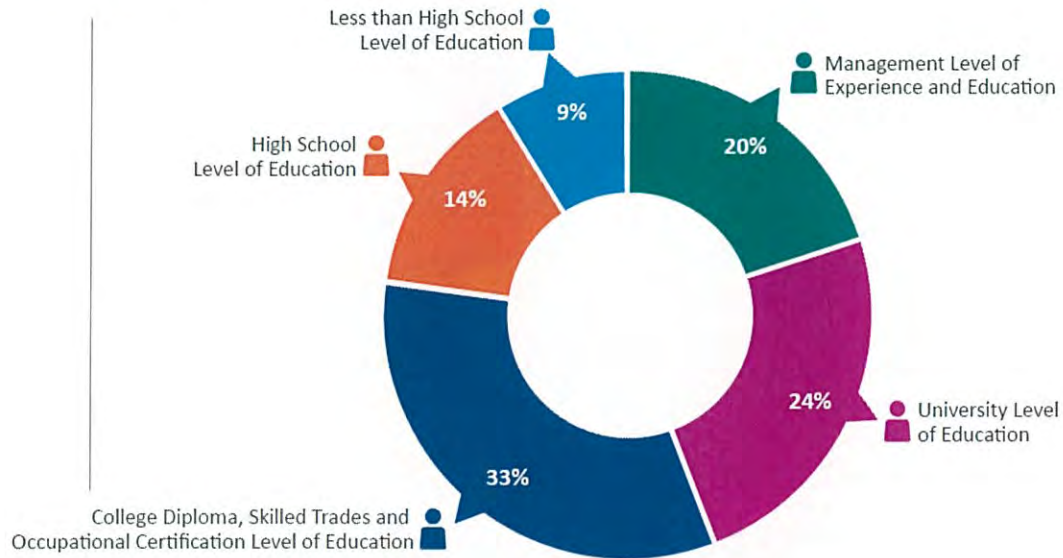
On February 8, 2018, the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly announced an additional \$1.5 million to put more mental health workers in schools, which may mean an immediate increase in the number of social work positions and opportunities for graduates.

⁵ Conference Board of Canada (no date) Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment

⁶ IBID

Figure 8:

FORECASTED NWT JOB OPENINGS
2015 to 2030



Source: The Conference Board of Canada (Base Case)

Source: Government of Northwest Territories (2016) Skills 4 Success NWT Jobs in Demand 15-year Forecast

Meeting the Needs of Students

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program has a diverse group of students. The following are some composite student profiles which illustrate student circumstances. Actual students are not referenced. :

- Maria entered the program directly after graduating from high school in Yellowknife. She is able to live at home and has no problem taking a full course load. She plans to transfer to the University of Regina upon completion of her diploma.
- Joseph is in his mid-thirties, with a history of trauma. He is attentive and engaged in classroom discussions. In spite of faculty advising, referrals to student support, and extensions for late assignments, he fails to hand in written work. He has significant family and employment demands which also compromise his ability to complete the required work. Joseph does not complete the program.
- Astrid, a young woman in her twenties, has the academic background to do well in the course. She becomes pregnant during the second year of her program and returns to school immediately. She continues to attend classes and gets her assignments in on time. She graduates within two years and becomes employed.

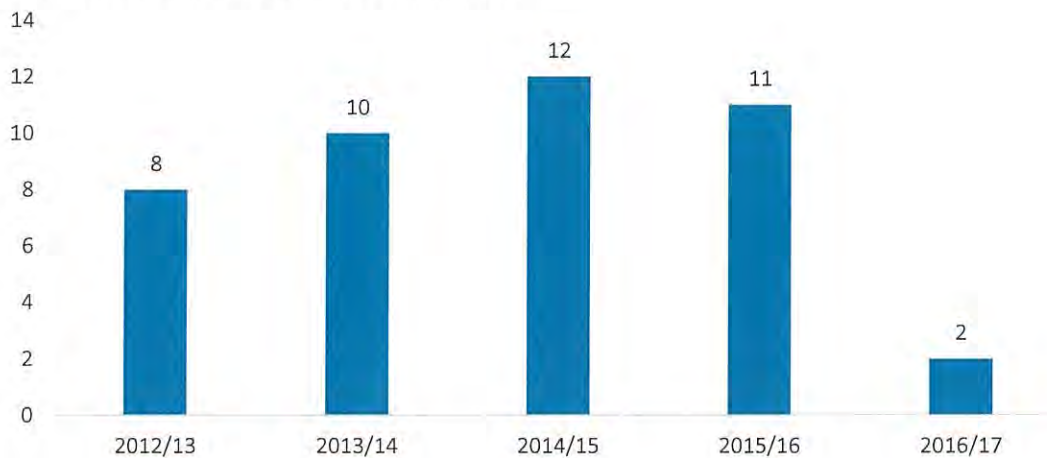
- Joy comes from a remote community. The move to Yellowknife is a big change for her. She finds her high school academics do not provide sufficient preparation for the program. The death of her mother during her first year causes her trauma and, as the strongest family member, she must help the rest of her family. She returns in the fall and is able to complete the program in three years.
- Emma is in her mid-twenties with two young children and a partner who drinks heavily and abuses her. She cannot depend on him to provide childcare while she is in school. She finds it difficult to keep up with assignments. She moves to taking courses part-time.

Students and faculty both reported that different supports are tailored to meet the needs of different students. Emma, Joseph and Joy are referred would be referred to community counselling services and supported while they wait for the services by their faculty advisors. Astrid would be allowed to bring her child to class. These four are given extensions on assignments. All are provided with academic counselling and assistance with course planning. Almost all student respondents, both current and past, indicated that the supports provided were helpful.

The survey of past students provides insights into the extent to which the program meets student needs. While there was a fairly high response rate (21 responded/45 invited) not all past students could be located. It is likely that those students who were most successful after graduating responded. Hence the results of the survey need to be interpreted with some caution. However, the consistency of response across sources indicates that the responses need to be seriously considered.

Sixteen of the past students who responded to the survey had graduated, five had not. Of the five who had not graduated, only one indicated that the program was not appropriate for him/her. Three indicated that they had entered a BSW program prior to graduating. This is a slightly different picture than that provided by the statistics provided by the program, as shown in Figure 9. The results of the survey are likely skewed in a positive direction since it is probable that only the most successful past students responded.

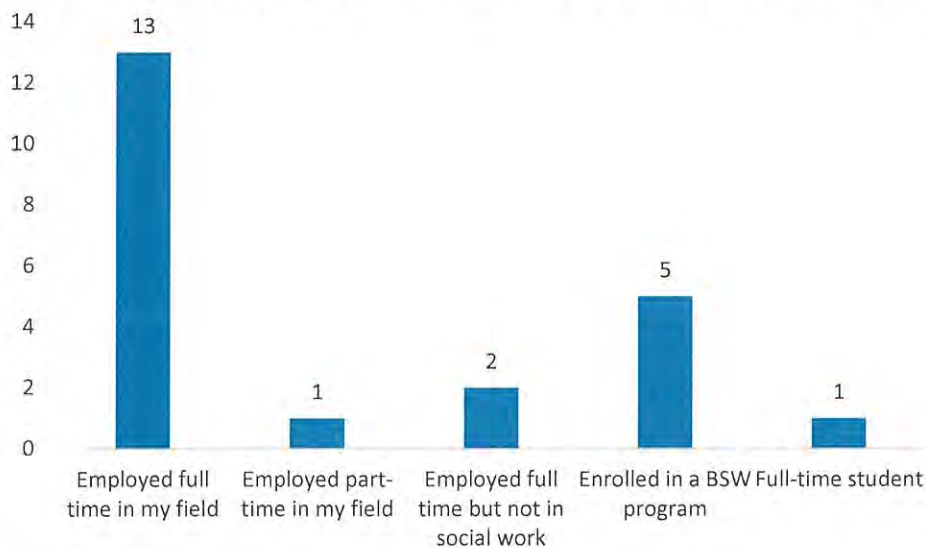
Figure 9: Annual Student Withdrawal



Source: Social Work Diploma Program Statistics

As shown in Figure 10, 11 or 55% of the respondents reported that they are employed full-time in their field and an additional four, or 20%, are enrolled in a BSW program, indicating that the program provided adequate preparation for at least 75% of the survey respondents. Most respondents were able to graduate within a two-year period.

Figure 10: Current Employment/Education Status of Past Students



Source: Past Student Survey

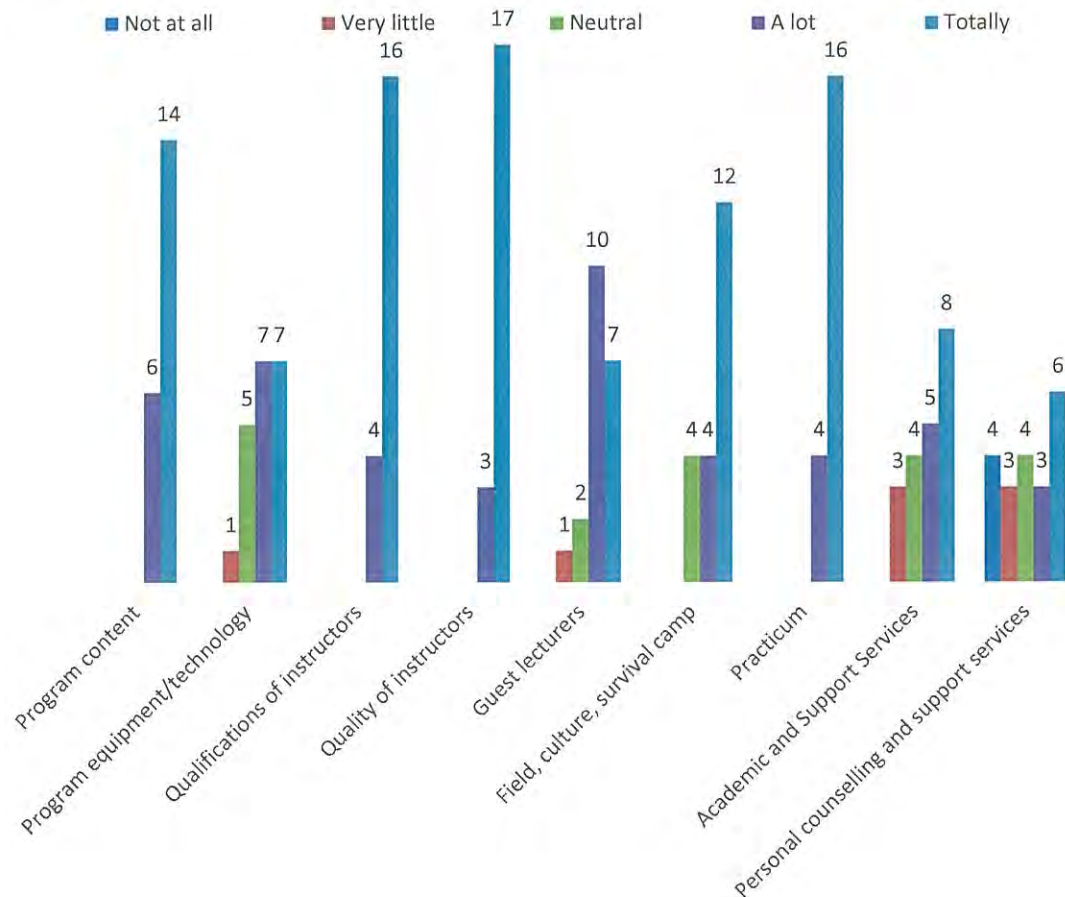
Note: Two employed full-time and one employed part-time in their field are also working on a BSW requiring responses from those students are recorded twice. Two students did not respond to this question.

Figure 11 shows the responses of past students who rated which factors contributed to their academic development and ability to be employed.

The practicum, field culture camp, quality and qualifications of instructors and program content were rated as the most frequent factors that 'totally' contributed to the students'

academic development and employment. This is consistent with the input provided by current students who attended the focus group.

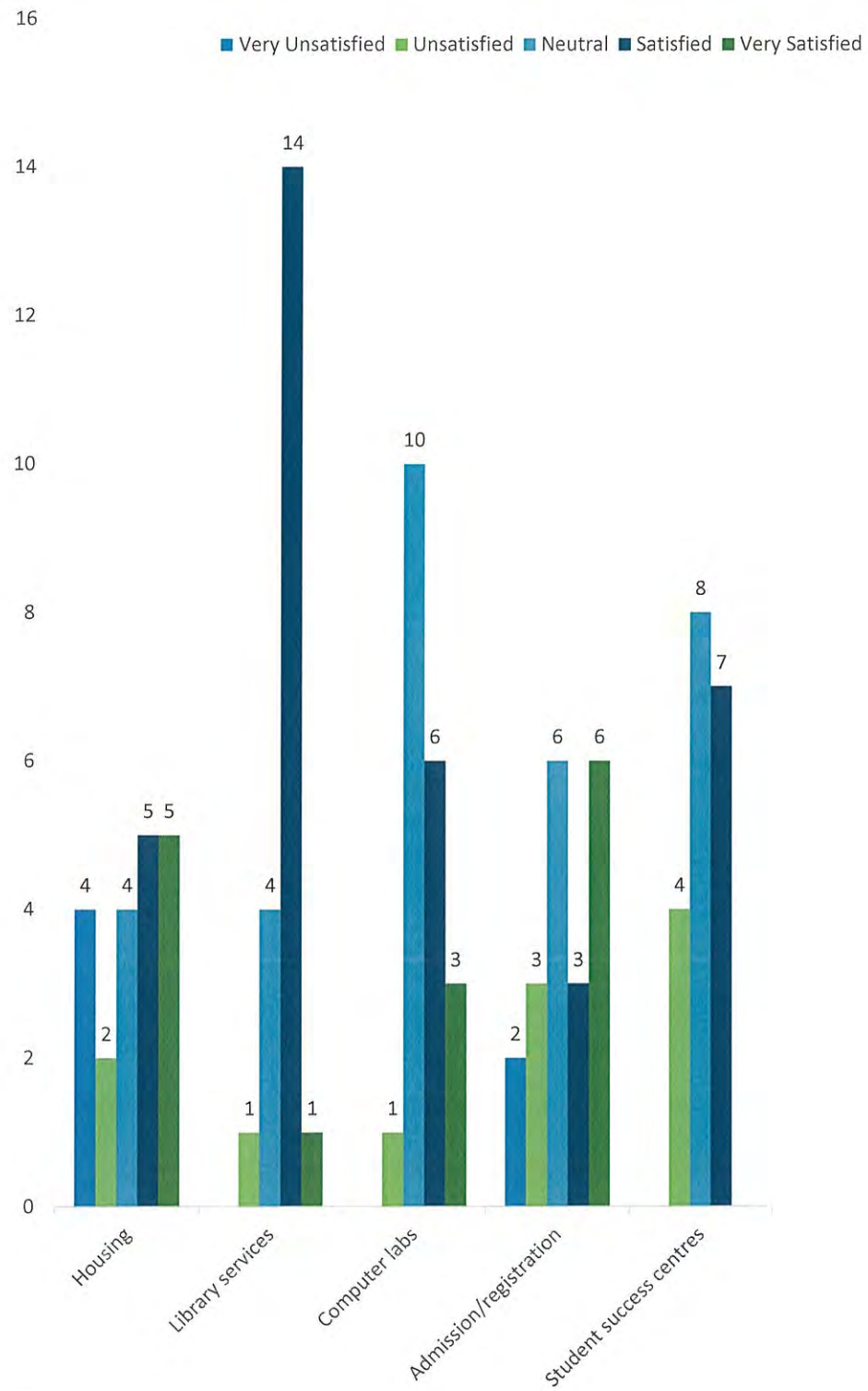
Figure 11: Program Factors that Contributed to Academic Development/ Employment



Source: Past Student Survey

Students were also asked to rate a number of services. As shown in Figure 12, the response varied substantially, with Library services being the most appreciated. Students in the focus groups also indicated varied experience with the services. They noted that having an Indigenous counsellor on campus is helpful in assuring culturally appropriate content and responses to students.

Figure 12: Past Student Survey Respondents Rating of Services



Source: Past Student Survey

Current and past students who had housing liked their housing. Students indicated that the waiting list for housing, the lack of access to housing for students already living in Yellowknife and the availability of housing only to full-time students often interfered with students' ability to attend school.

All of the survey respondents indicated that they would recommend the Social Work Diploma program to others. When asked what the strengths of the program are, current and past students indicated the following:

- Knowledge and skills of the instructors
- Instructors' concern for the students
- Northern experience and understanding of northern issues
- Small class size
- Understanding the healing process needed by some of the students.

When asked what needs to be changed, current and past students were almost unanimous in the need for a BSW program in Yellowknife. Other changes included:

- On-site childcare
- More instructors
- Improved learning space
- Improved technology
- Greater variety of courses
- Papers marked more quickly
- Improved access to housing.

The overwhelming emphasis was on the need for a BSW program located on a new campus. Survey respondents and interviewees spontaneously indicated this. Based on a poll taken by the student representative on the Review Advisory Committee, 10 of the students who will be completing the program this year have indicated they plan to continue to work on their BSW but cannot leave Yellowknife at this point.

Conclusions

Based on survey data and responses in focus groups, students are generally satisfied with the program and indicated it meets their needs with two exceptions:

1. Many students want to be able to obtain their BSW at Aurora College
2. The building needs to provide more space for students to meet.

Comparison of the Program to Similar Programs

Curriculum

As demonstrated by the Curriculum Review matrix in Appendix D, Aurora College provides a unique program that does not appear to be duplicated anywhere else. Most colleges provide a social service diploma program that does not qualify the individual to call him/herself a social worker. The NWT legislative framework recognizes graduates

from the program as Licensed Social Workers and they can become members of the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada.

The curriculum was developed in partnership with the University of Regina and there are similarities to that curriculum as well as to the curriculum at Yukon College, as shown in Table 1. It should be noted that Yukon College partners with University of Regina and resulting almost identical courses at both institutions.

Table 1: Course Comparison between Aurora College and University of Regina

Aurora College Social Work Diploma	University of Regina Bachelor of Social Work	Notes
SW 100 Foundations of SW	SW 100 Foundations of SW	Same course Yukon College offers SW 200 "Introduction to Social Work" instead of SW 100
SW 202 Critical Thinking/Critical Thought	SW 202 Critical Thinking/Critical Thought	Same course
SW 390 Communication Skills	SW 390 Communication Skills	Same course
ENGL 100 Critical Reading & Writing I	ENGL 100 Critical Reading & Writing I	Same course
ENGL 110 Critical Reading & Writing II	ENGL 110 Critical Reading & Writing II	Same course
Indigenous Peoples of the NWT	IND 100	Equivalent course
PSY 261 General Psychology	PSY 101 Introduction to Psychology	Equivalent course
SW 346 Social Work Practice I	SW 346 Social Work Practice I	Same course
SW 347 Social Work Practice II	SW 347 Social Work Practice II	Same course
SW 350 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice	SW 350 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice	Same course
SW 414 Child Welfare	SW 414 Child Welfare	Same course
SW 469 Social Policy	SW 469 Social Policy	Same course
SW 348 Practicum I	SW 348 Practicum I	Same course
SW 448 Practicum II	SW 448 Practicum II	Same course
SW 389 Cultural Competence for Northern Social Work Practice	Not offered	Also offered at Yukon College
SW 352 Cultural Camp	Not offered	Also offered at Yukon College
Elective Courses Offered towards BSW	UR also required for BSW	
SW 411 Issues of Abuse and Violence SW 412 Mental Health Services	SW 421 Human Behaviour in a	3 required BSW

Aurora College Social Work Diploma	University of Regina Bachelor of Social Work	Notes
SW 421 Human Behaviour in a Social Context SW 451 Social Work Research SW 460 Social Work Ethics	Social Context SW 451 Social Work Research SW 460 Social Work Ethics	courses offered on a rotating basis at Aurora College

The University of Regina expects students to take a number of electives outside of the Social Work program in order to meet the requirements for a bachelor's degree. These are generally taken during the first two years of study in the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program.

The first and second level courses are intended to be taken in the first year of program in order to provide a foundation for the students. However, of the seventeen courses offered through Aurora College, only seven are at a first or second year level. As well, students are expected to complete third and fourth level courses as soon as they start the program. This would be a challenge for most students. Faculty report that the demands of the course work can be overwhelming for students without a strong academic background from high school.

Admission Requirements

Table 2 compares the admission requirements at Aurora College, University of Calgary, University of Regina, University of Victoria and Yukon College.

Table 2: Comparison of Admission Requirements

Aurora College	University of Calgary	University of Regina	University of Victoria	Yukon College
<p>Grade 12 with English ELA 30-1 or English ELA 30-2 with a minimum mark of 65% or ABE English 150 or 160 with a minimum mark of 60% and ABE Math 140 with the applicable passing grade.</p> <p>Complete a College entrance application.</p> <p>Submit a letter of interest, indicating their reasons for applying to the program.</p> <p>Submit two letters of reference, one work-related, one personal. Submit official transcripts</p>	<p>Not a direct entry program. Required: 2 years of study (60 units) including 19 non social work university transferrable ½ courses (3 units each) plus social work 201 or its equivalent. OR: an undergraduate degree in another discipline from a recognized institution and Social Work 201 or its equivalent. OR: a social work diploma from an approved College in Alberta that is part of the Alberta Association of Social Work Diploma Program Agreement. Students must complete all required 300-level core Social Work courses before registering in practicum.</p>	<p>Application for Admission to the University of Regina, Pre-Social Work Program.</p> <p>Completion of the Pre-Social Work Program (30 university credit hours including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 100 (or equivalent) Indigenous Studies 100 (or equivalent) Psychology 101 (or equivalent) Sociology 100 (or equivalent) <p>Minimum 70% grade point average.</p>	<p>Students are responsible to plan their BSW program to ensure that the University Requirements are fulfilled.</p> <p>Entry to the BSW program is in third year.</p>	<p>Students must complete a minimum of 30 university credit hours prior to admission to BSW and obtain a minimum GPA of 70%.</p> <p>The following courses must be completed as part of the 30 university credit hours: English 100 Level English 100 level, or higher Social Work 200</p> <p>General university studies of 21 credits.</p> <p>A 70% combined average is required for the English courses.</p>

All of the other post-secondary institutions require one to two years of university prior to entering the program. The Aurora College Social Work Diploma program allows entry directly from high school, which is consistent with other college diploma programs. However, as noted previously, Social Work Diploma program students at Aurora College enter directly into the program and are expected to take third and fourth year social work courses. This is likely a contributing factor to student withdrawal. Although Aurora College Social Work Diploma program students are required to have taken a Grade 12 English course, for some students (Indigenous and new comers to Canada) English is not their first language, so this exacerbates the situation of struggling with third and fourth year courses.

Conclusion

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma program provides courses that are similar to third and fourth year courses in a BSW program. This places a significant demand on first year students entering directly from high school, particularly those for whom English is an additional language. This may contribute to withdrawal rates.

Relevancy of the Curriculum

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma program offers a number of courses that relate specifically to the northern context, with the Aurora College program placing greater emphasis on the Indigenous and northern context. Aurora College's culture camp takes the students onto the land away from Yellowknife and provides a program, led by an Elder, where they are totally immersed in the Indigenous culture. Almost all respondents emphasized the importance of having a curriculum that reflects the NWT context. In this way the curriculum is relevant.

However, input received through interviews, focus groups and the surveys indicates that the program structure is not as relevant as it could be. Almost all respondents indicated that it needed to be a BSW program. There is some confusion with employers as to whether those with the Aurora College Social Work Diploma can call themselves social worker. The Social Work Profession Act (2012) provides for two categories of social worker:

- Registered Social Worker (RSW) requires a Bachelor of Social Work
- Licenced Social Worker (LSW) requires a Diploma of Social Work

Increasingly, entry-level jobs require a BSW. Having a BSW supports a strong career path in the field. Most students would prefer getting a BSW, but settle for the diploma because they are unable to move south or to the Yukon. As with most BSW programs, the general liberal arts electives and foundational social work courses could then be taken in the first and second years. Many felt this would also correct the issue of students needing to take third and fourth year courses in their first and second years. Almost everyone pointed to the importance of having a BSW program with NWT-relevant curriculum.

A few interviewees suggested developing a 'laddered' or 'scaffold' program that would allow students completing two years to receive a diploma if the appropriate social work courses had been completed and those completing the four full years would receive a BSW. Many also suggested that this could be accomplished in more cost effective

manner if the general liberal arts courses were shared with the nursing, teachers and business programs, thus having a core of bachelor programs available through Aurora College. A respondent within ECE indicated that they have been hoping for such a proposal from the College.

Almost all students and faculty noted that the current campus is no longer adequate for the current programming and many indicated that a change to a BSW would require an expansion of the campus. A respondent within ECE indicated that the Department has developed plans for a new campus that would be more suitable than the current location. Until such time as those plans come to fruition, students need spaces to congregate, an improved computer lab and access to additional housing. The expansion of the program to four years will also require additional classroom space.

The campus should be located on the shores of the lake where students can easily participate in culture-based activities – near Yellowknife but outside of it. It needs to have places, both inside and out, for students to meet and study. It should have sufficient residence space and space for other supports for the students

An Elder

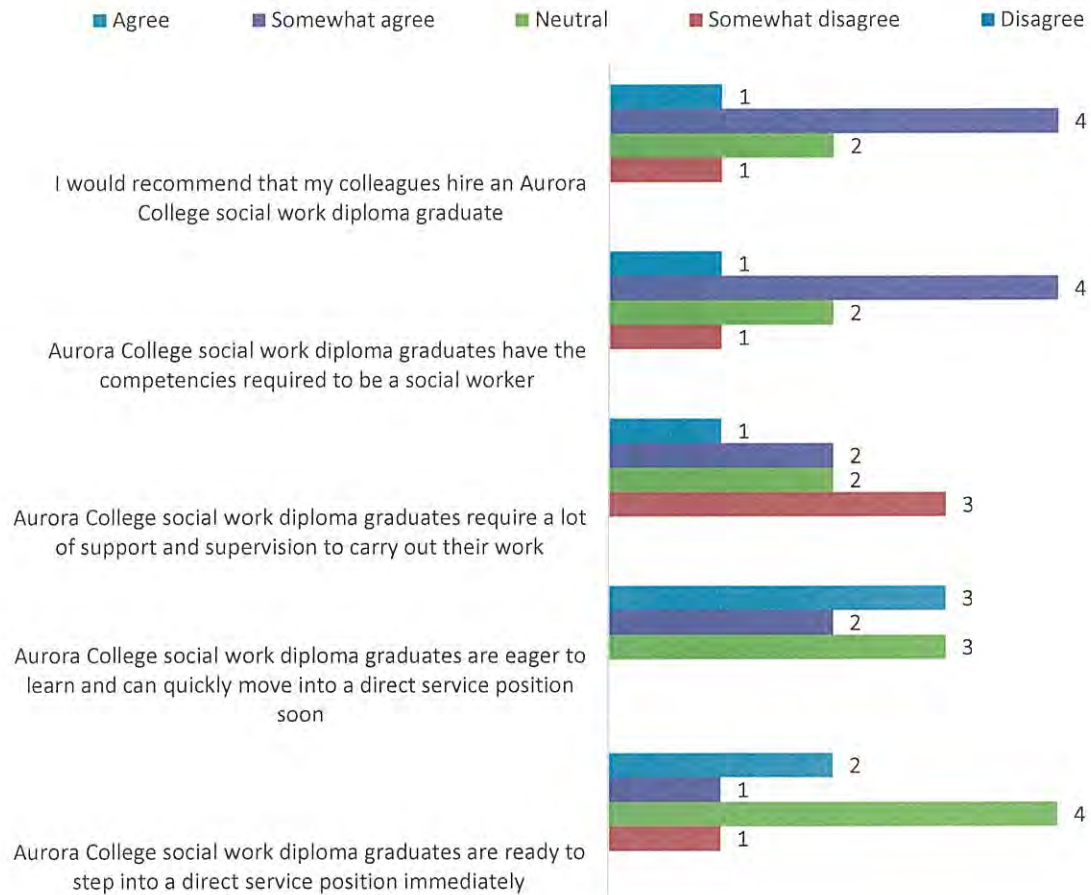
Conclusion

The program is relevant to the extent that it provides a northern education in a field that is in high demand. However, it does not meet the need for a BSW program located in Yellowknife. There is planning that will need to occur. In the meantime a transition plan could support the 10 students who wish to work towards a BSW locally.

Meeting Employer Needs

Fifty employers and field supervisors were asked to respond to the Employer/Field Supervisor survey. Of the 19 responses, eight indicated they had hired a Social Work Diploma program graduate. Three had hired multiple graduates. Students were hired into a variety of positions ranging from intern to policy advisor. Three were direct service workers. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about graduates from the program. Figure 13 provides responses from employers, five of whom are also field supervisors.

Figure 13: Views of Respondents who Hired at Least One graduate

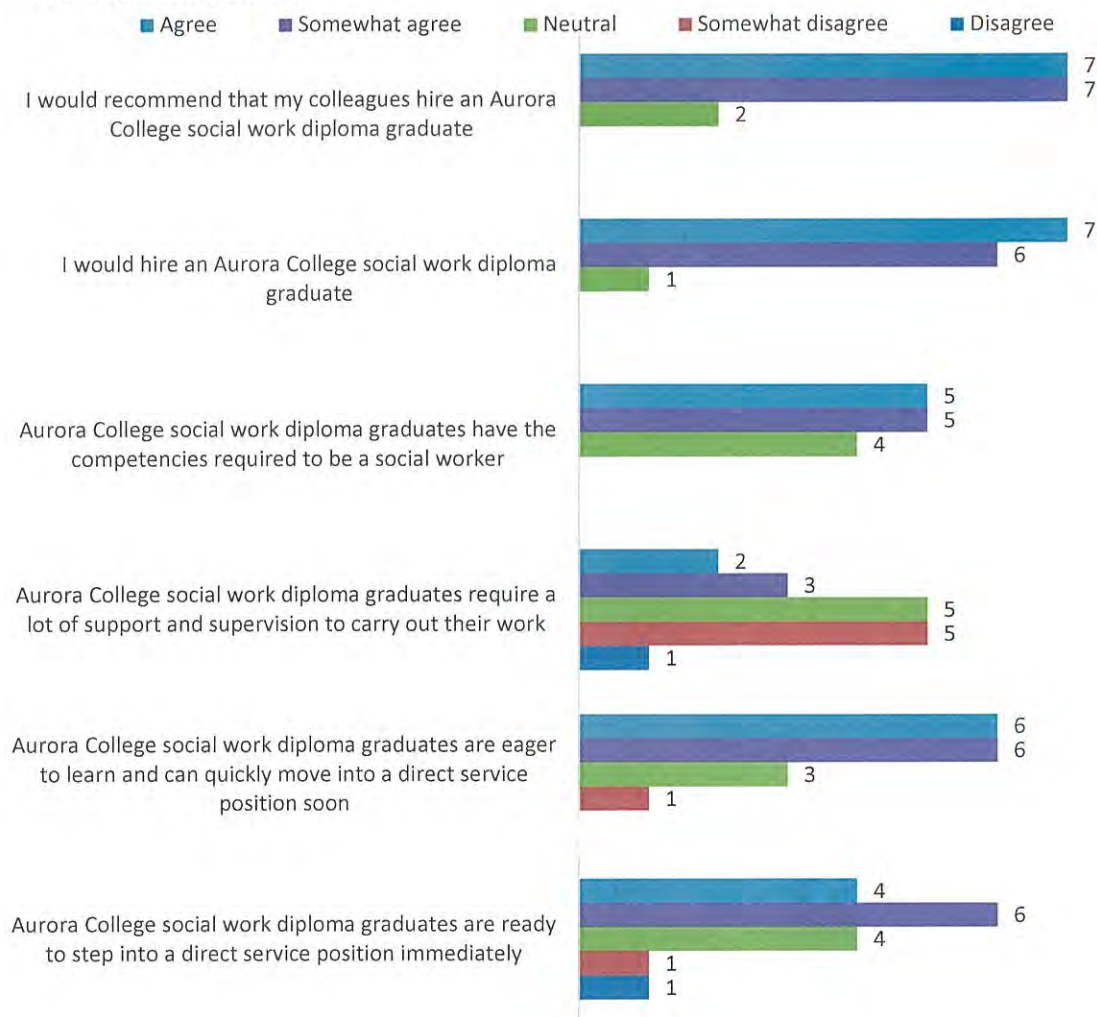


Source: Employer/Field Supervisor Survey

In their responses, over half of the eight employers were positive about hiring a graduate, two were neutral and only one was negative. That is similar for perceptions of competencies. Most employers felt that graduates do not require a lot of support to carry out their work, but only a few felt that graduates could move into a direct service position immediately.. Faculty and employers provided examples of a few students who performed so well in their field placements that employers hired them. Although the numbers are too small to determine significant differences, there does not appear to be any real difference between the perception of government and non-government employers regarding program graduates as employees.

Sixteen of the respondents were field supervisors, with five being both supervisor and employer. Figure 14 provides their responses to the questions about program students. Overall field supervisors are more positive about the students than are employers.

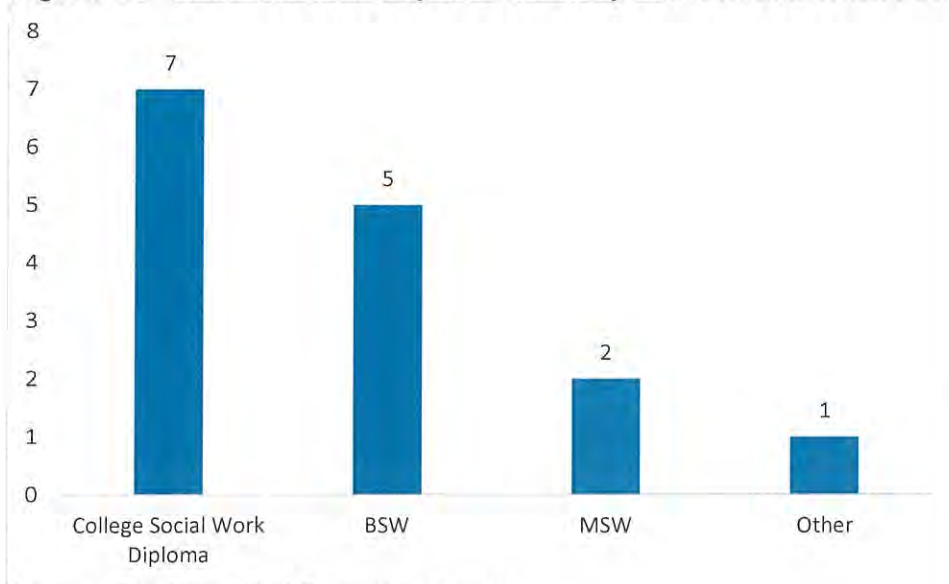
Figure 14: Field Supervisors' Views of Future Graduates Based on Experience with Field Placements



Source: Employer/Field Supervisor Survey

Employers and field supervisors were asked what qualification their organization require for an entry-level position. Figure 15 shows their responses. Almost half require a diploma, while over half require a social work degree or a diploma plus several years' experience.

Figure 15: Qualifications Required for Entry Level Social Work Positions



Source: Employer/Field Supervisor Survey

A number of field supervisors and employers who were interviewed indicated that there is a trend towards requiring a degree. Despite GNWT giving the license for diploma graduates to call themselves social workers, the GNWT has upgraded their requirements to needing a BSW for many entry level social work positions. These are the higher paying jobs with greater job security. This speaks to the need for Aurora College to develop a BSW program.

Survey respondents suggested the following changes to the program:

- More about dementia and end of life care
- Availability of evening teleconference options
- Expand it to a BSW program

Conclusions

Employers had mixed reactions regarding the extent to which the program met their needs for preparing students for entry-level positions. This could be because different employers have had different experiences with different students or they have different requirements. Many indicated the need for a BSW program at Aurora College.

Efficiency of Resource Allocation

Efficiency is difficult to measure with the data available. It can be measured in different ways, based on the faculty/student ratio, the cost per student ratio, cost per graduate employed or the cost per graduate ratio. Because reporting has not been consistent in recent years, it is difficult to assess efficiency.

The faculty/student ratio varies depending on the number of students, but on average is one faculty member for 12.3 students. Given the nature of the courses, the small class sizes inherent in the NWT, the number of courses and the multiple roles faculty play, this ratio is efficient.

Looking at the cost per student ratio and the revenue figures available for 2012, it appears that the cost per student is approximately \$16,625, while the cost per graduate is approximately \$133,000. While the cost per student is fairly reasonable, the cost per graduate is extremely high. Ideally, the number of graduates should be about 15 per year, which would reduce the cost to per graduate to approximately \$40,000 per graduate.

Because Aurora College has not been consistent in their reporting in recent years, it is difficult for ECE to assess the efficiency of the Social Work Diploma program. The College indicates that ECE changed the reporting structure three years ago and is revising again, making it difficult to provide consistent reporting. Regular reporting would put the College in a better position to support their budgets.

Regular and standard reporting on approved measures are key components of strategic planning, evaluation and reporting. Reporting needs to be done in the context of supporting ECE and Board decision making.

Reporting of approved statistics is the basis for accountability. The statistical indicators also need to be defined to ensure consistency in reporting. Table 3 provides an example of four core indicators that demonstrate the value of the program.

Core Business	Description	Core Indicators*
Student completion rates	Completion rates will remain at or above current levels	75% overall college average
Graduate employment	Percentage of students employed in their field 6 months after graduation	75% overall college average
Graduate satisfaction	Proportion of students expressing satisfaction with the quality of the college program	95% of graduates express satisfaction with program
Employer satisfaction	Employers will express confidence in the performance of college graduates	90% of employers express satisfaction with graduates

Despite the reporting challenges, there is no question that the program needs to increase the number of people it graduates each year. Interview respondents made the following suggestions:

- Expanding the program to a BSW would likely improve the quality of the candidates
- Increasing academic admission requirements would mean a greater expectation of high school marks
- Interviewing prospective students would help to determine their emotional readiness for the program.
- Being less lenient with extensions. The number of students graduating in the 2017-18 academic year indicates that when a student is required to put in the effort to graduate, most can do it.

Conclusion

It is difficult to know how efficient the program is based on the statistics collected. The program is efficient in terms of its faculty/student ratios and the cost per student. It is not efficient in terms of the number of graduates. The program needs to keep better records. Aurora College is moving towards getting a new student record system, using Power Campus. Having the right indicators and being able to calculate full-time equivalents (FTEs) for students will support determination of efficiency.

Comparison of Program to Best Practices

Best practice is defined as 'a practice that has been shown, through a rigorous process of evaluation, to be effective in improving outcomes for a particular population'⁷. Two key aspects are evident from the literature:

Standards: The Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) standards are generally considered to be a minimum requirement for BSW and MSW programs. Although the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program is not required to comply, effort is made to meet the standards. The Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) standards⁸ provide principles and standards in four domains: 1) Program mission and goals; 2) Program governance, structure and resources; 3) Faculty and professional staff; and 4) Student development. These four domains provide the foundation for a rubric that addresses the quality of the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program, keeping in mind that these standards are for BSW and MSW programs. An assessment was conducted using this rubric, drawing on the evaluators' knowledge of the program with assistance from the senior faculty member. Based on this assessment, the program meets standards in the areas of field education, most aspects of faculty and professional staff, and most aspects of student development. Improvement is needed in the areas of program mission and goals, program governance, structure and resources, financial and physical resources, providing faculty time for research, ensuring diversity of staff, having a four-year BSW curriculum and program evaluation/assessment. More detail is available in the completed assessment attached in Appendix E.

Best Practices in Northern Post-Secondary Education: Indigenous people account for half of the NWT's population⁹, and northern social work education must take the needs of NWT Indigenous students into account. Durst and Ives¹⁰ use the BSW program at Yukon College as an example of a degree program that meets the needs of northern students. They refer briefly to the diploma program at Aurora College, noting that the program is relevant to the NWT's social issues, cultural groups and delivery systems. The program is designed to support transfer to the BSW program at the University of Regina and Yukon College.

⁷ McGuire, Martha (2016) Program Design and Development Resources, United Way of Toronto and York Region.

⁸ Canadian Association for Social Work Education (2014) Standards for Accreditation

⁹ <http://statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016013-eng.htm>

¹⁰ Douglas Durst and Nicola Ives (2012) Social Work Education in Canada's North: Capacity Building through Social Work, Journal of Comparative Social Work 2012/1

Timmons¹¹ identified the following factors as supporting Indigenous student success in post-secondary institutions;

- Awareness of services and supports
- Quality and use of services and supports including a student lounge
- Adequate student financial support
- An environment that supports a feeling of belonging

This is further supported by Gallop and Bastien's¹² research, noting the following factors as important to Indigenous student success:

- Social engagement and formal community-building efforts that support a strong cultural identity and self-efficacy
- Supportive institutional space with Indigenous-centred education programs and peer support
- Supportive teaching strategies including emphasis on positive feedback with clear expectations
- Creating supportive institutional space including small class sizes and opportunities to create connections with peers and faculty
- Creating supportive instructional space with faculty members who are approachable, committed to working hard, unafraid to express their own opinion and sensitive to students' needs

Based on responses from current and past students, the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program does create a supportive instructional environment with faculty members who are approachable, who express their opinions and are sensitive to students' need. The faculty use supportive teaching strategies, working with individual students to help them find ways to complete their courses successfully or take a break from school if that is needed. The curriculum reflects an Indigenous-centred education program that can support a strong cultural identity with Indigenous students and prepare non-Indigenous students to work with an Indigenous population. There has been an effort to create spaces for student interaction and group work within the existing building, but current and past students as well as instructors report that it is not adequate for the size of the student population. The foyer on the first floor provides tables, coffee and occasionally food, but it is small with people walking through. The lounge area on the second floor is small and located adjacent to classrooms used by other programs. The students do make use of unused classroom space to meet when it is available, which is rare during the times that students are on-campus. Any planning for a new campus needs to take these concerns into account.

¹¹ Timmons, Vianne (2013) Aboriginal Students' Perceptions of Post-Secondary Success Initiatives, *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 33:1, pp231-238

¹² Gallop, Cynthia and Nicole Bastien (2016) Supporting Success: Aboriginal Students in Higher Education, *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, Vol 46, No. 2 pp 206 - 225

Conclusion

The program meets many of the standards and best practices for a BSW program. The areas requiring attention are the institutional space, some areas of governance, expanding the curriculum to a full four years and engaging in more regular monitoring and reporting.

Conclusions

Strengths of the Program

The Aurora College Social Work Diploma has a number of strengths including:

- Preparing students so they are able to be a licensed Social Worker under the Social Work Profession Act of the NWT (2012)
- Providing preparation for one of the jobs most in demand in the NWT. Social work is anticipated to be one of the top three jobs in demand for diploma graduates.
- Having a curriculum that takes into account the NWT context and is appropriate for the NWT Indigenous population. The program is flexible about the time allowed to complete the program. It includes a number of Indigenous-specific courses which are relevant to social workers practicing in the NWT.
- Having a diverse student population that is representative of the population of the NWT. On average, more than half the students are Indigenous.
- Providing post-secondary education within the NWT, which gives students from the NWT an opportunity to get their education closer to home
- Although not required for a diploma program, meeting many of the CASWE standards, particularly with the field practicum, professional staff and student development.

Some of the factors that have contributed to these strengths are:

- The qualifications and quality of the social work faculty. All instructors have an M.S.W and have practiced in the NWT. Almost everyone interviewed commented on the dedication and quality of the instructors
- The qualifications and quality of sessional instructors. Almost everyone interviewed commented on the and quality of the sessional instructors
- The inclusion of Elders in the programming
- The availability of an Indigenous counsellor associated with the program
- The availability of the library
- The availability of adequate housing for full-time students coming from outside of Yellowknife

Changes Needed in the Program

Develop a BSW Program

Almost every review participant spoke to the need for a BSW program. There are several reasons this is needed:

- Employers are increasingly requiring at least a BSW for entry-level jobs
- Students want to remain in the NWT to pursue their post-secondary education
- It would support having a program that is relevant to the NWT
- It would solve the issue of students having to take third and fourth year courses in their first year of post-secondary education

The development of a BSW program could be more cost-effective if it is done collaboratively with other programs that already have (nursing) or will be developing a bachelor degree program. The programs could share the general liberal arts courses provided in the first two years, thus creating cost efficiencies.

The development of a BSW program would support having more stringent admission requirements. This is needed to ensure that the program accepts those most likely to succeed in the program. This should translate into higher graduation rates. It may also be necessary to be a bit less flexible in the extensions granted to students to complete the program. It is necessary to recognize the complex lives of students and provide them with adequate support to ensure their academic success.

Having a BSW program that is provided in collaboration with other Aurora College baccalaureate programs will require improvements in the facility such as more meeting space, a cafeteria for students, more elder space and more classroom and office space. In making needed changes to the Social Work program it is recommended that Aurora College continue the program connection to Elders as well as the focus on the, land, cultures and languages. ECE is already engaged in long-term planning for a new campus, with no date for when it might actually occur. One option is to retrofit the current space so that it better meets the needs of the programs it houses. In planning the campus it is important to consult with the users of the campus including faculty, students and Elders associated with Aurora College. A new campus, when it is built, should continue to be located in or near Yellowknife because of the availability of field placements, but located where cultural activities can easily occur.

Create an Advisory Committee

The creation of an Advisory Committee would allow the program to meet the following CASWE standard:

The academic unit provides partners with opportunities to participate in policy formulation, program development and program evaluation.

An Advisory Committee could include representatives from partner post-secondary institutions, employers and organizations that provide field placements. Such a committee would provide the opportunity for broader input into the program. It also would provide the opportunity for partners to have a better understanding of the program and what it has to offer.

Improve Program Reporting

For past several years, in part due to changes in reporting requirements, Aurora College has not provided reports to the Department, its primary funder that sufficiently demonstrate the strengths of the Social Work Diploma program, indicate problem areas and provide information regarding how those problem areas should be addressed. This leaves the College and the program vulnerable and unable to demonstrate the good work that is being done.

The program keeps its own statistics which cover a number of elements that could support comprehensive reporting: gender; ethnicity; community of origin; enrolment status; reasons for withdrawal; years to complete; and employment status, further study status, and professional license status following graduation. The College is in the process of developing a new data collection and storage system for student records. The system should include the fields currently being collected by the program. It should also ensure that the system can easily generate reports that can be accessed by both the program and the College.

In the meantime, the program should continue to keep its Excel spreadsheets and share them with the College administration. The numbers generated by the program frequently do not agree with Aurora College statistics. These numbers need to be reconciled as part of the sharing process. The College needs to provide adequate supports to the program to ensure that the data being collected is complete and accurate.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerge from the conclusions.

1. That Aurora College develop a BSW program that builds on the strengths of the existing Diploma program. Staff from that program should be tasked with developing the baccalaureate program. Following are three options for development.
 - Develop it in collaboration with the University of Regina. This would be the easiest and most straightforward option, given the existing relationship. It would likely be a program similar to that provided by Yukon College, with minor adjustments to reflect the NWT context and structures. It will maintain the ease of transfer of credits to the University of Regina and Yukon College.
 - Develop a relationship with a new university that already has a BSW program. University of Victoria might be one option given that the nursing program already has an established relationship. Collaborating with a university other than University of Regina would likely require more time and resources.
 - Start a new stand-alone program that has some affiliations with other universities to support ease of transferring credits. This would likely be the most time-consuming and costly option.

The BSW program should incorporate the strengths of the existing Diploma program with strong emphasis on the NWT context. It should consider more stringent admission requirement and less flexibility in providing students with program extensions in order to support a higher graduation rate.

2. That Aurora College, with the University of Regina, develop a transition plan that supports Social Work Diploma students who wish to obtain their BSW without leaving Yellowknife. This plan should be put into place for the 2018/19 academic year. Having ten students currently interested in beginning a BSW program provides a solid base for providing courses that would allow them to move towards that goal. This will also support the program in moving towards development of a permanent BSW program.
3. That an Advisory Committee be formed to help guide the planning, transition and implementation process. The committee should be comprised of key stakeholders including Aurora College administration, the Social Work Diploma program staff, program students, University of Regina, community partners, Elders and ECE.
4. That ECE consider retrofitting the current building until such time as a new campus is created.
5. That Aurora College support the program in continuing to collect administrative data on its Excel spreadsheets until the new administrative database for student records is completed. The existing data should be imported into the new database, ensuring that the same fields occur in both databases.
6. That Aurora College improve their reporting to government regarding the Social Work program by providing them with annual reports that break down costs by program and provide an overview of each program that includes: successes achieved by the program, issues faced and how they are being addressed, the number of applications, admissions, enrolment and graduation; the gender, ethnicity and community of origin; the number going on to a BSW program; and the number who have moved into employment, breaking it down by full-time in field, part-time in field, full-time in other field, part-time in other field and unemployed.

Appendix A: Data Gathering Tools and Documents Reviewed

Past Student Survey Informed Consent

Aurora College has engaged Crowe MacKay to conduct a review of the Social Work Diploma program. The purpose of this review is to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and of employers in the Northwest Territories and to develop recommendations to improve the program to better meet the needs of those two groups. It will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017 and cover all aspects of the program including courses, student supports, and practicums.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your response will be kept confidential.

By completing this survey you are giving consent to use the information you provide in this review.

Questions

1. Did you graduate from the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to Q3)

2. If so, what year did you graduate?

- ☐ 2017
- ☐ 2016
- ☐ 2015
- ☐ 2014
- ☐ 2013
- ☐ 2012
- ☐ Earlier than 2012 (skip to Q4)

3. If not, why not: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Tuition costs
- ☐ Living expenses
- ☐ Family demands
- ☐ Program was not appropriate for me
- ☐ Unable to access childcare services
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please feel free to make any other comments:

4. Please indicate the number of years you were a student in the program.
- ☐ 1 year
 - ☐ 2 years
 - ☐ 3 years
 - ☐ 4 years
 - ☐ 5 years
 - ☐ More than 5 years
5. Please indicate your current level of education.
- ☐ Social work diploma
 - ☐ BSW
 - ☐ MSW
 - ☐ Other (specify)
6. Please indicate the institution from which you obtained your highest degree/diploma.
7. Please indicate your current employment/student status:
- Employed part-time in a social work job
 - Employed full-time in a social work job
 - Employed part-time but not in a social work job
 - Employed full-time but not in a social work job
 - Self-employed in an area related to social work
 - Self-employed in an area not related to social work
 - Unemployed
 - Enrolled in a BSW program
 - Enrolled in other further education
 - Other (specify)
8. Please indicate the extent to which the follow factors in the Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program contributed to your ability to be employed.
- 5=totally, 4=a lot, 3=somewhat, 2=slightly, 1=not at all, na=not applicable

	1	2	3	4	5	na
Program content						

Program equipment and/or technology						
Qualifications of instructors						
Quality of instructors						
Guest lecturers or speakers						
Field, culture or survival camps						
Practicum, practice or intern placements						
Academic and support services						
Personal counselling and support services						

9. Overall, how would you rate the following services in the Social Work Diploma program?

5=excellent, 4=very good, 3=satisfactory, 2=somewhat unsatisfactory, 1=not at all satisfactory na=not applicable

	1	2	3	4	5	na
Housing/residence services						
Library services						
Computer labs						
Admission/registration						
Student success centres						

10. Would you recommend the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program to others?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

11. Why or why not?

12. Would you recommend Aurora College to others?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

13. Why or why not?

14. What are the strengths of the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program?

15. What would you like to see changed in that program?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please click 'submit'

Employer/Field Supervisor Survey

Informed Consent

Aurora College has engaged Crowe MacKay to conduct a review of the Social Work Diploma program. The purposes of the review are to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and employers in the northern territories and to develop recommendations to improve the program to better meet the needs of those two groups. It will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017 and cover all aspects of the program including courses, student supports, and practicums.

As an employer or potential employer, your views on the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program will contribute our getting a better understanding of how the program is viewed and the opportunities for graduates.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. Your response will be kept confidential.

By completing this survey you are giving consent to use the information you provide in this review.

Questions

1. Name of your organization.
2. Please check the position description that most closely describes your position in your organization
 - ☐ Human resource specialist
 - ☐ Senior manager of a social or community program
 - ☐ Middle manager of a social or community program
 - ☐ Staff in a social or community program
 - ☐ Other (identify)
3. In what sector do you work?
 - ☐ Government
 - ☐ Non-profit
 - ☐ Private
 - ☐ Indigenous
 - ☐ Other (specify)

4. Have you ever hired an Aurora College Social Work Diploma program graduate?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No (skip to Q13)
5. Please indicate the number of graduates hired:
- ☐ 1
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3
 - ☐ 4
 - ☐ 5
 - ☐ More than 5
6. Please indicate the year you hired the person: (check all that apply)
- ☐ 2017
 - ☐ 2016
 - ☐ 2015
 - ☐ 2014
 - ☐ 2013
 - ☐ 2012
 - ☐ Earlier than 2012
7. What position(s) was filled by the person you hired? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Management
 - ☐ Direct service worker
 - ☐ Administration
 - ☐ Other (specify)
8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 5 being totally agree and 1 being do not agree at all. Check 'na' if the statement is not applicable. Base your answers on your own experience

	1	2	3	4	5	na
Aurora College social work diploma graduates are ready to step into a direct service position immediately						
Aurora College social work diploma graduates are eager to learn and can quickly move into a direct service position soon						
Aurora College social work diploma graduates require a lot of support and supervision to carry out their work.						
Aurora College social work diploma graduates have the competencies required to be a social worker						
I would hire an Aurora College social work diploma graduate again						
I would recommend that my colleagues hire an Aurora College social work diploma graduate						

9. Overall how satisfied are you with the performance of the person(s) on the job?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not satisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied

10. Please tell me the reasons for your responses.

11. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program?

12. Have you ever had an Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program student in a practicum position?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to Q20)

13. Please indicate the number of practicums you have supervised:

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2

- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ More than 5

14. Please indicate the year(s) the person(s) participated in a practicum. (check all that apply)

- ☐ 2017
- ☐ 2016
- ☐ 2015
- ☐ 2014
- ☐ 2013
- ☐ 2012
- ☐ Earlier than 2012

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 5 being totally agree and 1 being do not agree at all. Check 'na' if the statement is not applicable. Base your answers on your own experience

	1	2	3	4	5	na
Aurora College social work diploma students are ready to step into a direct service position immediately						
Aurora College social work diploma students are eager to learn and can quickly move into a direct service position soon						
Aurora College social work diploma students require a lot of support and supervision to carry out their work						
Aurora College social work diploma students have the competencies required to be a social worker						
I would hire an Aurora College social work diploma graduate						
I would recommend that my colleagues hire an Aurora College social work graduate						

16. Overall how satisfied are you with the performance of the person(s) in the practicum?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied

- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not satisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied

17. Please indicate the reasons for your responses.

18. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program? (skip to Q21)

19. Based on what you know of the Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program and its reputation, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 5 being totally agree and 1 being do not agree at all. Check na if the statement is not applicable or you cannot answer.

	1	2	3	4	5	na
Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduates are ready to step into a direct service position immediately						
Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduates are eager to learn and can quickly move into a direct service position immediately						
Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduates require a lot of support and supervision to carry out their work.						
Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduates have the competencies required to be a social worker						
I would hire an Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduate						
I would recommend that my colleagues hire an Aurora College Social Work Diploma graduate						

21. What is the minimum qualification your organization requires for an entry-level social work position?

- ☐ College social work diploma
- ☐ BSW
- ☐ MSW
- ☐ Other (specify)

22. What is the minimum qualification your organization requires for a management social work position?

- ☐ College social work diploma
- ☐ BSW
- ☐ MSW
- ☐ Other (specify)

Thank you for your time and information. Please click on submit.

Interview Guides

Expert interview guide

Interviewee Name:	
Title or Position:	
Institution:	
Interviewer:	
Date & Time of Interview:	
Telephone or Face-to- Face Interview:	

Informed Consent

Aurora College has engaged Crowe MacKay to conduct a review of the Social Work Diploma Program. In order to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and employers in the Northwest Territories and to develop recommendations to improve the program to better meet the needs of those two groups. It will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017 and cover all aspects of the program including courses, student supports, and practicums.

You have been identified as someone with expertise in social work education programs. Your input should contribute to our identifying some best practices – that is going beyond the basic standards.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. The information you provide will not be kept confidential.

Do you consent to this interview and the information you provide being used in this review?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Questions

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself and your experience with social work education programs.
2. If you were conducting a review of a post-secondary social work education program, what would you look at?

3. What is the ideal post-secondary social work education program for providing social work services to peoples of northern communities? (Probe: number of years needed, type of certification, curriculum, objectives, teaching approaches, connection with other institutions for degree, entry to practice, advantages of a two-year diploma)
4. What is your view of a two-year college program that provides students with the option of a two-year diploma or entry into a four year BSW program with credit for the first two years? (Probe: strengths of the program, changes needed)

Thank you for your time and information.

Key Informant Interview Guide

Interviewee Name:	
Organization	
Sector (public, private, Indigenous):	
Title or Position:	
Community:	
Interviewer:	
Date & Time of Interview:	
Telephone or Face-to- Face Interview:	

Informed consent

Aurora College has engaged Crowe MacKay to conduct a review of the Social Work Diploma program. In order to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and employers in the Northwest Territories and to develop recommendations to improve the program to better meet the needs of those two groups. It will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017 and cover all aspects of the program including courses, student supports, and practicums.

You have been identified as someone with expertise in social work education programs. Your input should contribute to our identifying some best practices – that is going beyond the basic standards.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. Because the number of people being interviewed is relatively small, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. However you will not be mentioned by name in the report.

Do you consent to this interview and the information you provide being used in this review?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Questions

1. Please describe your connection or level of knowledge of the Aurora College Social Work Diploma Program?

2. Based on your experience with the program, give me an example that best describes the Social Work Diploma program at its best.
3. What factors, related to the program, contributed to things working well?
4. Thinking ahead to the year 2020, what are the characteristics of a program that is working well?
5. What is needed to ensure that happens? (Probe: immediate changes to the program, longer term changes including application, enrolment, student retention, curriculum, connection to the needs of employers)
6. What are the key strengths of the current program?
7. What changes are needed?
8. Is there any additional information that would contribute to this review?

For University of Regina/Yukon College:

9. Please describe the ways in which the Aurora College Diploma Program prepares students for participation in your BSW program?
10. What else is needed for better preparation?

Thank you for your time and information.

Focus Group Guide

Sign-in sheet with Informed consent

Aurora College has engaged Crowe MacKay to conduct a review of the Social Work Diploma Program. In order to determine how well the Social Work Diploma program meets the needs of its students and employers in the Northwest Territories and to develop recommendations to improve the program to better meet the needs of those two groups. It will focus primarily on the last five years of the program, from 2012 – 2017 and cover all aspects of the program including courses, student supports, and practicums.

We have invited all current students to participate in a focus group because your views are important.

Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary. Your individual responses will be kept confidential. Giving consent means we can include you in this focus group and the information you provide can be used in this review.

Name	Consent

Questions

Type	Question	Time
Introductory	Please introduce yourselves, telling us your community, the reasons you are taking the Social Work Diploma program, and what you hope to do after completing the program	10 minutes
Key	Based on your experience with the program, give me an example that best describes the Social Work Diploma program at its best and the factors that have contributed to things working well.	30 minutes
Key	Thinking ahead to a future program, what are the most characteristics or elements of a program that is working well?	30 minutes
Key	What is needed to ensure that happens?	20 minutes
Concluding	What are the key strengths of the current program?	10 minutes
Concluding	What changes are needed?	10 minutes
Closing	Is there any other information you feel we need in conducting this review?	10 minutes

Documents Reviewed

A Northern Vision – A Stronger North and a Better Canada – 2016

A Northern Vision – Building a Better North – August 2014

Aurora College Academic Calendar (2016-2017)

Canadian Association for Social Work Education – Standards for Accreditation

Colleges and Institutes Canada *Indigenous Education Protocol*

Commission on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – Yellowknife hearings

Federal transfer agreement (Canada/GNWT) Canada Social Transfer. This is the primary source of federal funding in Canada that supports post-secondary education in the provinces/territories.

January 2000 program review report, with 1997 review recommendations

NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment Skills 4 Success Supporting Documents at <https://www.ece.Qov.nt.ca/en/services/des-compentces-pour-reussir/supporting-documents> including The Conference Board of Canada Labour Market Information Resource

Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (February 8, 2018) Hansard

Social Work Diploma program articulation/transfer agreement with the University of Regina and other current agreements, if any

Social Work Diploma Program Annual Review Reports (available to 2014-2015) and include financial data, student administrative data, graduate employment information and results from the student satisfaction survey.

Social Work Diploma program course descriptions

Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action*

UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People

Appendix B: Bibliography

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- Canadian Association for Social Work Education (2014) *Standards for Accreditation*
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- Drummond, Tom (no date) *A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching* <http://tomdrummond.com/best-practices>
- Durst, Douglas and Nicola Ives (2012) *Social Work Education in Canada's North: Capacity Building through Social Work*, *Journal of Comparative Social Work* 2012/1
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- Hogue, Michelle Marie (2012) *Interconnecting Aboriginal and Western Paradigms in Post-secondary Science Education: An Action Research Approach*.
- Nunavut Arctic College (March 2014) *Yukon and Nunavut Colleges recognized for Adult Basic Education Best Practices* <http://www.arcticcollege.ca/en/education-news/item/5948-arctic-education-best-practices>
- Rock, Robert (no date) *Transitions/Linkages* <http://aboriginal.cmec.ca/documents/AB-AboriginalTransitions.en.pdf>

Schwartz, Michelle (no date) Engaging Adult Learners, Ryerson University Learning and Teaching Office

Timmons, Vianne (2013) Aboriginal Students' Perceptions of Post-Secondary Success Initiatives, *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 33:1, pp231-238

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Calls to Action

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Principles of Reconciliation

Ulrich, Stephen (2006) International social work best practices curriculum for schools of social work, ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository (doctoral dissertation)

Appendix C: Reconciliation Principles

Principles of Reconciliation (2015)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the twenty-first century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on the following principles.

1. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.¹³

¹³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

Appendix D: Curriculum Comparison Table

