UVIC Bachelor of Social Work Program

The School of Social Work offers a program of studies leading to the degree of Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) that is fully accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education. Graduates are employed in a wide range of government and voluntary organizations such as family and children's services, hospitals, women's services, corrections, mental health and Indigenous practice settings.


School of Social Work Mission Statement

The emerging vision of the School of Social Work commits us to social justice, anti-racist, anti-oppressive social work practices, and to promoting critical enquiry that respects the diversity of knowing and being.

Our educational mission is to prepare generalist social work practitioners skilled in critical self-reflection and in working with individuals, families, groups and communities. In particular, we endeavour to prepare Indigenous social workers and child welfare practitioners and we emphasize structural, feminist, Indigenous and anti-oppressive analyses.

Our scholarly mission is to share and create collective knowledge and understanding through engaging in critical enquiry and by supporting research and innovative curriculum development at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Our practice mission is to act on social justice issues through community change initiatives and anti-oppressive social work. Our political and social responsibility is to participate in and reflect community experiences in all our efforts to challenge oppressive societal structures.

In all our activities, we aspire to create a supportive environment that promotes equity, respect, responsibility, curiosity, collaboration, flexibility, risk-taking and creativity. We support interdisciplinary collaboration. We seek to provide accessible and flexible social work education and we are committed to working across differences, such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, abilities, and sexual orientation.

Note: The School is currently re-visiting the Mission Statement with a focus on de-colonization and addressing the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

Definitions and Selected References

Critical/Anti-Oppressive Practice:

Anti-oppressive social work practice seeks to redress inequalities and social disparities which oppress people due to their ability, age, class, gender, race and sexual identity. Anti-oppressive practice necessitates a high degree of critical self-reflection on the part of the social worker including an examination of how they themselves potentially replicate dominant relationships and/or discourses. Within this framework the social work relationship is one where the practitioner works from a “not knowing” stance in terms of the lived experience of the person(s) they work with. Inherent power
imbalances present between the practitioner and service user, as well as within the service user's life, are examined.

**Indigenous Perspectives on Social Work:**

The School of Social Work at UVIC places a strong emphasis on Indigenous social work practice. The program seeks to link Indigenous issues with structural oppression and begins the task of addressing power imbalances. The program also seeks to incorporate alternative means of practice based on respect, honour and authentic understanding. This perspective requires a complete critical re-examination of the history, applications and impact of racism and colonialism. The School has Indigenous faculty and core curriculum by and about Indigenous peoples.

**Social Justice:**

Working towards social justice is a cornerstone of anti-oppressive social work practice. Social justice work involves acknowledging inequality and engaging in activities which are aimed at reducing inequity and oppression. These activities focus on moving our society towards a more equitable distribution of resources and power. Some examples of social justice activities are: letter writing, media campaigning and public education to generate support for social change efforts; engaging in various forms of grassroots organizing and community development; opposing legislation, policies or practices that are oppressive to marginalized groups; and engaging in protests or acts of civil disobedience to draw attention to and oppose oppressive government or corporate systems and actions.

**Articles/Books and Links of Interest**

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The Centre for Social Justice  http://www.socialjustice.org/

First Peoples Child and Family Review Journal
http://journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR/issue/archive


