

*Eight-Year Program Review IBHE Report Summary***PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY**

1. **Reporting Institution** Eastern Illinois University
2. **Program Reviewed** B.S. in Human Services
3. **Date** February 9, 2024
4. **Contact Person** Dr. Jill Bowers, Acting Chair
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5. OVERVIEW

The B.S. in Human Services (formerly the M.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences/ B.S. in Human Services and Community Leadership) is an integral program housed in the College of Health and Human Services' Department of Human Services. The University, Graduate School, and Departmental missions are solidly aligned in purpose, values, and goals and reflect embodiment of: commitment to diversity, social justice, and inclusion; opportunities for student-faculty scholarship; applied learning experiences; student-centeredness; responsible citizenship and professional leadership; and empowerment of individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan.

Similar programs exist at Northern Illinois University, University of Illinois-Springfield, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Our program is distinguished by: 1) an applied and experiential focus on human and social services; 2) degree tracks offered face to face, online or hybrid (Human Services offered online or face to face, and an Early Childhood track offered online); 3) maximum flexibility and; and 4) financial commitment to support students (e.g., Early Childhood Consortium funding and scholarships from the former Family and Consumer Sciences funds).

Our student learning objectives align with the University's goals of undergraduate education and provide a core foundation for students' career specialization and advancement, certification and credentialing, professional and leadership development, and preparation for advanced scholarship in human services programs to improve quality of life for individuals, families and communities throughout the lifespan. Students have multiple opportunities for hands-on learning experiences, including working with pre-school aged children in the child development laboratory and completing internships in the field of human services. The program also offers minors in Aging Studies, Early Childhood Program Administration, Human Services, and Financial Literacy.

Significant program changes include transitioning into the College of Health and Human Services from the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences; degree program name/focus change; a fully online option; a new accelerated graduate program transitioning students into graduate school; a Student Ambassador program; increased recruitment strategies; and an Early Childhood track that supports students who have been working in the field. We also established the Child and Family Life Education Center, which houses the Child Development Laboratory; this expansion offers educational programming for community audiences and increases opportunities for students to work with community agencies.

Student achievements include presentations at the Undergraduate Research and Scholarship conference, as well as The Illinois Council on Family Relations. Three Human Services Undergraduate and Graduate students were chosen to serve as the commencement speaker to represent The College of Health and Human Services. Students have received ECACE scholarship funding.

Future plans include: implementing additional recruitment strategies, exploration of feasibility of more special topics courses; more enhanced/intentional alumni engagement; revamping the child development laboratory model in the Child and Family Life Education Center to offer expanded hours and serve a larger population to enhance opportunities for students; and additional interdisciplinary collaborations with other undergraduate programs in the College of Health and Human Services (e.g., the possibility of a B.S. in Social Work with The Department of Sociology).

6. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a.

(1) The human services field is constantly changing. As community and social service needs evolve, new trends in offering services emerge and undergraduate programs must remain current on how to best serve and support individuals, families, and communities. Current trends shaping human services include integration of human services and healthcare, utilization of data-driven approaches to program assessment and delivery, increase in technology and virtual programs, equality and inclusive accessibility, and formation of historically non-traditional partnerships with other human services organizations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023) projects overall employment in community and social service occupations to grow to grow faster than the average for all occupations (8.6%). These include substance abuse, mental health or behavioral disorders, therapists or social workers, education health specialists, child and family social services, and child care workers.

(2) The current program and course configurations are responsive to the needs of our student demographic. Many students are non-residential and have personal, family, or work obligations outside of their undergraduate program. Thus, having the online option and all courses regularly offered online has benefited students. Online course delivery has helped with both recruitment and retention. To successfully continue recruitment, retention, and academic performance levels, Human Services will continue to offer a high-quality undergraduate degree program with accessibility, flexibility, and affordability. These key considerations assist in guiding program efforts and initiatives. At present, we will continue to offer face to face classes and hybrid options to support residential or International Students.

(3) Policies, programs, production and provision of services will enable human services to continually adapt to changing family and societal circumstances, increase service accessibility, and remove restrictive service barriers for individuals and families at community, domestic, and global levels. Human services is vital to optimal policies and programs optimal for all individuals and families at all levels of society. Examples of prevalent societal needs/issues related to human services include: available and affordable quality childcare; healthcare reform; abuse and neglect prevention/intervention for children, older adults, and persons with disabilities; foster care and adoption; addiction; domestic/intimate partner/acquaintance violence; caregiving; family leave; poverty and financial resource management; and marriage equality.

(4) As described in #5, the B.S. in Human Services fully aligns with the University's mission. Human Services is a logical fit for our faculty, staff, and students to be an integral component of the interdisciplinary College of Health and Human Services. Our curriculum and program, research/creative activity, and community and other professional service outreach align with the College's promotion of health and well-being of diverse populations across the lifespan. Our current faculty composition changed after the transition from Family and Consumer Sciences to Human Services and all present faculty have background degree and experiential expertise in Human Services specializations (e.g., Aging Studies, Early Childhood). In recent years, the University has approved new annually contracted and tenure-track searches. We will be actively exploring opportunities to grow our faculty ranks along with continuing to bolster our recruitment and enrollment of new students, especially with existing and upcoming programs like the accelerated track for those getting their Masters in Human Services.

(5) Students are prepared through course content and existing/well-established community-departmental partnerships for establishing or launching careers and/or certifications through CASA, ICASA, and ICADV. The Court Appointed Special Advocacy (CASA) program serves children and youth traumatized and displaced in the foster care and related systems by providing one consistent, caring volunteer advocate, trained to address each child's needs in the court and community. Our local Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Service (SACIS) under the umbrella of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) offers career opportunities and certification in Sexual Violence Prevention. Our local HOPE of East Central Illinois under the umbrella of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) offers career opportunities and certification in Intimate Partner Violence Prevention. All such certifications transfer with maximum seamlessness to nearly all states for students wishing to relocate, and professional competencies in these service delivery specializations are ones that transfer easily to other Human Services career pathways. While we have not been able to offer these as much since the pandemic, we intend to work with the agencies to offer more opportunities for these trainings and certifications in the next few years.

b. All learning objectives are assessed annually by looking at eight CORE courses. Learning outcomes include: Display an understanding, and the ability to apply, the foundational concepts and theoretical perspectives that inform Human Services and Family Life Education; Demonstrate an understanding of human development throughout the lifespan and the diversity of family and community relationships; Interpret, analyze, evaluate, and disseminate information using professional oral and written communication techniques; Demonstrate the ability to effectively engage with internal and external departmental constituents; and Exhibit an understanding of the value of personal and professional ethical conduct. Targets for each objective were for students to successfully complete each assignment with a C or higher, and this target was met 80-95% across all courses and objectives.

c. Since the last review, actions (including instructional resources and practices, curricular) taken have included: The department launched with a) major and minor in Human Services (formerly Human Services Program Administration, b) minor in Financial Literacy, and c) minor in Aging Studies. This is the 1st formal assessment report of the new department, however we have informally reviewed our processes, programs, and courses on a continual basis.

- Developed Special Topics courses
 - Financial Aid Navigation 1 credit
 - Families, Incarceration, and Advocacy 3 credits
 - Chronic Disease Self-Management 3 credits
 - Child Welfare: Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Training 2credits
- Created an Early Childhood Program Administration minor that leads to credentials through Gateways to Opportunity
- Worked with Public Health to cross-list and collaborate on *HSL/PUB Health Education Research Methods I*

In process:

- Departmental Honors program
- Early Childhood Program Administration Bachelors in collaboration with the College of Education (Early Childhood Consortium project)
- Collaborate with Sociology to develop an interdisciplinary B.S. in Social Work program
- Collaborate with local school districts and agencies to revamp the Child Development Lab model
- Work with The Department of Children and Family Services to develop another special topics course where students can take their child welfare license exam
- Hiring two new faculty (one annually contracted and one tenure-track who have MSW degrees and who could serve as a BSW program and field director if these proposals are approved)

d. Actions (including instructional resources and practices, curricular) to be taken as a result of this review include:

- Implementing new, more creative, and/or larger-scale recruitment strategies
- Developing the Department Honors Program
- Implementing senior exit surveys to assess job placement and students' perspectives about their experiences
- Enhancing and increasing alumni engagement;
- Explore feasibility of revising the Adolescent and Emerging Adulthood course to include undergraduates (currently a required grad class, but this will be changed to an elective for grads); and
- Increase engagement and collaboration with external workforce stakeholders to best insure desired and needed competencies and skills of students are aligned with students' learning environment.

Comments from the College Dean:

***The Acting Chair of Human Services also serves as the Associate Dean. We recommend a decision of Program in Good Standing.**

VPAA Decision:

- Program in good standing
- Program flagged for priority review
- Program enrollment suspended

VPAA Explanation: B.S. in Human Services

The summary above details the B.S. in Human Services program's evolution in serving a broad audience of students. These students are online and on-campus, traditional and non-traditional, full-time and working professionals. The program has acclimated to a new college setting (from the Business School to the College of Health and Human Services) with a new name (formerly the B.S. in Human Services and Community Leadership), more flexible curriculum, and greater focus on experiential learning. The program has made significant strides in not only creating the Child and Family Life Education Center, but also building for the future along many fronts, including a new proposal for a B.S. program in Social Work, experimenting with the offerings of a child development laboratory model, engaging more alumni, and working on programming across disciplinary lines.