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The Development of the Student Advisory Board in the Master's of Social Work Program at Eastern Kentucky University

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**The Development of the Student Advisory Board in the Master's of Social Work Program
at Eastern Kentucky University**

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SWK 895: Integrative Capstone

Dr. Ann Callahan

November 27, 2022

Abstract

Over the past six months, a selection of Masters of Social Work (MSW) students at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) have been diving into program development mode through interprofessional collaboration to establish a firm foundation for the new Student Advisory Board (SAB). This capstone is an overview of the program planning from one student representative's perspective within the interprofessional team. This capstone will provide an overview of the program's development process, limitations, and suggestions for future directions. Attached is a copy of the SAB Handbook that was developed simultaneously with the capstone (see Appendix). Throughout the capstone, the SAB team will often be referred to as the "Team" to assume a collective whole.

Keywords: Student handbook, Student advisory board, interprofessional collaboration

The Student Advisory Board Overview

The Need for a Student Advisory Board

The development of student advisory boards has been presented as a need in various educational settings throughout the nation (Jones, 2022; New York University, 2022; School of Social Work University of Washington, 2022; Stanford University, 2019; University of Central Oklahoma, 2022; University of Houston, 2022). In our ethical responsibility to the profession, implementing effective interventions to further the educational experiences of our students is imperative to the innovation of the social work program (NASW Code of Ethics, 2022, 5.02).

By providing a student-to-student option for sharing concerns and feedback, the SAB assures that the student's message is heard and that action will be taken. Furthering this step, the Team informs the student body via email when their message has been communicated to the faculty and follows up with a report of what steps the faculty stated would take place to address the students' issues.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the SAB is to advocate for the student body by being a sounding board between the students and professors in an effort to unite and innovate the MSW program at ECU.

Vision

The vision is to provide students with various opportunities to connect as an effort to build the student cohort. During these encounters, the Team will assist students with emerging program and life challenges through peer compassion, brainstorming sessions, and direct support (such as suggestions on effectively communicating with professors and peers).

Goal

The program aims to achieve deeper human connection within the social work cohort, while simultaneously alleviating unnecessary stress, confusion, and anxiety.

Values

As stated in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2022), the SAB team adheres to the same core values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. By adhering to these values, the Team acknowledges the need for continual evaluation to ensure that the work being done is on track toward promoting the well-being of all individuals within the program.

Interprofessional Collaboration

Eastern Kentucky University's MSW program describes interprofessional practice as having "the capacity to facilitate individual and collective action to promote social welfare through interprofessional teamwork and related partnerships" (Eastern Kentucky University, Integrative Mezzo Practice Process Reflections [Class handout], 2022). This approach applied to the foundation of the student advisory board ensures collaborative partnership for shared decision-making toward a common goal of meeting the needs of the students to "enhance human well-being" (National Association of Social Workers [NASW] Code of Ethics, 2022, para.3).

Board Design

Though each member who makes up the current SAB team is an active social work professional, our diverse backgrounds (Social Work, Psychology, Fine Arts, American Sign Language Interpretation, etc.) contribute to the diversity that structures our interprofessional collaborations. Because each background is rooted in varied ethical standards and their specific epistemologies, team collaboration views student interventions through a range of micro to

mezzo lenses. Having collaborative input that examines the intricate details of individual student affiliations, compared to the assessment of the overall student body interrelations, is essential in providing holistic, effective interventions to the constituencies (student body).

Composition

The assembly of interprofessionals on the SAB team is pivotal in accomplishing the program's vision, goal, and values. The SAB team comprises five MSW graduate students and a faculty supervisor (the Program Director). The Team also collaborates with other faculty and university staff dedicated to the evolution of this program, such as the program Chair, the designated student advisor, and an appointed Graduate Assistant (GA).

The Supervisor

This role is subjected to the MSW program director and is vital in ensuring that the chosen interventions are promoted through faculty contribution. The supervisor is responsible for informing the Team of program meetings, a crucial step in efficiently advocating for students. The supervisor is liable for overseeing conflicts within the program and should be directly contacted via email to address any ethical dilemmas that may present. The supervisor should not be included in student-student interaction but should be continually aware of student concerns and chosen interventions to assist in the program.

The Department Chair

The MSW department Chair is instrumental in offering objective direction when confounding biases present as potential for hindering the students' experience within the program.

The MSW Academic Advisor

The student advisor has offered continual guidance in how to effectively reach the student body and has assisted with technical difficulties in advancing program development.

The Graduate Assistant

The GA is a student worker that serves as an additional vessel for student advocacy. Their role was an aid in obtaining an online shared platform for the SAB and students (Microsoft Teams), obtaining a designated email for the student representatives, and assisting with various technical obligations (conducting surveys, newsletter design, etc.). Each task was essential in the execution of the foundation of the advisory board and assisted in promoting student advocacy. The appointed GA should communicate with the Team reps via email and attend at least one team meeting monthly. This recommendation encourages maximum opportunities for shared student content to obtain knowledge of student concerns and applied interventions.

Selection of Student Representatives

Upon needing a student representative replacement, the program is informed of the available position (s). Students are nominated as representatives by their peers, professors, and/or themselves. Nomination submission is based on the individual's level of interest, commitment, interpersonal skills, and dedication to the program's innovation. The student body then has the opportunity to vote for appointed members.

Role Expectations

Because the ECU MSW program is virtual and asynchronous, the Team meets weekly to affirm the program's purpose and evaluate team tasks in sustaining an innovative direction. Some role responsibilities include networking with students to adequately advocate for the students, supporting professional development opportunities, attending monthly program meetings, and supporting Interdisciplinary University Certificate programs. These duties are executed through

collaborative team meetings, student gatherings, informative surveys, newsletters, and weekly email updates.

Model for Effective Interprofessional Collaboration

After accepting the SAB role, the Team received minimal direction regarding the program's next steps. Though there was little instruction, we were encouraged and motivated to explore all possibilities this program offered; this led to our initial team meeting to establish the initial blueprints for the program's foundation.

The formation of this meeting resembled Gray's Three-Phase Model for effective interprofessional collaboration (Iachini et al., 2018). The Team gathered to discuss our concerns, brainstormed to organize an agenda for effective problem-solving, and implemented various agreed-upon strategies for intervention. This model was implemented for team collaboration throughout our time on the board.

Problem-solving Phase: identify common concern

The Team's first concern was the lack of initial direction of a student representative's role expectations. This influenced the Team to collaborate on establishing a specific purpose, vision, and goal for the SAB, which should reflect the student's needs.

Direction-setting Phase: organizing the agenda

The Team began discussing what we, as students, would like to see this program evolve into. Being intrigued by the option of a safe space option for students, the Team brainstormed how to provide this space. It was decided that a space where students could speak on issues without repercussions would be the best option. Students could gain support from board members while gaining direction and support to collaborate with peers and professors. The idea for an anonymous option felt like a fundamental need in reaching an array of student voices.

During this discussion, the fostered idea was that students would benefit from more profound involvement. In nurturing this idea, it was suggested that the Team address the barrier by providing students with frequent reminders of upcoming program/community events and various opportunities to connect with their cohort. This initiative extends our MSW unit beyond the program perimeter, which influenced the further discussion of an annual in-person and/or virtual gathering.

In prioritizing student voices, a survey was designed and distributed to assess specific student needs. Through this student feedback, the Team felt validated to continue with the Team's pre-discussed plans.

Implementation Phase: enact and monitor strategy

To implement these strategies, the Team began creating a bimestrial newsletter to inform all the students of what the program offered for the upcoming eight-week semester. This information consistently included specifics on the Chat with the Chair's monthly student sessions, the monthly student gatherings, student representative contact information, and collaborative program updates.

The Team found that an additional weekly email was helpful for students in addition to the bimestrial newsletter, which was implemented during the second half of the semester. This weekly email hosted the anonymous suggestion box for students to utilize; this anchored the anonymity option for students.

Interprofessional Contributions

Social workers have a holistic epistemology allowing us to assess needs through a multilevel lens. This theoretical approach assists in promoting and establishing interprofessional collaboration to ensure sufficiency in facing various issues within the program. This is

accomplished through implementing current evidence-based interventions and utilizing various social work skills.

Duties

A student representative's expected primary role is advocating for the student body. The SAB team conveys students' needs and concerns by adhering to the role of the liaison between the students and the faculty. Each team member is expected to practice effective communication, respect others and their time, be present for team and program meetings, and utilize the shared virtual platforms for group collaboration.

In striving toward the SABs goal of building the student cohort and alleviating student distress, various attempts of outreach were administered, such as:

Student Gatherings

Due to the nature of a virtual program, students are limited in their abilities for in-person contact. Not only are students enrolled from all over Kentucky, but the MSW program also enrolls students nationally and internationally. This influenced the need for virtual gatherings.

In the planning stages, the Team recognized that there needed to be more student participation during course sessions and program meetings. The low attendance during evening course sessions swayed the decision to offer three separate time frames for student gatherings: a morning, afternoon, and evening gathering. These meetings served as a student-only space and aimed toward promoting more opportunities to connect with an array of students.

These meetings are held the last week of each month to prepare for the department Chair meeting.

Surveys

Surveys were distributed at the beginning and the end of the semester to collect and assess student needs. Additionally, students would receive surveys throughout the semester when various topics needed to be addressed. This information was instrumental in establishing the advisory board's foundation and sharing comments and questions with faculty members during program meetings.

Anonymous Suggestion Box

The anonymous suggestion box provided a safe outlet for students to voice their concerns. Students would submit their thoughts, opinions, and suggestions into the virtual box via Microsoft Forms, distributed in the weekly SAB email. Students were encouraged to give specific examples and suggestions to effectively address their concerns.

Student responses were collected and reviewed during weekly team meetings for intervention implementation. A typical intervention resulted in sharing the information collected during program meetings with the faculty and seeking direction to appease the student's needs. Additionally, professors were contacted directly via email to address specific concerns.

After applying the intervention, the Team would send the student body an email addressing the reported concerns. This email informed the students of the feedback from the faculty members on the decided direction in addressing the issues.

Program Meetings

During program meetings, the student representatives will present a report reflecting the student surveys' results, suggestion box inquiries, and verbal student comments. This report is to inform the program's board of current/progressing issues and share any encouraging acknowledgments from the students. The SAB team also utilizes this time to seek faculty feedback.

Skill-set

In assuring that each team member felt heard and understood, members practiced active listening to ensure that the purpose of the message was received. This ensures an effective two-way exchange of information and reinstates an equal balance of power (Iachini et al., 2018). A sense of self-awareness is a crucial skill in promoting collaboration- recognizing when one has disrupted the synchronicity is crucial in reestablishing harmony for team balance. Being able to admit one's shortcomings speaks louder than the wrongdoing itself and reflects the continuous learning process toward developed professionalism.

Evaluation of Interprofessional Collaboration and Contribution

Understanding the complexities associated with group practice embraces the inevitability of collaborative conflicts. "Part of interprofessional collaboration and developing as a leader is being able to handle conflict" (Iachini et al., 2018, p.239), and understanding the intricacies that define each individual. Focal Conflict Theory (FCT) presumes that group conflicts happen and effectively intervening is plausible. Gaining a better understanding of conflict theories will assist in one's approach by developing skills that are useful in formulating assessments and interventions that cater to the complexities of the various needs of individuals (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2012).

Conflict within the Team

Iachini, Bronstein, and Mellin (2018) provide a list of seven practice tips for developing practical attributes in demonstrating the ability to handle conflict: managing stress, being respectful of differences, constructive feedback, dealing with one issue at a time, making it a habit to identify and reflect on responses to certain situations, create norms and values, be able to

problem-solve and be able to make decisions. These attributes help develop one's leadership intuition in managing conflict.

The Team was presented with an opportunity to demonstrate Iachinies et al. (2018) tips for developing practical attributes for handling conflict. This opportunity manifested when a Team member was not adhering to their professional role as a student representative. A team member neglected to attend meetings and was uninformed of the agreed-upon interventions when attempting to address student needs; this raised concern for conflict in the directed vision, goals, and values.

Preconceived notions that the absent member was disinterested in maintaining their representative role were resolved by addressing the member with the issue. The Team approached the member with compassion and respect in an effort to expand perspective through team differences. Bringing awareness to the member's behaviors and how their actions conflicted with the SAB purpose was helpful for the member to reevaluate their commitment to the Team. Though this was a difficult task, it created the opportunity to reflect "assertiveness and leadership skills" (Iachini et al., 2018, p.242) which ultimately benefited the growth of the SAB.

Conflict in an Ethical Dilemma

Providing the students with a safe outlet to voice their concerns was part of our original outreach attempts and has proven effective. Because the SAB adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics, students are reassured in their decision to share concerns through the confidential component of the SAB ethics, influencing a student's decision to speak out on a complicated issue. The student expressed frustrations with a professor expressing microaggressions in class. The Team validated the student's frustration and offered to assist. However, the student was decisive about not wanting to confront the issue.

Examining and Evaluating the Presented Dilemma

The student's decision not to vocalize the issue left the Team with an ethical dilemma. A social work dilemma is described as being faced with two or more conflicting professional values (Corcoran & Roberts, 2015; Cournoyer, 2017). The two conflicting social work values at hand are: do we respect the student's confidentiality by not addressing the issue, or do we neglect the request in an effort to promote social justice within the program? The ETHIC Model of Decision Making assisted in developing a solution (Cournoyer, 2017).

Review Documentation on the Dilemma

The team then reviewed the NASW Code of Ethics (2022), which states, "social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. "Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession (Section 5.01, b), influencing the direction of moving toward social justice. It also states that "social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions" (2.02), influencing the decision to respect confidentiality. Both directions continue to influence lingering conflicts.

However, the ECU Department of Social Work (2021) mission and goals state that the program actively "promotes inclusion, diversity and equity in our teaching and interactions with the community. An essential part of this stance includes denouncing the racism and injustice that is woven into our country's history. We commit to continual growth and action through intersectional, anti-racism education and professional development, and we work to address systemic oppression and other forms of inequities with the goal of helping individuals and groups achieve their full potential" (para.3). Furthermore, it is stated that the department will

stand with their "students... who feel marginalized based upon their identity and whose needs are not being met because of those differences" (para.4). This information expanded our perspective on the dilemma, influencing the need to hypothesize different potential scenarios.

Hypothesizing Different Scenarios that Could Play Out in the Dilemma

By neglecting this opportunity, the Team would be turning away from promoting social justice, and it would be inhibiting the chance for professional growth within the program, which is stated as a department goal. However, deciding to move forward in this direction would mean violating the student's confidentiality and hindering the credibility of a safe space for all students.

Identify the Benefits and the Risk of Harm

There is potential for both risk and benefits within this dilemma. Correcting injustices is necessary for the advancement of innovation within the department program. The Team would be taking a step toward social justice and advocacy by speaking out on this issue, ultimately decreasing the chances of similar incidents. However, that direction came with significant risk at the student's expense. Not only is there a potential of violating additional values, but there is a chance that the student could feel further marginalized by our inability to respect their decisions or disrupting their educational environment.

Consulting for Help

The Team's next decision was to seek assistance from the Department Chair. When speaking with the Chair, the Team used hypotheticals and kept all information anonymous/confidential. The Chair encouraged critical thinking in analyzing the various components contributing to this issue's complexities. If the faculty member intended to express the microaggressions, that would be a more significant issue that would need further

repercussions. The incident in which the faculty member made those choices by mistake proves the need to reflect social work ethics and values in promoting professional development. The Chair suggested that in this situation, the best direction would be to get permission from the student to address the issue anonymously. By addressing the faculty body, we would make a blanket statement that would ultimately influence all faculty members to reflect on promoting their professional development. With the student's permission, we moved forward with this intervention.

The Team reached out to the student a few weeks after addressing the faculty, of which they reported zero microaggressions from the faculty member and zero disturbances within the environment of their virtual learning. In response to this report, we chose not to do an additional intervention. It was evident that there was a violation of social work values within the professor's actions, and the Team felt it would be a disservice to the student, the professor, and the program if this issue was not addressed. Social workers strive toward promoting the well-being of all individuals and strive toward a life of continuous learning; this sometimes is exemplified through the confrontation of personal limitations.

Program Departure

Planning for Transition

In approaching the end of the term, two students will be exiting their SAB role (graduating). With this in mind, the Team began planning for the transition by sharing team duties and reaching out to the student body to advertise for the open positions. Upon being nominated as a student representative, the SAB supervisor sends a congratulatory email with an inquiry of a brief personal statement that can be conveyed to the student body.

Once all of the SAB nominations are received, the Team compiles the list of nominees with their student statements and sends it to the student body via email. Before opening the voting polls, students receive an invitation to join a meet-and-greet for a brief introduction from the SAB nominees. The following day the polls opened for student voting. Polls remain open for four days to ensure that all students have an opportunity to participate.

The appointed members were invited to the Team's last couple of weekly meetings. Before the start of the following semester, the new members will receive an email with the SAB Handbook and further information detailing Team meetings. Furthermore, the departing members will be removed from shared forums, and passwords will be changed to secure student confidentiality within the SAB cohort.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitation in Collaboration

The first identified limitation within collaboration being the failure to immerse the SAB supervisor in continual program updates. With the initial lack of direction in the beginning stages of program planning, the Team assumed this was solely a student project. Reflecting on the experience, it is evident that having a faculty member privy to the direction of the SAB would be more beneficial in advocating for the student body. With minimal guidelines to build on, the Team spent an inordinate amount of time attempting to comprehend role obligations rather than growing into the collaborative role.

The second identified limitation in collaboration was one member's role as a SAB representative and as the appointed GA. Though this unique position benefited the SAB team (due to the allotted time to focus on the intricate details of program development), it skewed the

power dynamic. This dynamic had the potential to be leveled through direct communication but was unfortunately overlooked, exposing further limits within team contributions.

Further Directions

It is highly suggested that the SAB supervisor be more associated with the ongoing direction of the SAB team. Specific examples include tending to intricate details, such as copying the supervisor on weekly student emails and each faculty email. Further direction also suggests that the supervisor attend at least one monthly meeting with the Team. These actions will ensure that the intercollabortive efforts continue to strive toward the same common goals. This direction will also assist in maintaining healthy boundaries within the program and allow faculty members to stay up-to-date on student concerns/interventions for maximum efforts in student advocacy.

It is also suggested that the appointed GA be involved with the SAB solely as an additional advocate for the student body. This is to be considerate of the time and respected roles of the individuals. If a student serves both roles simultaneously, there should be clear expectations upon accepting the responsibility of both positions. The GA is to be knowledgeable on current student concerns and interventions for further student advocacy. Specific examples include copying the GA on weekly student body emails and extending an invitation to weekly Team meetings.

Limitations in Contribution

Limits within Team Contributions stemmed from needing to acknowledge the interprofessional skill set of each member during the beginning stages. This was a missed opportunity to identify individual strengths, which would have influenced the proper

establishment and distribution of team duties. The lack of program organization revealed accompanying issues in collaborative contribution.

When executing the student gatherings, the SAB team expected higher participation from students with the option of three separate time frames. However, there was minimal student participation; concurrently, there was minimal feedback in student surveys and the anonymous suggestion box. Though, with minimal student participation, these newly implemented platforms were being utilized by some students, motivating the Team to continue offering them in the future. Furthermore, the anonymity options limited the Team's ability to connect with the students, hindering the ultimate vision and goal of the SAB.

Further Directions

In advancing these contributions toward innovating the program, it is suggested that the professors be provided with the option of an anonymous suggestion box and semester surveys. By offering this option, the SAB has a unique opportunity to gain perspective on effective interventions toward program innovation. Therefore, a weekly email will be provided for the MSW faculty with an attached anonymous suggestion box. Additionally, faculty will also receive a bimestrial survey.

Because of the need for initial direction, a Student Advisory Board Handbook was developed (see Appendix). This handbook proved necessary in advancing the unification of the Team and promoting the organization. The handbook will be implemented for all members at the beginning of the following semester alongside newly implemented shared platforms. These new platforms, such as Microsoft Teams Group Tasks, allows each member to stay informed of what tasks need to be done, what tasks are in progress, and what completed tasks. This platform tracks which member has worked on/completed each task, with due-date reminders. The Team will also

utilize Microsoft OneNote. This platform is similar in that it organizes and stores shared team notes. Furthermore, the Team will fully utilize Microsoft Teams for further student collaboration.

Concluding Statement

Being immersed in the construction of a developing student program offered valuable lessons that will surely strengthen each member's leadership skills. Learning to accentuate personal strengths in a new role while acquainting oneself with new individuals is difficult to manage. Though this SAB group reflected resilience in tackling each challenge while simultaneously building a student advisory board, a program that strives to enhance the ECU MSW experience of all individuals within the cohort.

The first six months of establishing the SAB foundation witnessed significant growth, of which is encouraging for the innovative direction of the MSW program and reflects the great potential for further implementation with future students.

Resources

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Appendix

The Student Advisory Board Handbook 2022-2023

Current members had the opportunity to review and edit the handbook. The SAB handbook is intended to be updated as deemed necessary by each SAB cohort and used for reference to gain clarity toward the primary purpose and goals of the SAB team.

20
23



(Eastern Kentucky University, n.d.)

Eastern Kentucky University's
Master of Social Work

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD HANDBOOK



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Welcome
4	The Need for a SAB
5	Purpose
	Vision
	Goal
	Values
6	Board Design
9	Role Expectations
12	Duties
17	Program Transitions
	Departure
	Selection Process
19	Ethical Dilemmas

WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Advisory Board (SAB) at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). We are incredibly grateful for your time and dedication to the students and this program. We look forward to collaborating with you in developing effective interventions for student concerns & issues.

It should be elucidated that this is a volunteer position, and this handbook serves solely as a guide for effective collaboration for maximum opportunities for student advocacy.

The handbook is implemented as a foundation for program development and illustrates the role expectations of the student representatives and the respected team members. This handbook is intended to be further developed throughout the innovative process. So, keep note of failed attempts, successful interventions, limitations in professional development, and most importantly, the small daily victories that are endured.

Best of Luck,
Your Fall 2022 SABTeam



THE NEED FOR A SAB

In our ethical responsibility to the profession, implementing effective interventions to further the educational experiences of our students is imperative to the innovation of social work programs (NASW Code of Ethics, 5.02). We ultimately enhance the overall learning experience by liaising between students and faculty.

By providing a student-to-student option for sharing concerns and feedback, we ensure that the student's message is heard and that the appropriate action is taken.

PURPOSE

The Student Advisory Boards' primary focus is to advocate for the student body by being a sounding board between the students and professors in an effort to unite and innovate the MSW program at ECU

VISION

To build our cohort through various opportunities to connect, while assisting students with emerging program and life challenges through compassion, brainstorming, and directive support.

GOALS

The goal is to strive toward deeper human connection within the social work cohort, while simultaneously alleviating unnecessary stress, confusion, and anxiety for those within the program.

VALUES

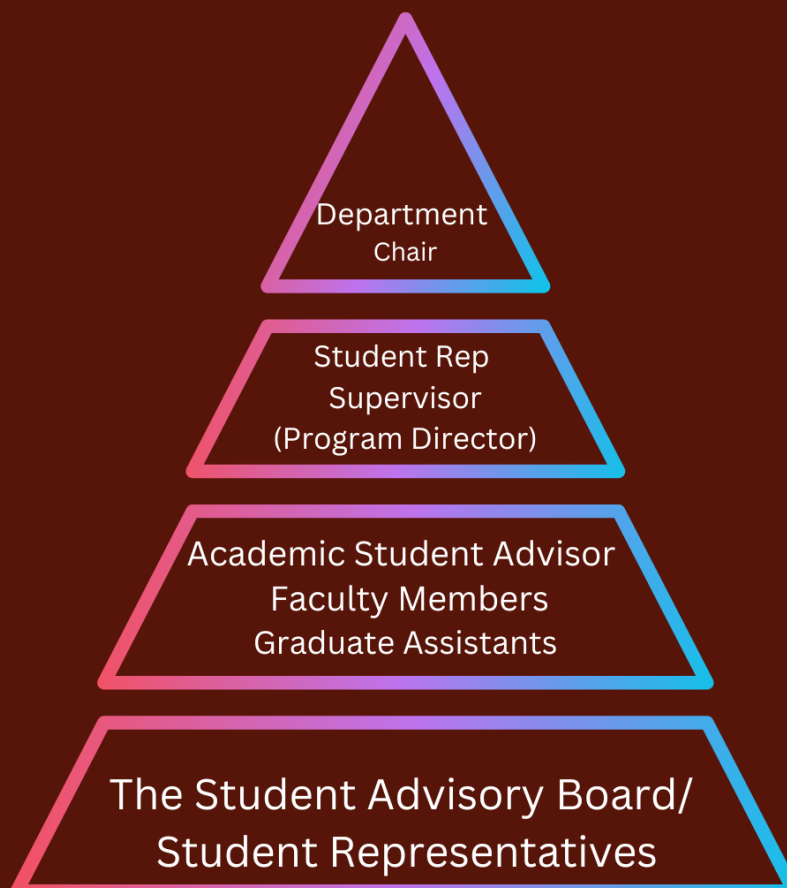
As stated in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, the SAB team is rooted in the same core values:

Service
Social Justice
Dignity and Worth of the Person
Importance of Human Relationships
Integrity
Competence

BOARD DESIGN

The assembly of interprofessionals on the SAB team is pivotal in accomplishing the vision, goal, and values of the program. Though each member who makes up the current SAB team is an active social work professional, our diverse backgrounds contribute to the diversity that structures our interprofessional collaborations.

The SAB team comprises five enrolled MSW students and a faculty supervisor. Additionally, the team utilizes the professional roles of the department Chair, the MSW academic advisor, the appointed GA, and various dedicated faculty members:



BOARD DESIGN COMPOSITION

The SAB Supervisor

This role is obtained by the MSW program director and is vital in overseeing that the chosen interventions are executed through faculty contribution. The supervisor is responsible for informing the Team of program meetings, a crucial step in efficiently advocating for students. The supervisor is liable for overseeing conflicts that arise within the program and should be directly contacted to address any ethical dilemmas that may present. The supervisor should not be included in student-student interaction but should be continually aware of student concerns and chosen interventions to assist in program innovation.

The MSW Department Chair

This role is instrumental in offering objective direction when confounding biases present with the supervisor. The MSW Academic Advisor: The advisor offers continual guidance in effectively reaching the student body and assists with technical difficulties in advancing program development.

BOARD DESIGN COMPOSITION cont'd

The MSW Academic Advisor

The academic student advisor offers continual guidance in effectively reaching the student body and assists with technical difficulties in advancing program development.

The Graduate Assistant

The GA is a student worker that serves as an additional vessel for student advocacy. The GA is expected to communicate with the student reps, via email and once-a-month team meetings to accumulate knowledge on current student concerns and applied interventions.

ROLE SELECTION

Potential representatives are nominated by their peers, professors, and/or themselves. Submission is based on the individual's level of interest, commitment, interpersonal skills, and dedication to the program's innovation. Nominees are voted on by the student body upon the need for student representative replacement.

Faculty members are appointed their roles through their respective positions.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

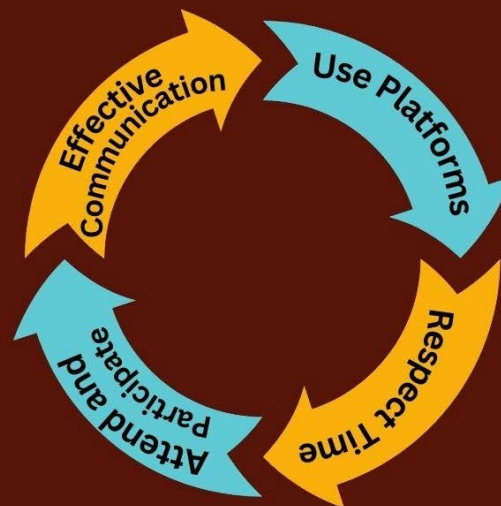
A student representative's primary role is advocating for the student body. This is achieved by being a liaison between students and the program faculty.

Various Role responsibilities:

- > Networking with students to adequately advocate for the students
- > Supporting professional development opportunities
- > Attending monthly program meetings
- > Supporting Interdisciplinary University Certificate programs.

Various Role Expectations:

- > Practice effective communication
- > Utilize shared platforms
- > Be respectful of time
- > Attend and participate in meetings



ROLE EXPECTATIONS cont'd

Communication

Practice effective communication by sharing verbal student concerns with the Team, notifying the Team of absences, and actively participating during collaboration. In practicing effective communication, members should utilize the appointed shared platforms: Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, GroupMe, and email.

Utilizing Shared Forums: These forums assist in group organization and team unification. Representatives are granted *owner* privileges upon SAB membership:

MSW SAB Microsoft Teams forum

- Host virtual meetings
- Share program updates, reminders, and files
- Check SAB tasks via Task Board
- Develop surveys via Forums
- Keep track of team meeting notes and student feedback via OneNote. Also, submit innovative ideas, verbal student feedback, etc. to OneNote.

GroupMe Forum

- Informal text communication to stay in continual communication with Team members
- Create groups with classmates for opportunities to build the cohort

Email: Students should use the university student email and appoint SAB email for collaboration.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS cont'd

Be respectful of time

Be mindful of your time commitment and also the dedication of others; stay on task during weekly meetings and focus on the *SAB purpose*. Adding additional duties to the SAB role can potentially be burdensome to the program's effectiveness.

- Team meetings should stay within the predetermined timeframe
- Use shared platforms to cut down on emails and meetings.
- Stay focused on your role as student representative. Various issues will arise that need to be addressed. As the student representatives, we should advocate for those needs to be met instead of assuming responsibility.

Attendance

Consistent attendance in team meetings ensures that all representatives are part of the collaborative process, staying up-to-date on student concerns and being knowledgeable of the applied interventions. Ultimately, consistent attendance and participation influence unity within the SAB cohort, reflecting the SAB vision.

DUTIES

These duties are executed through collaborative team meetings, student gatherings, informative surveys, and weekly email updates.

WEEKLY TEAM MEETINGS

Team meetings are held each week to review collected student and faculty feedback via verbal statements, email, anonymous suggestion box, and/or survey. The meetings include brainstorming interventions, designing weekly emails, and check-ins with each representative. By providing a weekly meeting, we can reassure that representatives are focused on the common goal and feel comfortable completing their tasks. Meetings should adhere to the following:

- Meetings should be held via *Microsoft Teams* for a maximum of 30 minutes- unless other terms are pre-discussed
- One representative should record meeting minutes via *OneNote*.
- Feedback gathered from the students and faculty anonymous suggestion box should be consolidated onto the provided excel sheet via *Forms* and saved within the Teams folder to ensure accessibility and organize data collection.
- Representatives will reach out to the interprofessional team and seek program information that needs to be added to the weekly email.
- The SAB supervisor and/or the GA should attend at least one meeting a month to aid in program direction and assist collaboration

MSW PROGRAM MEETINGS

MSW program meetings typically occur once a month. SAB representatives are expected to be present for these meetings to share student concerns.

- Two representatives should be present at each meeting (does not have to be the same two members each time).
- Representatives should be prepared to discuss common student complaints/concerns, share SAB advancements, and seek faculty feedback. The information needs to be consolidated into 4-5 minutes.
- Notes of the meeting should be reported via *OneNote*, so other members can access the information.



DUTIES cont'd

STUDENT EMAILS

Email is a common form of communication. The SAB supervisor should be copied on all student body emails to assist with the communication barriers and stay informed of program interventions.

- Students will receive weekly informative emails in program advances, updates, reminders, opportunities, an anonymous suggestion box, and something encouraging or humorous.
- Students will receive emails conveying program interventions in addressing their shared concerns

FACULTY EMAILS

Simultaneously, faculty emails will receive a weekly email. This will include any student information that needs to be conveyed and an anonymous suggestion box. The SAB supervisor should be copied to each email to assist with the communication barriers and stay informed of program interventions.



SAB STUDENT GATHERINGS

In an effort to build the virtual student cohort, the SAB offers monthly virtual student gatherings for all MSW students.

This is a virtual meeting that allows the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with representatives and other students. Students can ask questions or share concerns/victories. The representatives will assist with emerging challenges through compassion, brainstorming, and directive support.

- Gatherings should be held via *Microsoft Teams* for at least 30 minutes- unless other terms are pre-discussed
- At least one representative should be present for the gatherings to assist with questions, concerns, and conflicts
- Gatherings are held the last week of each month in preparation for the department's Chair monthly meeting.
- Three time frames will be offered in an attempt to reach an array of students: morning, afternoon, and evening
- Students will receive an email with the date, 3-time options, and a link to the optional gatherings.

DUTIES cont'd

SURVEYS and ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION BOX

The SAB team offers the students an anonymous option for feedback. This has been helpful for those students who are building their voices and are fearful of repercussions. Though this option has limitations, it has also proven to be effective. The faculty will also receive an anonymous suggestion box to assist with bridging the communication gap.

- The Anonymous Suggestion Box should be attached to each weekly email for students and faculty.
- Surveys should be distributed to students and professors at the beginning and end of each semester. Surveys should seek feedback on individual perspectives of the effectiveness of SAB and future direction. Surveys should be developed via Forms and **always** marked anonymous under settings.



PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

SAB TEAM DEPARTURE

Upon departure, exiting student representatives should do the following to ensure that students' confidentiality stays intact:

- Be removed from *ownership* status of Microsoft Teams, as well as removed from the GroupMe chat
- Ensure that all role duties have been shared with remaining team members
- Be removed from the shared email and uniformed of the password change.



PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

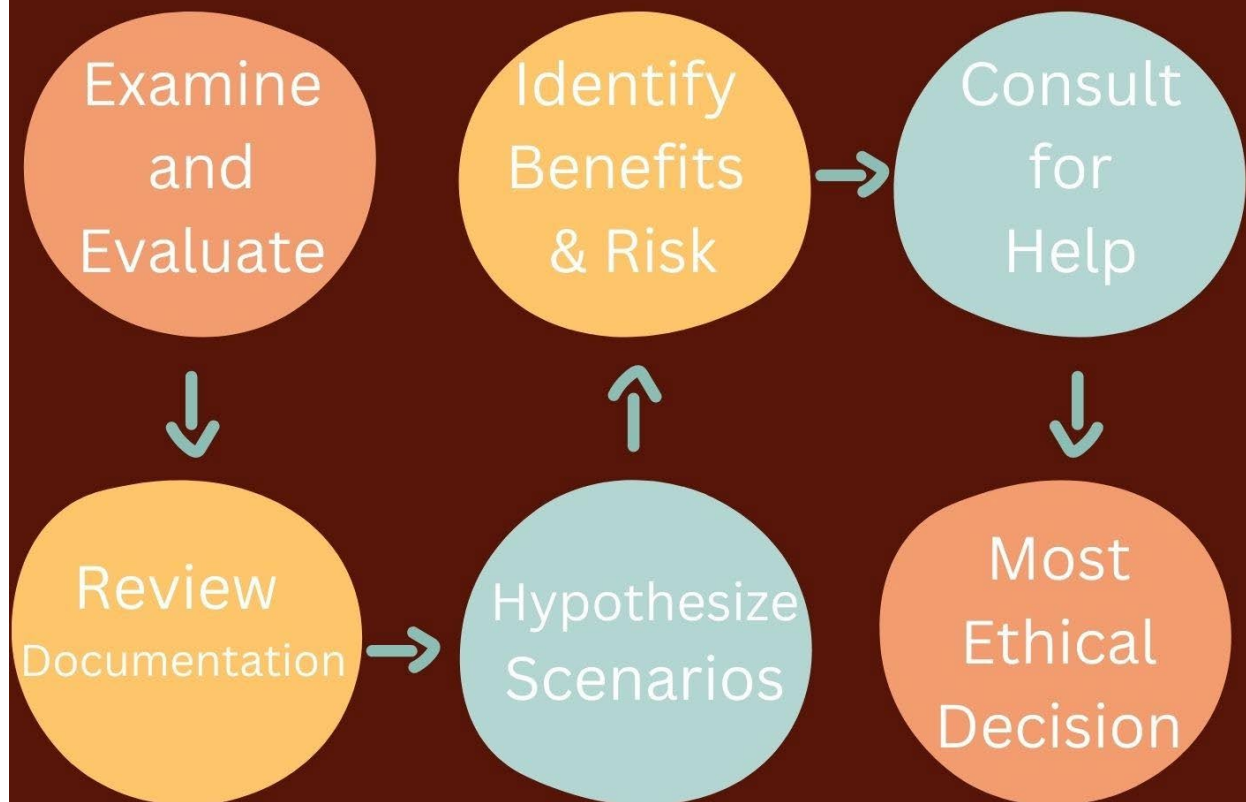
Upon departure, student representatives exiting should be removed from *ownership* status of Microsoft Teams, as well removed from the GroupMe chat.

- An email should be submitted to the Student Body in seeking new student representatives for the open positions (see Role Selection)
- Upon being nominated, a congratulatory email will be sent with an inquiry of a brief personal statement that can be conveyed to the student body
- Once all nominees are received the Team compiles the list of nominees with their statements and sends it to the student.
- Students are invited to join a meet-and-greet for a brief introduction from the SAB nominees.
- The following day, the polls opened for student voting.
- Polls remain open for at least four days to ensure that all students have an opportunity to participate.
- The appointed members will receive an email detailing the status of their new positions and a congratulatory email will be sent to students.

ETHICAL DILEMMA

Ethical Dilemmas

If conflicting social work values are presented, follow an evidence-based ethical decision-making model. Immediately include the supervisor, and if the conflict involves the supervisor, reach out to the Chair.



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