I. **Course Rationale**

Feedback about one's behavior has long been recognized as essential for motivation and learning. Feedback plays the same essential role in performance-oriented organizations. Managers require key information to determine if the program is performing as intended. Additionally, managers routinely develop administrative interventions in the interest of program improvement.

Properly defined, collected, and reported information can be used to assess the coverage of a target population, the implementation of the program and the degree to which clients/consumers achieve positive outcomes. The value of good information is based on its attention to data collection technique, including cultural sensitivity. This information becomes the foundation for evaluating administrative practice.

Most organizations devote great resources to the collection, storage and retrieval of data. Virtually all organizations have some form of computer generated information system. The output from these systems, although frequently massive, rarely proves helpful to the organization. Also unique, is the human service manager who structures and uses the output of his or her information system to improve the program’s performance.

This course is designed to teach management students the skills needed to design, implement, use, and evaluate information systems. The primary thrust is on identifying, presenting, and utilizing the information needed to monitor and improve agency. Students will be prepared to evaluate their own management practice, especially the impact of their interventions on client outcomes.

We believe that teaching managers to identify and use data to manage takes precedent over the discussion of computer hardware and software. This technology changes rapidly, and lacking the ability to do something meaningful with the data, the latest hardware provides little benefit to clients. This class does not prepare you to be a data manager, but rather to use data to manage on behalf of the clients who contact your program.

This course is critically linked to the School of Social Welfare’s mission given the practice focus of the course. Not only are students given an opportunity to apply the skills developed in this course, but the course encourages students to continually assess their administrative practice, especially the impact of their management efforts on positive outcomes for clients. This course is directly tied to the Social Work Administration Outcomes around teaching students to evaluate their own administrative practice.
Additionally, this course will highlight the use of administrative and evaluation data for advocacy purposes. Often, political, organizational, and community dynamics can obfuscate the presentation of clients needs or program effectiveness. Energy will be invested in illustrating the importance of identifying, collecting and reporting information that accurately reflects the legitimate human needs as well as the degree to which services are improving the lives of clients for the purposes of advocacy. This discussion would not be complete without some attention to the use of information within this context.

SW 842 builds generally and specifically on the content of other Social Administration Courses. There is a logical sequence between this course and Designing Programs. Designing Programs, which precedes this course in the curriculum, allow students to determine the specific details of program content, which in turns becomes the context for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the program in this course. Additionally, the other Social Administration courses allow specific skill development in various aspects of administrative practice and this course provides the tools necessary to evaluate the implementation and impact of their practice on client outcomes.

The rationale in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

II. Educational Outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define the management performance areas and at least two methods for measuring each with attention to the specific needs presented by various target populations. (SWAAP objectives 1,5 & 8)

2. List constraints to the use of performance information in the human services. (SWAAP objective #51)

3. Identify the elements required for a learning organization (SWAAP objectives 4 & 5)

4. Develop measures of status change, behavior change, client satisfaction, productivity, efficiency, resource acquisition and staff morale for an agency program with attention to the specific needs presented by various target populations. (SWAAP objectives 1,5 & 8)

5. Critique data-based reports using the principles of report formatting. (SWAAP objectives 5)

6. Design a performance report package for a manager in a human service agency. (SWAAP objectives 1, & 5)

7. Describe the steps involved in designing management information systems. (SWAAP objectives 5 &)

8. Identify situations in which there is an apparent conflict between social work values and ethics and information system design and develop alternatives for these situations. (SWAAP objectives 5 & 7)

9. Demonstrate competence in using program data and information to assess, monitor, and improve program performance. (SWAAP objectives 1 & 5)

10. Develop an awareness and an understanding of the importance of purposefully attending to the utilization of information in an organization. (SWAAP objectives 5 & 8)
The educational outcomes in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

III. Curriculum Themes

A Practice Centered Curriculum is the overarching theme of the School of Social Welfare. Students in this course will get ample opportunities to assess and evaluate their own administrative practice. This requires students to define their practice activity in a manner that is conducive to an objective assessment. Although some portions of the course emphasize the presentation of critical content, the vast majority of the class activity is focused on students obtaining experience in utilizing the course material to assess and evaluate administrative practice examples from their practicum.

Strengths Perspective
A strengths orientation is applied in this course in a number of ways. Students are given the opportunity to find a topic of professional interest and concern for their application of the material. This gives students credit for their commitment to key professional issues and presents them information in this course as a method for advancing their practice skills in that arena. Additionally, client input is framed as a critical source of information for assessing, evaluating, promoting, and improving program performance.

Critical Perspective
This course presents the key information about program operation and client outcomes as the key lens for determining the impact of services. Many programs are operated under the guise of status quo orientation or political power models, students are taught how to design and collect information that will yield a more objective representation of program functioning centering on client impact.

Social and Economic Justice
The raison d’etre of this course is the systematic evaluation of the impact of services on clients. Routinely, managers will be faced with the administration of services that are targeted at client populations that are routinely subjected to economic and social oppression. The material students gain in this class is presented as an effective tool for organizing programmatic efforts around making significant changes in the lives of clients and interrupting the patterns of oppression.

Diversity
Systematically collected information is a critical component of culturally competent practice. Eradicating oppression and its negative effects on the capacity of human services to value diversity on the base of race, ethnicity, class, disability, culture, age, religion, spirituality and sexual orientation is central to our work together in this class. Information can be collected and organized in a fashion to determine if services are effective for all clients. Information can be utilized to design and assess service methods that build on the strengths that specific groups have to offer.

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IV. **The Liberal Arts Perspective**
This course requires graduate level skills in written and oral communication. Student evaluation is based on the completion of four papers. The papers will be graded both on substance and on the ability of the student to communicate succinctly and in terms understandable to a variety of audiences. Professional jargon is frequently an impediment to effective communication. The effect of measurement and feedback on the behavior of people within organizations is an integral part of the course and builds on current knowledge of behavior and motivation.

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V. **Professional Purpose & Values**
The core of any management information system is the focus on measuring and enhancing client outcomes. Within this focus desired client outcomes are discussed, within the social work context of the person and their environment, which enhance personal freedom and respect personal values. On occasion this presents value conflicts which are discussed and alternatives to these value conflicts are developed.

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VI. **Preparation for Practice with Diverse Populations**
Variations in human development, perspective and behavior related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disablement are important considerations in the design and use of information systems. This is particularly the case in relationship to defining client outcomes and their measurement. Each student must be sensitive to defining client outcomes and measures in a manner which respects cultural and social diversity and does not further patterns of discrimination.

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VII. Topics

**Required Topics**

- Logic Models-Program definition
- Principles of Measurement
- Productivity and Efficiency
- Utilization
- Client Outcomes: Status and Environment Change
- Client Outcomes: Knowledge Acquisition, Behavior Change
- Client Outcomes: Affect change
- Clinical Info System
- Resource Acquisition
- Performance Report Design
- Implementing an MIS
- Guest Speakers-- Quality Improvement Indicators
- Using information to improve performance
- Ethics of Information Management

**Possible Topics**

- Learning Organization
- Performance Incentives
- Technology:
  - Spreadsheets
  - Databases
- Web Page Design & Management
- Presentation Software
- Statistical Software
- Total Quality Assurance
- Performance Contracting
- Clinical Supervision & Information Utilization

Individual instructors’ syllabi should provide a topical outline for the course and provide adequate information to determine where and when the required topics are being covered.

VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS & RESOURCES

**Required Readings:**


Individual instructors must either select from the listed readings or obtain approval from the faculty mentor for alternative readings.

Suggested Readings


For individual syllabus, remove the word “RECOMMENDED.” In addition, individualsyllabi need to specify which readings are required and which are recommended. The entire list of “additional resources” does not need to be included in individual syllabi.
IX. **Recommended Assignments**

- Develop a plan for defining, collecting, reporting, and promoting the use of the following types of measures: resource allocation, productivity, efficiency, staff morale, client satisfaction and outcomes. Outcome measures would include: status & environment change, knowledge acquisition, behavior change, and affect change. *(Ed. Outcomes 1,2,4,5,6,7,10)*

- Develop a program improvement plan spelling out an administrative intervention along with a plan to monitor its implementation, and impact. *(Ed. Outcomes 3,5,8,9)*

- Weekly examples of information utilization from student placements identifying the info, how it is measured, how it is collected and utilized for decision-making. *(Ed. Outcomes 2,5,6,8)*

- The presentation of a management information package including measures, data collection, reporting and utilization of the information. *(Ed. Outcomes 2,5,6,8)*

- Manage a listserv discussion of a current challenge in the administrative use of information in practice with invited guests, information management practitioners, as participants. *(Ed. Outcomes 2,5,6,8)*

X. **GRADING**

**What Grades Mean** *(It is the instructors’ discretion whether to use pluses and minuses).*

- **A** = Exceptional work: outstanding: this grade will be assigned to work that shows extensive use of the literature as well as wide use of concrete examples from practice.

- **B** = Fully meets graduate standards: this grade will be assigned to work in which all aspects of assignments are completed satisfactorily, showing a combination of accurate use of theory and principles, and precise descriptions of practice.

- **C** = Overall performance is unsatisfactory, below graduate standards, although all aspects of assignments were completed.

- **F** = Failure: overall quality of work is unsatisfactory, or some aspect of assignments not done.

**Incomplete grades.** A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student’s control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an I or F letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an F.

**Attendance Policy**

**Specifically state whether attendance is part of the grade, and, if so, how.**

For example: Attendance/participation will affect the final grade. Any student missing more than 2 classes (or the accumulation of hours equal to two classes) will be referred to the Associate Dean. If you miss 3 classes you will not pass this course. Points are deducted for missing class and coming to class late (3 pts. for each absence).
Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:

- The weighting of each assignment in the final course grade and the dates by which they are done.
- For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.
- If class participation is part of the grade indicate what this means. For example, if 10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.
- Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.
- Indicate how final grades will be determined

XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate the educational opportunity.

The instructor will work with you and the Services for Students with Disabilities Office to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in class.

If any course activities conflict with your personal religious or spiritual holidays please contact the instructor to make alternative arrangements.

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XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

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XIII. HIPAA REGULATIONS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality.
Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
- Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines.

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**XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

Office Hours:

Phone:

Email address:

**XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather students should call

Lawrence: the University (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, (800) 766-3777

Edwards Campus: (913) 897-8499

KCKCC Campus: (913) 334-1100

to determine if classes have been cancelled. Class will be held if classes have not been cancelled, and students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.