About the Program

Social work is a professional and academic discipline that improves the quality of life of individuals, groups and communities. Social work graduates demonstrate competency in research, policy, social justice, diversity, community organizing, group work, direct practice to effectively problem solve a variety of individual, group, family, community, government and organizational problems. The program includes a liberal arts base and prepares students with the competencies needed to engage in culturally competent practice, critical thinking and the analysis of environmental factors affecting individuals, families and communities to confront institutional barriers.

The undergraduate program in social work at SRU awards a bachelor of science degree in social work. The program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, the profession’s nationally accrediting body.

Career Opportunities

Social work is recognized as a growing profession. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that between 2012-22, the growth rate of Social Work will be 27% faster than the national average. SRU graduates have enjoyed excellent success in finding jobs and moving to advanced degrees. By design, the generalist practice approach is intended to prepare students for a variety of career and educational opportunities. Our graduates can expect employment opportunities in child welfare, aging services, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health, family services, community organizing, working with developmental disabilities, industry, schools, juvenile and adult corrections and work with non-profits. Persons who already have or are working towards an undergraduate major or minor in psychology, criminology, sociology, allied health, communication, aging and non-profit studies will find the social work program complements their existing expertise and opens new employment opportunities.

Those students who wish to pursue the masters or MSW degree can expect the faculty to assist them in making the correct choice from the hundreds of different regional and national specialized and generalist graduate programs. Although each MSW program has different admissions standards, most of our graduates are afforded advanced standing, which allows them the opportunity to complete their studies in 18 months. Many of our graduates complete their bachelor’s degree at SRU and the MSW in five and a half years. In Pennsylvania and many other states, on completion of the MSW, graduates are allowed to take the test for Licensed Social Worker.
The Social Work Association and Phi Alpha
The social work program and SRU support an active Social Work Association (SWA). The SWA provides a number of opportunities for service learning, speakers and other activities to learn more about the profession outside of the classroom. It allows students the opportunity to practice leadership and collaboration.

Omicron Upsilon is the SRU chapter of Phi Alpha, the social work profession’s national honor society. Our active chapter engages in a number of service and academic opportunities that provide additional learning and career opportunities.

What to expect from the program
Social work majors at SRU can expect a world-class education. The faculty have decades of clinical, group, administrative and policy experience. Learning occurs in the classroom and in internships, service learning and other real world settings. In Pennsylvania and nationally our graduates are leaders in countless organizations with successful careers as clinicians, community organizers, directors and educators.

Social work majors can also expect faculty that provide both academic and professional advising. Faculty advise students on course offerings and learning experiences to assist with understanding career options and obtaining their professional goals.

Students with associate degrees and those who have taken social work courses outside of the University are welcome to apply. The program works with individual students to receive credit for comparable coursework and competencies earned from other colleges and universities.

Internships
The social work education culminates in an extensive internship program. Social work students are required to undertake an internship of a minimum 480 hours of onsite observation and participation. During the internship students demonstrate and are assessed on their understanding and practice of the competencies and practice behaviors acquired in classes and through service learning. The SRU social work program is continually updating and improving their internship offerings to provide students with a variety of options to meet their career goals. The program offers more than 120 internship sites, affording practice opportunities in child welfare, aging services, community action, housing, mental health, family services, foster care, adoption, corrections and many others.

Scholarships
SRU makes a variety of scholarships available to new freshmen. Students are encouraged to apply for admission early to be considered for academic scholarships. Limited to only social work majors, in the junior year students interested in a career in public child welfare in Pennsylvania may apply for the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates program. Students successfully admitted into the program receive funds to reimburse their tuition and books for their senior year. CWEB students are required to work in a public Pennsylvania child welfare agency on graduation. Interested students should discuss this program with the social work program coordinator. In addition, social work students may apply for the McMullen and Unterwagner Scholarships.