



University Senate

Introduced by: Council on Research, University Planning & Policy Council

Date: April 24, 2006

PROPOSAL TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

- I. That the attached proposal be approved by the University Senate.
- II. That the implementation be effective immediately.
- II. That this bill be referred to the President for approval.

Operating Plan Outline
The Institute for Social Services Research and Development

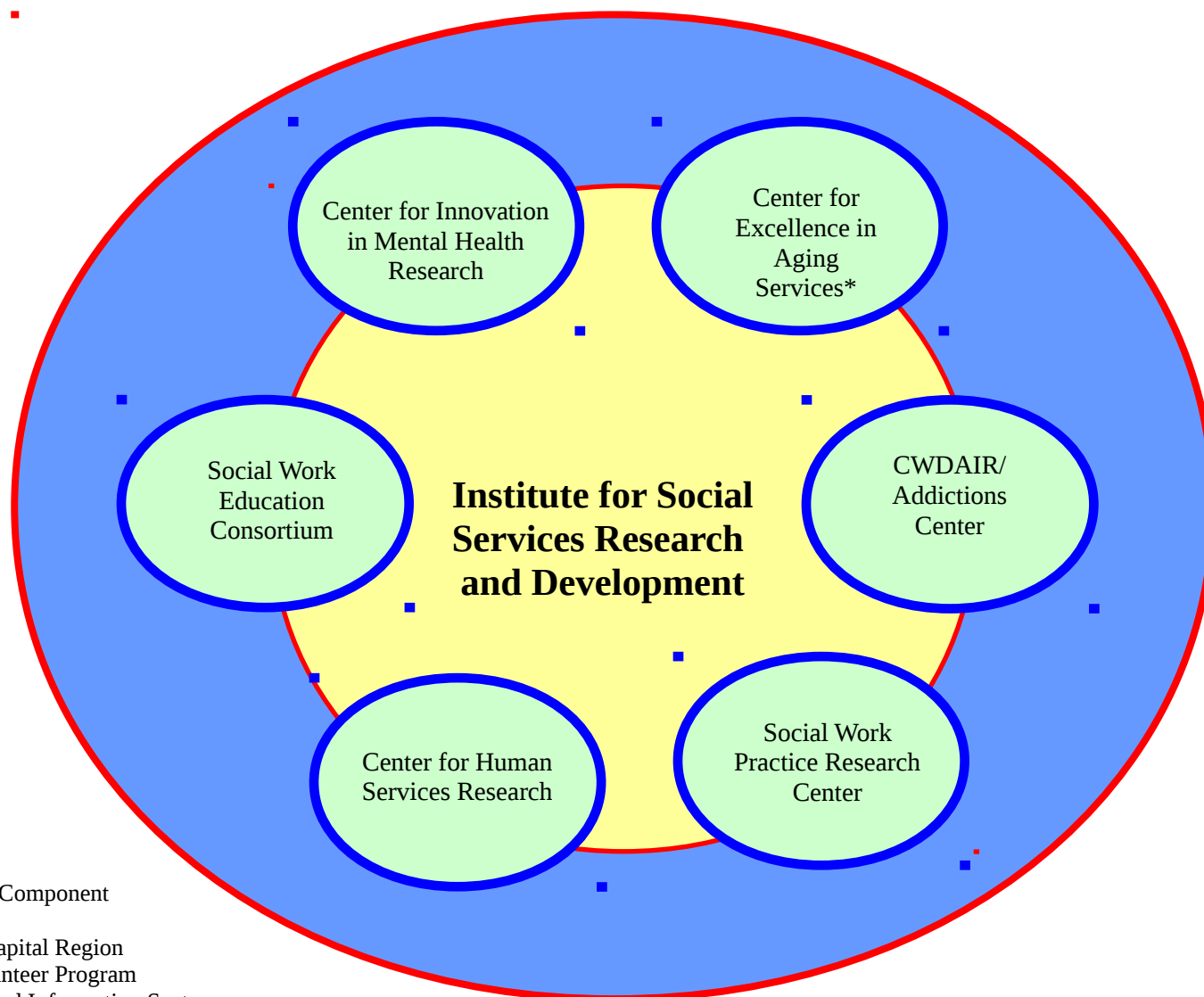
Title and Leadership: Institute for Social Services Research and Development
Director: to be appointed by Dean, School of Social Welfare
Contact Person: Jan L. Hagen, Distinguished Teaching Professor
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Abstract: The primary function of the Institute for Social Services Research and Development (ISSRD) is to serve as an umbrella organization to coordinate, promote and oversee research, outreach programs, and workforce education and training in the area of social service programs and systems. The impetus for establishing the Institute is the dramatic expansion of the School of Social Welfare's portfolio of interdisciplinary research and development in the social services arena through several centers and the Social Work Education Consortium. (Figure 1 shows the organizational arrangement for the ISSRD and its affiliated units.)

Under the auspices of ISSRD, the mission of the affiliated Centers and Social Work Education Consortium is to:

- 1) Develop empirically-based knowledge to promote effective social welfare services to meet human needs;
- 2) Conduct applied research on social service programs and systems through interdisciplinary partnerships with government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and foundations addressing human service needs through program and policy development;
- 3) Increase the participation of the School of Social Welfare and the University in federally funded research opportunities;
- 4) Promote further linkage between applied social services research and social welfare policy;
- 5) Enhance the professional development and capacity of the social services workforce through evidence-based education and training; and
- 6) Provide services that enhance the quality of life for vulnerable, marginalized, or oppressed populations.

**Figure 1: Organizational Arrangements
Institute for Social Services Research and Development**



*Center for Excellence Component Programs:
 Elder Network of the Capital Region
 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
 Older Adults Services and Information Systems
 Aging and Intellectual Disabilities
 Internships in Aging Project

This mission promotes the development of the scientific knowledge base to enhance the effective delivery of social services. It contributes to the University's goals for excellence in research and scholarship (discovery) as well as the goals for community service to assist communities, government, and not-for-profit organizations to better meet their goals and objectives (societal responsibility). Further, the establishment of ISSRD advances the University's commitment to social justice by encouraging the development of effective services to vulnerable, marginalized, or oppressed populations. It also represents an investment in the School of Social Welfare, a distinguished school recognized for its excellence and visibility within the social work profession.

The proposed Institute will serve to coordinate, promote, and oversee the excellent work now being conducted by the Social Work Education Consortium and several existing centers: the Center for Human Services Research, the Center for Innovations in Mental Health Research, the Social Work Practice Research Center, the Center for Excellence in Aging Services, and the Child Welfare, Drug Abuse, and Intergenerational Risk Research Center. Folding these Centers and the Consortium under the umbrella of the Institute for Social Services Research and Development will facilitate the maintenance and expansion of the research, services, and education and training programs of the Centers and the Consortium by allowing for the coordinated development of a research and development infrastructure that is both efficient and integrative. This will be particularly helpful in reducing duplication of administrative functions by enhancing the sharing of infrastructure resources. Further, ISSRD is envisioned as fostering the link between social services research and social welfare policy and development, cross fertilization of projects, interdisciplinary collaboration among investigators, and coordinated sponsorship of lectures, seminars, and conferences. It is anticipated that the synergy created under ISSRD will enhance research productivity and facilitate continued success by the School of Social Welfare and its partners in procuring extramural funding.

Activities: The Institute will have three functions:

- 1) to serve as an umbrella organization for the affiliated Centers and the Social Work Education Consortium;
- 2) to support affiliated units singly and together in applying for more and larger grants, particularly NIH funds; and
- 3) to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations with other institutes and centers within and beyond the University at Albany.

Institute staff will build an infrastructure to support the operations of its affiliated units, facilitate applications for, and management of, extramural funding, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty and staff affiliated with the Centers and the Consortium. Activities will include coordinating, promoting, and overseeing research, outreach programs, and workforce education and training in the area of social service programs and systems, development of interdisciplinary and inter-university partnerships likely to support expansions of research, training and service portfolios, development of Federal, State and Foundation funder relationships, and sponsoring of interdisciplinary seminars, colloquia, and conferences.

The main research, service, and educational and training activities are embedded in the Consortium and Centers affiliated with ISSRD. These Centers and the Consortium may be viewed as research and development clusters in selected areas relevant to social services research, programs, and education and training. These Centers and the Consortium focus on children and families; mental health; social work practice; and child welfare, drug abuse, and intergenerational risk; aging services; and workforce development. Faculty associates and senior research personnel from all these Centers and the Consortium regularly publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journals and regularly make presentations at national conferences. Descriptions of the Consortium and the Centers follow. Additional information about these units as well as curriculum vitae for faculty associates and research staff of the Centers and Consortium are located in the appendices.

The focus of the Child Welfare, Drug Abuse, and Intergenerational Risk Research Center (CWDAIR) is on the design, development, and delivery of coordinated, evidence-based services for families in the child welfare system with drug abuse and co-existing problems, especially HIV/AIDS. CWDAIR's specific aims are to 1) develop a research infrastructure at the School of Social Welfare that will support faculty in increasing the quality and quantity of social work research on drug use and HIV/AIDS in high-risk families and 2) expand collaborative partnerships with state agency leaders and professionals from child welfare, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS services to improve the design of services to address substance abuse and co-existing problems among high-risk parents. The ultimate goal is to improve services for vulnerable families and children in the child welfare system. Secondary goals are to promote a self-sustaining federally funded research agenda in these areas and to develop into a permanent Addictions Research Center sustained by Federal research support.

CWDAIR has developed infrastructure supports through the creation of a statistical consultation clinic, junior faculty mentoring, a mini-grants program for pilot projects, and doctoral student development through research assistantships, mentoring, a dissertation seminar, and supports to attend workshops and other training. Two pilot projects are currently being supported: 1) inter-agency collaborative relationships and effective treatment services for child welfare clients and 2) predictors of drug release in HIV-infected women. These projects are the basis for subsequent RO-1 applications to NIDA.

This Center provides regularly scheduled colloquia and seminars on various aspects of drug abuse, child welfare, and research methods, including a year-long seminar on child welfare, drug abuse, and intergenerational risk. These colloquia and seminars are open to the entire University community and are of particular benefit to advanced graduate students and faculty. CWDAIR is supported by funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (approximately \$500,000 annually for five years).

The Center for Excellence in Aging Services develops and implements innovative practices and policies that address the needs of aging persons, their families, and professional caregivers. The Center is committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship,

and public service and to addressing the needs of vulnerable and oppressed populations. The Center works with communities, state and local agencies, and the Legislature to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable older persons in society; stimulate interest at local, state, and national levels in the capacity, potential, and needs of older persons; and raise community awareness of the needs and strengths of older persons from diverse cultures. Its projects, which serve to translate existing knowledge into practice, include the Elder Network of the Capital Region, Assessment of Effectiveness of Palliative Care Interventions, Dementia Care Training and Demonstration, and Supporting Grandparent Caregivers. The Center is also recognized internationally as the lead research and training center on dementia care for persons with intellectual disabilities and leads several multi-site and multi-national research projects.

The Center also operates several programs, including the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), OASIS (a national, not-for-profit education organization dedicated to enriching the lives of mature adults), and the Center on Intellectual Disabilities which offers training and program innovations in the care of aging persons with intellectual disabilities and promotes cross-agency support of aging caregivers. The Center serves the education mission of the School through the Web-Satellite Instructional Center developing cd-rom based and other instructional media on critical aging and workforce issues, through the Internships in Aging Program for MSW students and through research opportunities for Ph.D. students. This Center is supported by funding from several sources, including John A. Hartford Foundation; National Institute for Aging, the Administration on Aging, the Corporation for National and Community Service; Albany Guardian Society; Community Foundation of the Capital Region; the New York State Department of Health, Office for the Aging, Office of Children and Family Services and Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; the Arthritis Foundation, and the United Way (approximately \$1,300,000 annually).

The Center for Human Services Research focuses on developing empirically-based knowledge regarding social welfare policies and programs for vulnerable children and families in order to promote effective services. This Center has worked extensively for many years with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Current projects include Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program Evaluation, NYS Healthy Families New York/Home Visitation Evaluation Program, Family Resource Center Study, Legally-Exempt Child Care Provider Study, and Evaluation of Collocation of Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Services. The Center also provides excellent research learning opportunities for students in the MSW and Ph.D. Programs at the School of Social Welfare. The Center has contributed directly to the educational mission of the School through an advanced seminar on children's services research offered by Brenda Smith and Lynn Videka in 2003-04. Funded by the U.S. Children's Bureau, this seminar supported in-depth, hands-on research and data analysis experience for 14 doctoral students through secondary data analysis of a major national data set on child maltreatment. CHSR is currently supported by grant funding from multiple sources (approximately \$1.3 million annually) and by faculty leadership supported by the School of Social Welfare.

The mission of the Center for Innovation in Mental Health Research is to advance knowledge in the field of mental health using an evidence-based approach to conducting research in the areas of clinical interventions, service delivery systems, and mental health policy. This center uses an engaged interdisciplinary research model based on collaborative partnerships with faculty, health and mental health providers, community members (including county mental health commissioners), and researchers from the New York State Office of Mental Health. Current projects include Geriatric Depression Screening in Psychiatric Home Health Care, Problem-solving Therapy for Later Life Depression, Parents with Psychiatric Disabilities, Measurement Models for Depression, Unity House Enhanced Supported Housing Evaluation, Project Liberty Peer Initiative Evaluation, and Case Manager Job Stress and Propensity to Leave. This Center provides educational opportunities in clinical interventions for MSW students, in research for Ph.D. students, and in depression screening and worker safety for community practitioners. Through this Center, an advanced practice course on evidence-based practice in mental health was developed for MSW students. The Center for Innovation in Mental Health Research is supported by several small grants and by faculty leadership supported by the School of Social Welfare.

The New York State Social Work Education Consortium is part of a long-term workforce professionalization and stabilization plan for the State's child welfare system. The Consortium is established as a formal partnership between the New York State Association of Deans of Social Work Schools and the Office of Children and Family Services, the Bureau of Training and Workforce Development. The purposes are to improve the effectiveness of training, evaluation, and research, in turn improving results for children and families. It promotes integrative research, evaluation, and education partnerships involving schools of social work, county child welfare services, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The consortium becomes a vehicle for systems improvement and cross-systems change. The long-term goal of the consortium is the design and implementation of an overall Workforce Development Plan to strengthen the knowledge and skills of New York's public agency human services workforce.

The Consortium provides tuition for child welfare workers enrolled in advanced professional social work courses offered in a web-based format, provides tuition support for child welfare workers enrolled in professional social work programs, and promotes in-service training for child welfare workers through the development and delivery of curriculum projects. Under a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Consortium is undertaking a five-year project to develop models for improving worker retention in rural, urban, and metropolitan child welfare units. The Consortium also works with local county commissioners in conducting a workforce retention study and in reviewing policy and program options to foster retention.

In terms of education for UAlbany students, the Consortium sponsors a graduate student traineeship program in conjunction with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and engages Ph.D. interns in multiple projects related to child welfare issues and model development for practice. In addition to its federal grant, the Consortium is supported by the New York State Association of Deans of Social Work Schools, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and the Bureau of Training and Workforce Development (approximately \$2 million annually).

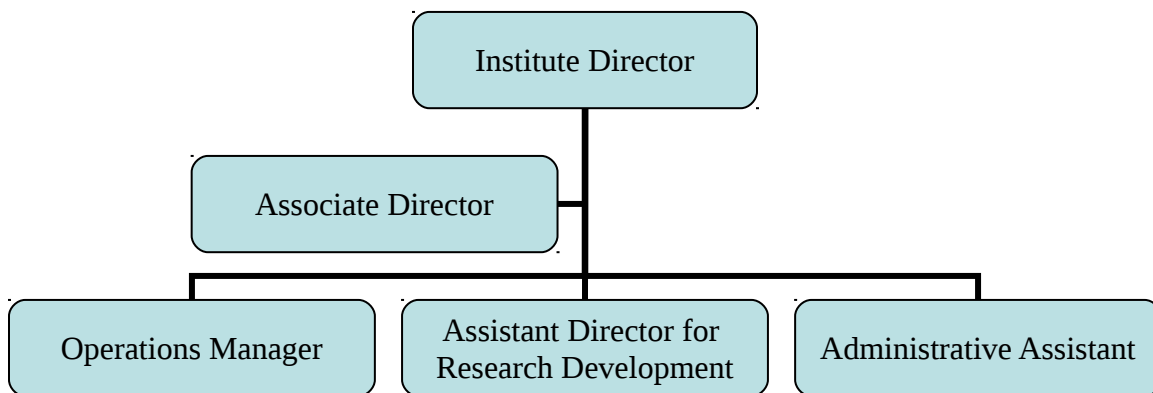
The purpose of the Social Work Practice Research Center is to promote the development and dissemination of empirically-based social work practice interventions. This center is currently not active. It is included here as part of the structure for ISSRD because the School of Social Welfare is actively working to re-activate this Center. The School is now recruiting for a senior faculty member to head this Center. It is anticipated that this person will lead the Practice Center in securing external funds and in mentoring students and junior faculty in the area of practice research. Additionally, an international conference on Evidence-Based Social Work Practice, which will serve to launch the Center, is planned for June 2005.

Organization/Staffing: Staff for the Institute of Social Services Research and Development will be comprised of a director and an associate director, an assistant director for research development, an operations manager, and an administrative assistant. A proposed organizational chart for the Institute is presented in Figure 2.

The Institute's director will be appointed by and will report to the Dean of the School of Social Welfare. The Director will be drawn from the faculty of the School of Social Welfare and will administer the Institute in consultation with an executive committee. The executive committee will be comprised of the Directors and Co-Directors of each of the Centers, the Director of the Consortium, and the Dean of the School of Social Welfare. In consultation with the Dean and the executive committee, the director will select an associate director. It is suggested that an Institute advisory board, which would meet semi-annually, be established, drawing from community organizations, government and not-for-profit organizations, and senior researchers not affiliated with the Center.

**Figure 2: Organizational Chart
Institute for Social Services Research and Development**

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



The Director and Associate Director will be responsible for the overall operations of ISSRD and will have particular responsibility for identifying new areas of research, service, and education and training as well as facilitating the meeting of interdisciplinary teams to explore research and develop ideas and to create working groups in areas of common interest.

The positions of assistant director for research development, operations manager, and administrative assistant will either be new hires or redeployment of existing personnel from the affiliated units. The Director in consultation with the associate director will hire these individuals and develop specific job descriptions. Under the direction of ISSRD's directors, the institute staff will offer support services to faculty and senior researchers in locating funding opportunities, completing and submitting proposals, and managing awards through such services as monitoring fiscal aspects of grants and contracts, fulfilling reporting requirements, and processing personnel materials.

By providing these services, it is anticipated that an effective and efficient research and development infrastructure will be created to support the work of ISSRD and its affiliates. Economies of scale will also allow for more effective use of resources in procuring such services as statistical consultations, computer applications support, phone banks, and access to 800 numbers.

Past Collaborations: The units under ISSRD have no extensive history of collaborating with each other; in part, this is due to the recent emergence of some of the units as well as the lack of a structure to facilitate this process. Establishment of the Institute will allow for further collaboration between the various Centers and the Consortium affiliated with the Institute as well as the expansion of interdisciplinary collaborations through partnerships with other disciplines in the University. It is anticipated, that in addition to the collaborative efforts noted below, collaboration will be fostered with faculty in the departments of psychology (particularly in addictions research), public policy and public administration, public health, and sociology. Additional state partners may also become involved in research projects; for example, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Within the Centers and the Consortium, there has been interdisciplinary collaboration across University disciplines as well as collaborative undertakings with various community partners, including New York State and local agencies. For example, the Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) has a multidisciplinary staff and a strong track record of collaborating on interdisciplinary projects, including collaboration with Monica Rodriguez of the Department of Psychology at the University at Albany and Don Boyd of the Rockefeller Institute of Government. CHSR has a long history of collaborative work with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, a key partner in the initial establishment of CHSR. In addition, faculty from the School of Social Welfare, the School of Public Health, the Department of Sociology, the Nathan Kline Institute, and Albany County Department of Social Services have collaborated on research projects in conjunction with CHSR.

The Center for Excellence in Aging Services has established partnerships with the New York State Department of Health, Office for the Aging, Office of Children and Family Services Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, over 40 nursing homes and intellectual disabilities service providers and faculties in 6 other universities and three countries. It also maintains close ties to the School of Social Welfare's MSW program through the Internships in Aging Project. This Center provides research opportunities for Ph.D. students.

The Center for Innovations in Mental Health Research maintains collaborative relationships with the New York State Office of Mental Health, Project Liberty, Unity House, and St. Peter's Hospital. It also sponsors an internship in mental health services for MSW students in the School of Social Welfare.

Financial Plan: Funding for the Institute will be derived, in part, from current grant funding received by the Centers and the Consortium. The School of Social Welfare will continue its support for faculty associated with the various Centers and the Consortium, and will insure leadership availability for the Institute's Director and Associate Director. The units within the proposed institute have substantial extramural funds as well as a heavy investment of resources from the School of Social Welfare. The creation of ISSRD will serve to promote cross disciplinary collaboration and research facilitation groups to promote proposal development. It is anticipated that this arrangement will increase and diversify the sources of extramural support and maintain and increase the number of applications for funding undertaken by the affiliated units.

Investment in the educational mission is already highly visible in the units to be affiliated with ISSRD. However, as cross disciplinary efforts increase, it is anticipated that graduate students from other disciplines will become increasingly involved in the research activities of the Institute.

Centers and the Consortium and their affiliated personnel will continue to list their units on grant applications and on the campus impact statements so that each unit may be properly credited should their proposals be funded. The Institute itself will also be noted on grant applications and on campus impact statements.

Other Resources: This proposed Institute is viewed as central to the education, research, and service missions of the School of Social Welfare. The School of Social Welfare has already invested significantly in the infrastructure development as indicated by the appointments of Gellis and Hardiman as co-directors of the Center for Innovation in Mental Health Research, Claiborne and Hagen as co-directors of the Center for Human Services Research, McCallion as director of CWDAIR and the Center for Excellence in Aging Services, and McCarthy as Director of the Consortium. Additionally, the School of Social Welfare is currently searching for a senior faculty member to lead the Social Work Practice Center. It is anticipated that this level of investment from the School of Social Welfare will continue.

The Institute and its affiliated units have need for such resources as statistical consultations, computer applications support, phone banks, 800 numbers, and computer hardware and software. Through the Institute, economies of scale will allow for more efficiency in procuring these resources to be used by all units of ISSRD.

Educational Mission: The proposed Institute of Social Services Research and Development will support the educational mission of the University and the School of Social Welfare by providing the following:

- Opportunities for faculty to be leaders in developing knowledge for social work practice and social welfare services, including policy development,
- Research learning experiences for Ph.D. and master's-level students,
- Professional development for the child welfare workforce through support of further professional education and in-service training,

- Internships in state and local agencies for master's-level and Ph.D. students, and
- Seminars on related research topics, fora with collaborative partners, and specialized courses that would not be possible without the activities of the Institute and its affiliates.

Service Mission: The Institute, through its affiliated units, will support the service mission of the School of Social Welfare and the University at Albany through its tradition of collaborative research with public and not-for-profit service providers and funders. Examples include programs for the retention of child welfare workers, safety training for frontline workers, program evaluation of Unity House's supported housing program, evaluation of collocation of substance abuse and child welfare services, outreach to and training for legally exempt child care providers in Albany County, and pilot testing a data and reporting system for New York State's adolescent pregnancy prevention program. The service mission is also realized through such programs as the Elder Network of the Capital Region, OASIS, and RSVP.

Evaluation and Review: The Institute will actively participate in the Council on Research's cyclical evaluation efforts for the University's organized research units. Additionally, the Dean and the faculty of the School of Social Welfare will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Institute in its academic planning and assessment activities. Measures for review will include:

- Publications and conference presentations at national professional meetings,
- Number of applications submitted,
- Number and range of sources of support,
- Degree of financial self-sufficiency,
- Development of collaborative and cross-disciplinary teams,
- Contributions to the education and training of students through internships, assistantships, special seminars, new course offerings, and
- Contributions to the community through service.

References: Other universities have found it efficient to provide an umbrella infrastructure for specific research clusters which allows those research clusters to develop further and to expand their interdisciplinary research portfolios. For example, the University of North Carolina School of Social Work has established the Jordan Institute for Families. Interdisciplinary in nature, the Jordan Institute engages in research, technical assistance and training on issues related to all aspects of family. The Jordan Institute has over 45 externally funded projects and involves more than 100 members of the School of Social Work faculty and staff.

The University of Utah School of Social Work has established the Social Research Institute to provide "research, training, and consultation to build and enhance the capacity for human service systems change through evidence-based practice." A final example comes for the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto with its Centre for Applied Social Research. Supported by grants, contracts, and fee-for-service projects, the Centre's mandate is "to conduct applied social research related to the effectiveness of

social work practice interventions, programs, social policies, and resource allocation.”
As the research arm of the Faculty of Social Work, this Centre “assists faculty members with various aspects of their investigations, including proposal writing, staffing, data analysis, and financial management.”