

## ASSESSMENTS OF SP2 DSW PROGRAM

Hartocollis et al. (2015) conducted an evaluation of the DSW program in 2014. A survey was sent to program alumni which included closed- and open-ended questions. With an 81.6% response rate, findings were that students averaged 7.5 years of post-master's social work experience at the start of the program. A student retention rate of 91% was reported, with 71% of students completing the program in three years. Key themes from open-ended questions related to graduate experiences and outcomes included improved practice expertise, as well as research and writing skills through the dissertation process. Additionally, graduates reported gaining in-depth expertise and career opportunities, such as teaching roles and increased responsibilities in their employment. Alumni also discussed career accomplishments tied to their DSW education, including publishing peer-reviewed articles, textbooks, manuals and book chapters, and presenting at conferences. Graduates also described greater involvement in research and evaluation. For more information, please see: Hartocollis, L., Solomon, P., Doyle, A., & Ditty, M. (2015). An evaluation of the University of Pennsylvania's practice doctorate (DSW) program. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 35(1-2), 116-130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2014.980487>

The results of Hartocollis et al. (2015) were used for continuous quality improvement.

An updated evaluation was conducted in 2020 and consisted of two components: a survey and dissertation content analysis. The survey was sent to all current students and alumni. A total of 87 students and alumni agreed to participate for a response rate of 53%. Over half (58%) of respondents were alumni, and 43% were current students. Most (82%) worked in a full-time job during the DSW program, and 11% worked part-time. The majority reported completing the program in three years (75%), which was an improvement from the 2015 evaluation. In the content analysis of all 130 dissertations that had been conducted in the DSW program, most were research-based (72%). Of these, the majority were qualitative (59%), 27% were quantitative and 15% were mixed methods.

For alumni, the most reported full-time position was clinician or clinical leadership (42%) and about one-third (31%) selected social work faculty. About one-third of alumni (37%) reported publishing peer-reviewed articles from their dissertations and books or book chapters (11%). Additional knowledge generation and dissemination activities included speaking at conferences (74%), developing or leading continuing education courses (48%), developing curricula or trainings (39%), and hosting or being a guest on other media (e.g. podcasts, webinars) (37%).

Other key themes were the following:

- Alumni reported high overall satisfaction with the extent to which the program met their goals.
- DSW graduates reported engagement in social work leadership, knowledge development, and dissemination.
- Dissertations included a variety of methods and topic areas including qualitative and quantitative methods and development of practice materials.
- Recommendations for program improvement included enhanced support and mentorship; adjustments to the curriculum; more training for academia, networking and career development; and racial equity.

- Potential areas for further inquiry included alumni engagement with practice-based research and ways to support timely completion of the dissertation.

This report generated an article that is currently under review with the *Journal of Social Work Education*: Solomon, P., Schwartz, N., & Corcoran, J. Evaluating Practitioner Scholars: An Evaluation of the University of Pennsylvania DSW Program.