

# SWOSU Social Work Program Celebrates in March

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March is National Social Workers Month and Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford is one of six Oklahoma universities that offer a Bachelor of Social Work degree.

Debbi McFarlin, assistant professor and director of the SWOSU social work program, said the program works closely with area social service agencies in meeting the needs of the communities. SWOSU is currently involved with the Department of Human Services and the Child Welfare Professional Enhancement Program. The DHS seeks social work students that aspire to work in child welfare.

At SWOSU, McFarlin said the program is able to place students in DHS offices and the students are frequently hired upon graduation. SWOSU is currently recruiting students that are eligible for the DHS professional enhancement program. Eligible students will receive monetary funds to pursue their education.

The SWOSU program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

“The CSWE accreditation is a rigorous process that requires adherence to national standards and insures a quality education for our students,” McFarlin said. “The accreditation demands a good deal of effort from our faculty, but the students have a definite advantage in obtaining a degree from a CSWE accredited school.”

To be called or use the title of “social worker” in Oklahoma, a person must have a professional social work degree from a CSWE accredited program and be licensed through the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers. Chris Gregston and McFarlin are both faculty members at SWOSU and earned their MSW from the University of Oklahoma and hold clinical social work licenses within the state of Oklahoma.

The National Association of Social Workers theme for this year’s National Social Work Month is Hope & Health: Help Starts here. The theme highlights the important role of health social workers in the well-being of their clients. More than simply treating a disease or illness, health social workers take a holistic, psychosocial approach for providing the best overall care possible for the client and their family.

McFarlin said social workers play a key role in the quality of care for clients in hospitals and clinics. Social workers see a client through the entire trajectory of their illness – from diagnosis to treatment to recovery and beyond. Social Work Month also provides an opportunity for social workers to highlight the essential role they play in alleviating some of America’s most difficult problems.

Social workers work in such settings as: child and juvenile services, aging, mental health, child welfare, cancer, adolescent health, criminal justice, HIV/AIDS, family violence, school social work substance abuse treatment, legal services, adoptions, mental health services, crisis intervention programs, family service agencies, public health agencies, hospitals, aging services, domestic violence programs, hospices,

schools, developmental disabilities services, immigration service and community action agencies.

At SWOSU, the student Social Work Organization is involved in numerous activities throughout the year, which benefits nursing homes, children's agencies and other charitable organizations. The student association is an active group of students that seek social work as a profession. Gregston serves as the faculty sponsor of the SWA.

Information about social work education and the DHS program is available by calling SWOSU at 580.774.7087.