Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The Management Imperative:

Displacement, Dynamics, and Directions Forward for Training Social Workers as Managers

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2015

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Abstract

Management's place within social work has long been of concern. Social workers are being displaced as managers due to competition from other professions, poor regard for their skills as managers, declining student interest, and weak graduate training. This article examines the displacement, discussing its impact on organizational mission, values, and culture; social work's future; graduates' readiness to take on management tasks; and career and compensation advancement. These concerns motivated the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis to implement a requirement that master of social work students complete three credits of concentration-level management coursework. We explore this change and others in a case that provides directions forward for training social workers as managers.

Key words: *Council on Social Work Education, curriculum, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, human service organization, management, master of social work, National Association of Social Workers, skills, social work, training, Washington University in St. Louis*

For decades, the place of management within social work education and the social work profession has been a matter of concern. In particular, authors have focused on the ability of social workers to obtain top management and leadership positions, a decline in the number of social workers occupying those positions, and the need to improve social work management education (Brown, 2008; Friedman, 2008; Gibelman & Schervish, 1997; Hoefer, 2009; Patti, 1984; Perlmutter, 2006; Watson & Hoefer, 2014; Wuenschel, 2006). This article explores the implications and dynamics of the decline as well as the imperative for its reversal. It also examines a case in which one master of social work (MSW) program's approach serves as an example of a possible path forward.

Market Dynamics and the Displacement of Social Work

The literature and anecdotal data note the limited presence of social workers in top human-service management positions. Poor perceptions of social workers as managers and preferences for individuals with alternate training are seen as important factors. In a study of the training and career paths of 99 nonprofit executives with advanced degrees in San Francisco, Suarez (2010) found that 25 had management degrees. The most common of those degrees were in business (nine), public administration (five), and nonprofit management (four). Five of the executives held an MSW degree. Claiborne's (2004) study of 20 international nongovernmental organizations found that social workers represented only 5% of top administrators and 9% of country directors even though they held 95% of the program director positions. In a study of public social-service agency directors, Brown (2008) found that only 57% had any master's level education and that fewer than half of them held an MSW. Thirteen percent held a master's degree in business. Few other sources of data

are available on the education and career tracks of human service executives. In this paper, we distinguish executives in human service organizations from executives in all nonprofits.[1]

Several factors lend credibility to anecdotal data on the declining presence of social workers in top human-service management roles. One such factor is the competition that social workers face from candidates with other sorts of backgrounds. As the number of related programs has grown, increased competition has come from individuals with such degrees as the master of business administration (MBA), the master of public administration, and the master of nonprofit management. Mirabella (2007) reported that the number of institutions offering graduate courses in nonprofit management increased by 26% from 1996 to 2006. In addition, the blurring of former distinctions among the for-profit, nonprofit, and public sectors (Ginsberg & Gibelman, 2009, p. 82; Kramer, 2000) may diminish the perceived need for sector-specific training. The rise in social entrepreneurship is related to this, as are trends of corporate social responsibility and business schools' focus on social impact (Blackman, 2011).

Although some recent research suggests a slight improvement in perceptions of social workers as managers, to a great degree, social workers have been seen as poor managers, especially as compared with individuals who hold other degrees (Hoefer, 1993, 2003; Patti, 1984, 2000; Watson & Hoefer, 2014). Hoefer, Watson, and Preble (2013) surveyed 49 board chairs of human service organizations with budgets in excess of $500,000. Forty-four percent viewed the MBA as the best degree to prepare an individual for an executive position with a human services nonprofit; 26% chose the MSW, 15% chose the master of public administration, and 8% chose a joint degree in social work and public administration. The common reason given for choosing the MBA was that the organization is a business and needs to be managed as one. Even among those board chairs who chose the MSW, few expressed confidence that someone with an MSW could handle the business aspects of the organization without additional supports.

Again, the literature examining these adverse perceptions is limited, and few studies compare the management effectiveness of social workers with that of counterparts trained otherwise. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that impressions exist concerning the professional characteristics and tendencies of social workers: weak financial and business skills, lack of budget discipline, poor or lackadaisical personnel management, limited use of data, and acceptance of mediocre outcomes. Gummer (1987, p. 28) observed: "There is a perception among many in the public arena that social workers have neither the technical skills nor the personal traits needed to manage large public organizations." Considered deficient in certain areas of knowledge and skill, and perceived as lacking characteristics needed to make hard decisions under conditions of scarcity, "we are seen as a profession preoccupied with consensual decision making, concern for process rather than outcome, and overly identified with the recipients of service" (Gummer, 1987, p. 29).

Perceptions of social workers may also reflect popular opinions about nonprofit management in general. Eisenberg (1997) identified a variety of factors that he believed increased pressure on nonprofits. They included conflicts of interest, scandals, and other unethical behavior; a lack of accountability; ineffectiveness of numerous nonprofit boards; excessive CEO compensation; loss of

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[1] As we use it, the term *human service organization* encompasses the wide variety of settings in which social workers may be employed. Those settings may include traditional, nonprofit social-service agencies as well as nonprofit, governmental, and for-profit organizations meeting a variety of social, health, community, and educational needs (Patti, 2009, p. 4).

vision; and what he termed the failure of nonprofit leadership. These concerns have contributed to the promulgation of standards of nonprofit management, such as Independent Sector's Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice (Independent Sector, n.d.), and to the proliferation of nonprofit rating organizations.

Social Work Training

As we noted above, a number of authors have recognized these trends and explored the extent to which social work education, particularly at the master's level, has prepared graduates to compete for and succeed in human-service management and leadership roles. Graduate social-work education has been the subject of studies identifying concerns and perceived deficiencies that contribute to negative perceptions of social work management as well as to declining student interest and declining access to top positions. Particular issues include standards for accreditation and licensure as well as negative attitudes toward management among faculty, but program-level limitations also abound. Curricula devote limited attention to management and leadership topics, faculty have little interest in or expertise on such topics, and there are few practicum opportunities (Austin & Kruzich, 2004; Ezell, Chernesky, & Healy, 2004; Hoefer, 2009; Mor Barak, Travis, & Bess, 2004; Rothman, 2013; Wilson & Lau, 2011). By way of illustration, we note that only 9.7% of 217 certificate programs offered in master of social work degree programs were in nonprofit or human services management (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2014).

These factors may contribute to and reflect reduced student interest in management training and careers (Ezell et al., 2004). For example, 69 accredited master's degree programs offer a management concentration (CSWE, n.d.), but CSWE (2012) reported that only 2.4% of MSW students focused their studies on management or administration. An additional 2.7% of MSW students in the United States chose concentrations that combined community planning and organization with management. In 2013, just 1.5% of master's students were in management-oriented field placements (CSWE, 2014). Moreover, in a 2012 survey of MSW alumni of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work (hereafter, Brown School) at Washington University in St. Louis, respondents reported limited exposure to training in management and leadership (Washington University in St. Louis, 2012). Asked about preferences concerning professional development offerings, the surveyed alumni, particularly recent graduates, indicate that they were most interested in courses or workshops on management skills. Numerous alumni expressed the wish that they had acquired management and leadership training during their graduate education. On a positive note, a study of recent graduates in one MSW program found that graduates who took the macro concentration, and whose first jobs were in macro roles, felt adequately prepared (Choi, Urbanski, Fortune, & Rogers, 2015), though the authors did not distinguish alumni who held management roles from counterparts with other macro roles.

Implications of These Dynamics for the Social Work Profession

The trends elaborated above have had profound implications for the profession. It is thus important to examine the place of management in social work and the nature of social work management education. It is also important to examine the impact on the services provided by human service organizations.

Insufficient training in organizational behavior, management, and leadership can adversely affect graduates' subsequent work experience and careers in several ways. Organizational behavior, power

relationships, group dynamics, human resource management, board governance, and variations in leadership style are critically important elements in management. Students who lack adequate understanding of them may find themselves disadvantaged in negotiating the workplace. Moreover, they may be poorly prepared to critically assess job opportunities for personal fit and potential for success, or to understand best practices such as normative and constructive tactics for conflict resolution.

Irrespective of causes, these realities undermine the ability of social work graduates to obtain management and leadership positions. As Patti (2000, p. 18) noted, "If graduate education has not instilled ways of thinking about organizational issues and managerial strategies for addressing them, if it has not socialized graduates to the expectations of managers, if it has not imparted technical skills and language, then potential employers are not likely to perceive graduates as credible candidates for management jobs."

Despite students' initial career aspirations and questions about the adequacy of graduate preparation, it has been commonly observed that social work graduates generally assume management functions within 2 to 3 years of graduation (Ginsberg, 2008). These may include supervisory responsibilities, budget management, volunteer management, fundraising, and work with boards and board committees. Zippay and Demone (2011) followed 19 cohorts of social work graduates from one state university, tracking them for 2 years after graduation. Many students who focused on direct practice during their graduate training reported having management responsibilities. On average across the sample, 31% in program development, 28% in supervision, 26% engaged in administration, 24% in program planning, and 21% in program evaluation. Of those students who focused on macro practice during their training, 68% engaged in administration (broadly defined), 58% in program development, 56% in program planning, 54% in supervision, and 43% in program evaluation. Another study tracked graduates over the first 9 to 15 months after graduation (Choi et al., 2015). The authors found that just under two thirds of macro concentration graduates obtained their first jobs in macro practice. Among graduates who changed jobs during that time frame, there was less migration to macro positions than expected. Most graduates initially employed in direct practice had taken new direct practice positions. However, as noted previously, the authors did not distinguish graduates whose primary interest was in management from counterparts whose primary interest was in other macro roles. Neither did they track whether direct practice graduates assumed specific, but limited, management roles. The authors speculated that restricted management-career ladders may reflect the adverse factors noted in this paper, and that curricula may need to provide more training on management, business, and entrepreneurship skills.

Throughout their careers, many social workers have significant management responsibilities irrespective of their primary role. A survey by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2009) found that, on average, social workers devote 18% of their time to administration or management; 5% to supervision; and a cumulative 7% to functions including planning, project management, fundraising, and grant writing. Another study found that 20% of licensed social workers devote 20 hours or more per week to management (Center for Health Workforce Studies, 2006).

The survey of MSW alumni from the Brown School found that 27% of graduates held a primary role in management or administration and that 57% had held such a role at some point in their career. Additionally, 19% listed program development and administration (including volunteer

coordination) as their primary role, 9% listed human resources, 7% listed fundraising, and 6% listed entrepreneur (respondents checked all categories that applied; Washington University in St. Louis, 2012).

Performance may suffer as unprepared graduates assume early-career management roles, and lasting implications may follow. This can threaten their personal job security. Unfortunately, many human-service organizations neither provide nor pay for continuing professional education that could compensate for lack of graduate preparation. The lack of training may also suppress the graduate's potential for career advancement and growth in compensation, which typically comes through promotion to management positions. Although NASW members reported overall satisfaction with their work; approximately half also reported dissatisfaction with their salary and career mobility (NASW, 2009). Reduced career mobility might lead to early departures from the field.

Lack of preparation has repercussions on other levels. As they transition into their first management role, clinical and direct service workers may experience stress; challenges to their self-concept and professional identity; role and value conflicts; feelings of loss; and managerial performance problems. Knee (2014) summarized research on role transition, describing how well-developed direct-practice approaches may be misapplied in new management roles. The consequences of poor skills may reverberate through the organization, affecting services as well as the performance and morale of others. Moreover, weak performance further tarnishes the image of social workers as managers.

On a larger level, the profession as a whole is adversely affected by the declining presence of social workers in top positions and by their lack of formal management training. The profession's ability to shape services and agendas erodes as social workers in top management are replaced or displaced by graduates of business, public administration, and nonprofit management programs. These factors likely reinforce the low status, negative images, and frequent misperceptions of the social work profession. Moreover, they contribute to a lack of public appreciation and recognition for the breadth of social work, its unique competencies, and the specialized training required for competent practice (Gibelman, 2004; Perlmutter, 2006). Such realities and perceptions may further depress the already low number of social work students initially seeking management careers. They may also motivate early-career college graduates with interests in human services to seek an MBA or nonprofit management degree rather than an MSW, opting for choices that seem to offer greater potential for career advancement (Murray, 1993; Preston, 2010). Taken together, such factors as displacement, poor image, and limited student interest could fuel a vicious cycle, resulting in even fewer social workers in management positions.

More importantly, the diminished presence of social workers in top management and leadership roles within human service organizations may adversely affect the direction of organizational mission, strategy, values, and ethics, as well as the application of social work knowledge and practice principles to service delivery (Moran, Frans, & Gibson, 1995). Much of the knowledge and skill involved in management and leadership is applicable to multiple professional fields. However, management and leadership in human services require recognition of the unique, special, and contextual factors that shape those services (Friedman, 2008; Healy, 2002; Watson & Hoefer, 2014; Wuenschel, 2006).

Patti (2009) identifies several factors that form the particular context of human service management. He notes heavy reliance on third-party financing; on the skill, commitment, judgment, and discretion of

frontline workers; and on service technologies that lack highly predictable consumer outcomes. He also observes that human service management is marked by the participation of consumers in the change process, the moral nature of the work and competing ethical imperatives; the obligation to operate in an environment shaped by multiple constituencies; the role of advocacy; and the need for collaboration. To this list, Hasenfeld (2010) adds the emotional and gendered nature of human services.

A study by Healy (2002) illuminates this context. She interviewed 34 nonprofit human-service managers who work in Australia and were identified by peers as progressive (i.e., as managers who promote social justice). She found that, although the managers worked in diverse contexts, most identified two core themes in their management practice: the importance of social justice principles and the importance of involving stakeholders in the management of human services through participatory and consultative approaches. She also found that social justice principles are associated with a dual focus on the individual and structural contexts of social disadvantage. This finding is consistent with social work's person-in-environment approach and with its commitment to social policy advocacy. The managers in Healy's study strongly emphasized the need to develop collaborative and trusting relationships outside their organization.

Additional factors are found to shape the context of human services. High reliance on volunteers frequently distinguishes nonprofits from other types of organizations. Moreover, the human service context requires cultural competency. This entails a strong commitment to respect, understand, and work with individuals of diverse cultures and perspectives. Such work requires this commitment at the levels of direct practice, the organization, and the community (Iglehart, 2009).

In recent years, a number of contextual changes may have further disadvantaged social workers and adversely affected the delivery of human services. These include changes in government welfare policy; increased for-profit competition; blurring of sectoral lines; heightened demands for accountability, efficiency, and application of business skills; and the rise of social entrepreneurship (Baines, 2006; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Healy, 2002). Moreover, Baines (2006, p. 199) notes the effects of the growth of "New Public Management," with its emphasis on standardization, quantification, and production. He argues that the trend shapes the context by displacing an ethic of caring, eroding professional discretion, and decreasing the quality of service. Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) likewise argue that adopting the methods and values of the market undermines the organization's not-for-profit role as value guardian, service provider and advocate, and social capital builder. Patti (2009) suggests that these changes may disempower service recipients and lead agencies to select only those clients who will enable them to meet performance metrics. Healy (2002) observes that these market forces elevate concerns about how senior managers are trained and may result in further marginalization of social workers from management. Social work, she suggests, should develop coherent management approaches that are relevant in this new environment, but the profession should also embrace its specific contributions to human service management.

Upper echelons theory provides insights that may prove useful for the development of such approaches. It holds that executives act on their personalized interpretations of the strategic issues they face (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). These interpretations are shaped by education, prior experience in the organization or field, and other factors. Thus, training matters because it shapes the manner in which executives learn to frame and evaluate issues. It ultimately shapes how they decide on courses of action. Rawls, Ullrich, and Nelson (1975) argue that, due to

differences in MBA students' personality characteristics, values, and motives, business schools should provide different training to those intending to enter or reenter the nonprofit sector.

Hoefer (2009, p. 487) argues that social work education should position the MSW as the preferred degree for managers at all levels of human service organizations. To achieve this, Patti (1984, p. 22) has argued, "It is necessary to fashion a model of management which is indigenous to social welfare and committed to preserving its integrity: one that reaffirms and maintains the progressive agenda that has traditionally been sought out by this institutional sector." We believe that this model and the requisite training are best developed within schools of social work. Failure to train our students in this way may leave us wondering, "Who will be charting the course for best practices in social work agency management?" (Wilson & Lau, 2011, p. 325)

Developments in Social Work Training

Although voices have repeatedly called upon the profession and schools of social work to address the lack of management training in program curricula, organized and sustained institutional efforts have recently become more visible. The 2010 Social Work Congress adopted a series of 10 Imperatives for the Next Decade, and two speak directly to the issue: "Infuse models of sustainable business and management practice in social work education and practice," and "Integrate leadership training in social work curricula at all levels" (NASW, 2010, n.p.). In 2004, the National Network for Social Work Managers (now the Network for Social Work Management) promulgated a set of curricular standards and competencies for social work management, synthesizing business models with the social work code of ethics (Friedman, 2006). The network offers a Human-Services Management Competency certificate to graduates of social work schools that meet its educational standards. The network has also increased its visibility and activity through the establishment of local chapters, its annual conference, a journal, online webinars and blogs, and mentoring programs (https://socialworkmanager.org/).

The Association for Community Organization and Social Administration's (n.d.) Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work has engaged a diverse group of academics and practitioners to restore the position of macro practice within social work education, practice, and research. A framework document produced for the special commission's Work Group on Knowledge Delivery, Education Development, and Curricular Support called for greater integration of organizational management, leadership, and organizational change content in the social work curriculum (Fernando, Esaki, & Rosenberg, 2015). One approach to such an integration could be to introduce changes that link micro and macro practice, knowledge, and skills. Those changes would better prepare students for subsequent management responsibilities (Ezell et al., 2004). Watson and Hoefer (2014) advocated requiring schools to include administration content in social work's foundation curriculum. They also endorsed a reconceptualized approach to teaching management skills, arguing that the approach should emphasize business aspects such as financial management, human-resource management, and strategy. Given CSWE requirements and already packed curricula, they advocate incorporating administration-related assignments within existing courses. For example, policy-related courses could include assignments on equal-opportunity hiring requirements or the evolution of nonprofit accountability requirements.

A Case Example of Curriculum Change

Against this background and the findings of the 2012 alumni survey (noted above), the Brown School adopted a variety of changes within the context of a broad MSW curriculum review. These changes build on the strengths of the program, which has always had a substantial macro orientation. For example, the Brown School has offered a 12-credit Management Specialization since 1984. The specialization is compatible with each of the six MSW concentrations, which span a range of fields (e.g., children and youth, social and economic development). Additionally, in 2011, the Brown School became the first school of social work in the United States to offer a 12-credit specialization in Social Entrepreneurship. The school has long offered three-credit management courses. Forming the foundation for these two specializations, the courses address such topics as organizational behavior, fundraising, financial management, social entrepreneurship, human resource management, leadership, and governance.

With the class that entered the MSW program in fall 2014, the Brown School began requiring that all MSW students take three credits of advanced concentration-level coursework in management and leadership. This extends the management and leadership content in the required foundation-level course: Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities. Students have flexibility in meeting this requirement and may select from a range of three-credit and one-credit courses.

Brown School Management and Leadership Courses as of 2015–2016 Academic Year

Three-credit courses
- Management and Leadership of Organizations[2]
- Managing People
- Budgeting and Fiscal Management[3]
- Leadership and Governance
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Implementing and Evaluating Evidence-Based Practice
- Marketing, Development and Community Relations

One-credit skill labs
- Budget Management Skill Lab
- Fundraising Design and Management Skill Lab
- Grant Writing for Foundations Skill Lab
- Grant Writing for Government Skill Lab
- Managing and Leading Teams and People Skill Lab
- Volunteer Management Skill Lab
- Program & Project Management Skill Lab
- Performance Management and Continuous Quality Improvement Skill Lab
- Strategic Planning and Execution Skill Lab

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[2] The Management Specialization requires completion of three courses: Management and Leadership of Organizations, Budgeting and Fiscal Management, and Managing People.

[3] The Management and Social Entrepreneurship Specializations require completion of the Budgeting & Fiscal Management course.

Concurrent with the introduction of the new management and leadership requirement, the school significantly expanded offerings of one-credit skill labs, which are courses designed to develop marketable, career-oriented abilities. Skill labs can be taught in numerous ways, including 5- and 15-week formats as well as weekend sessions. Each skill lab requires 15 hours of classroom contact. Thus, social work students may fulfill the management and leadership requirement through one of the traditional three-credit courses or through a combination of three skill labs. In several cases, students have a choice of a three-credit course or a one-credit skill lab on a similar topic. For example, students who select the three-credit Managing People course are exposed to the full range of human resource issues, including leadership theory on management style, supervision of both paid and volunteer workers, use of teams, performance management, and legal issues in personnel management. Within the skill lab format, the focus is primarily on concrete supervision skills. Additionally, a new three-credit course, Implementing and Evaluating Evidence-Based Practice, was introduced in spring 2015 and focuses on the organizational dynamics of implementing such practice. The class has particular appeal to direct-practice students. Although some tenured faculty teach these courses, many are taught by full-time professors of practice or adjunct faculty, most whom are retired executives with extensive experience and long-standing ties to the school (e.g., the former head of United Way of Greater St. Louis).

The new degree requirement and expanded course offerings in leadership and management augment the Brown School's long-standing strengths in social work macro-practice areas. They also connect to new curricular programs such as a certificate in Affordable Housing and Mixed Income Community Management, a new specialization in Social Policy, and a collaboration with Fudan University to offer a dual degree: master of social policy and master of arts. The historic focus on macro practice was reinforced in the school's long-range vision plan, *Impact 2020* (Washington University in St. Louis, 2008), which identified the development of health- and human-service leadership as one of six key initiatives. In 2008, the school's focus expanded to encompass public health, with a strong focus on policy and population-level issues. The Brown School now offers a master's in public health and a doctoral degree in public health sciences. Several Brown School centers, such as the Center for Social Development, the Center for Public Health Systems Science, and the Social System Design Lab, have a strong macro focus. The Brown School's capacity is further enhanced by a robust professional-development department. The department has extensive management and leadership offerings, an expanded focus on executive education, and partnerships with the university's John M. Olin Business School and Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary and Entrepreneurial Studies.

Conclusion

Several dynamics interact in a reinforcing manner to contribute to the displacement of social workers from top management and leadership positions. They include poor perceptions of social workers as managers, inadequate and limited training in management and leadership, and limited student interest. If the profession seeks to reverse this trend, social work must encourage students to acquire the management and leadership skills they will most likely need; help them make the connection between management and their commitment to social justice, so that they will aspire to leadership positions; deepen and strengthen management and leadership education; and demonstrate that social workers can be highly competent leaders.

By virtue of their role and authority, chief executives and senior managers are positioned to have the greatest impact on organizational mission and culture, core values, strategy, program design, and decisions about resource deployment. Moreover, these leaders are most likely to hold responsibility for policy practice and to have access to policymakers. If we want social work values, ethics, and knowledge to shape human service organizations, the services they provide, and the larger social policies, then social workers need to be in top positions.

Successful management and leadership in the human services demands diverse knowledge and a nuanced set of skills. The social work profession is uniquely positioned to contribute both. The basic training offered in social work programs provides foundational knowledge of organizations and communities. However, if the profession wants to prevent its further displacement from leadership in the services it can largely be credited with developing, then changes must be made in advanced, graduate social-work curricula. This change is complicated and requires faculty leadership.

The faculty of the profession must see advanced training in management and leadership as imperative for the continued influence of the profession and the career success of our students. There is reason to be optimistic about the resurgence of interest in macro practice among faculty from a diverse range of educational institutions (see the membership of the Special Commission on Macro Practice for the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration, 2014). Yet, the task of undertaking the necessary change actually rests with the faculty of each individual social work program. One case example has been offered here on how to integrate advanced management and leadership content in the curriculum. In this example, the school built upon the strengths of the program, and the effort was galvanized by resounding alumni evidence that more training was needed.

How will other schools proceed? Strengths and needs will determine some choices, but other programs might consider a range of options such as revising the foundation-level macro course to include more organizational content or adding electives or practicum sites that provide management exposure. In addition, schools may focus on their continuing-education and professional-development programs. It is important that these efforts incorporate evidence-based approaches in design and content as well as in assessment of enrollment and graduates' career trajectories.

In conclusion, the sounding bells have been rung by prior scholars for years (Brown, 2008; Friedman, 2006, 2008; Hoefer, 2009; Patti, 1984, 2000; Perlmutter, 2006; Watson & Hoefer, 2014; Wuenschel, 2006). But this call is different. It is undergirded by data, which show that social work has lost ground to the point of being marginalized from leadership. Washington University offers a curricular response to these data. However, larger, professional level responses are needed. Unless urgent action is taken, ground may not be regained. The ground is tended and cultivated by social work professional associations. Although new efforts have been undertaken to advance the social work management imperative, the vanguards of the profession should champion the cause: CSWE and NASW could make management the focus of conferences, workshops, and advocacy efforts. These efforts could also include public campaigns on the crucial roles that social workers play in management of human services. Social work faculty could develop curricula and pedagogies to be studied and shared across programs. Social work doctoral programs could actively recruit and encourage future faculty to develop management scholarship. There are diverse and systemic strategies to be pursued. These strategies will advance social-work management training, research, and social impact, but social work must first embrace its management imperative.

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Suggested citation

Rosenberg, B., & McBride, A. M. (2015). *The management imperative: Displacement, dynamics, and directions forward for training social workers as managers* (CSD Working Paper No. 15-41). St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Center for Social Development.

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