

University of Utah College of Social Work Undergraduate Certificate in Social Justice Advocacy



The University of Utah has an admirable record of requiring a diversity course for completion of an undergraduate degree. The courses are widely available and, many times, are relevant and pertinent to the student's major, minor, and/or interests. Many students attest to the importance of the inclusion of these courses in any and every major. However, knowing is not enough; there must also be advocacy and action. Students, upon completing a diversity class, wonder what they can do with this new-found consciousness and knowledge.

On March 3, 2014, the University of Utah College of Social Work College Council voted unanimously to support the Undergraduate Certificate in Social Justice Advocacy. The comments from faculty were indicative of the importance the College places on this initiative.

Undergraduate Studies data show that 12 students (out of 31) in the last six years have put together majors that focus on social justice through the Bachelor of University Studies program. This is 39% of University Studies majors. These majors incorporate many classes that focus on diversity, indicating a deep interest and commitment to understanding the complex dynamics of oppression and privilege in societies. A certificate that focuses on how one can advocate for action and change can be useful and effective.

Every discipline and profession can incorporate an advocacy piece to their mission goals. Every individual can advocate in her or his everyday life. There is a need to have options, knowledge, and models that help individuals feel knowledgeable, comfortable, and able to do so. An interdisciplinary approach and curriculum are vital and can be offered and implemented through this certificate.

Beyond Diversity: Getting to Social Justice Advocacy: The courses that are defined as diversity courses are filled with important knowledge and perspectives that most students do not get in the public K-12 school system. The information presented is often new and can provide critical incidents and epiphanies. Knowing the history and present circumstances for our diverse populations is necessary and provides an understanding that can move us to equality and equity. However, once students develop this critical consciousness, they also express desires to know what they can do with this new found awareness. The certificate in Social Justice Advocacy offers them the knowledge and hands-on skill sets that can create advocates, advocacy, and change. This knowledge and these skills are imperative in moving toward social change.

This certificate in social justice advocacy would include several approaches through multidisciplinary coursework. This would give students, our future professionals, a broad range of knowledge and options in how to strive for and achieve equity and change. Because we are becoming more global in our interactions and more and more diverse in society, there are tensions, fears, and a desire to maintain the status quo, and there can be no social justice without action. This certificate will give individuals an education that focuses on the opportunities to use a combination of multiple approaches to get to change and social justice. This provides the individual with varying degrees of skills where one feels competent and able to actively address the issues of inequality and change.

Contact: Irene M. Ota, irene.ota@socwk.utah.edu, 801-581-8455, SW 228
Lam Nguyen, lam.nguyen@socwk.utah.edu, 801-585-1596, SW 210

Certificate in Social Justice Advocacy Program Curriculum

REQUIRED COURSES	Title	Credit Hrs
<i>Must Take All Courses in this Section</i>	SW 3550 - Social Diversity and Cultural Understanding (DV)	4
	ENVST 3365 – Environmental Justice	3
	GNDR 3570 - Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBTQ Studies	3
	POLS 3700 - Urban Politics	3
	POLS 5324 - Disability Studies X-list w/ OC TH 635 and 6350 PADMN 635 and 6350	3
	SW 5535 - Social Justice Advocacy Skills and Techniques -- CAPSTONE CLASS	3
Sub-Total		19 required

ELECTIVE COURSES	Title	Credit Hrs
Choose One	SW 3564 – Native Americans in Modern Society: Implications for Social Policy OR SW 3720 – Immigration & Resettlement: Interdisciplinary & Community OR SW 4100 – Global Community Based Research (IR)	3
Choose One	Comm 3030 – Communication and Social Responsibility (CW) (HE) OR Comm 3330 – Negotiation and Interviewing	3
Choose One	Comm 3140 – Dangerous Liaisons in Relationships & Organizations OR Comm 3170 – Introduction to Organizational Communication OR Comm 5150 – Dialogue and Cultural Studies OR Comm 5200 – Persuasion and Political Communication OR Ethnc 5800 – Theories and Research on Social Inequality	3
Sub-Total		9 elective

Total Number of Credits	28
--------------------------------	-----------