TITLE: Has Graduate Social Work Education Made Progress in Promoting A Critical Approach In Mental Health Practice?

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PROJECT ABSTRACT:

The aim of the study is to gauge if mental health education in Social Work has incorporated the latest scientific research in mental health regarding the concepts of mental disorder, reliability and validity of psychiatric diagnoses, the validity of biological etiology, and drug treatment. We hope to compare these results with that of our previous study, published in the *Journal of Social Work Education* (2003). That study found that Social Work education has followed the explanations of biomedical psychiatry regarding problematic human behavior without offering to our graduate students those scientific findings that contradict its conventional claims, thereby limiting their ability to independently assess best mental health practice. In the fall of 2010, we identified courses where psychopathology including diagnostic assessment and the DSM were taught from all graduate schools of social work listed in the top-82 of the annual U.S. News and World Report rankings (2008). In the spring of 2011, after having received IRB approval, we searched course schedules at each institution and began requesting syllabi directly from MSW directors and instructors. Syllabi collection continued during the Fall of 2011 and Spring of 2012. We searched online to find

any publicly available syllabi and procured some syllabi through informal networking. We ended up with 95 syllabi, with at least one syllabi from 39 of the 50 top ranked graduate schools. Through content analysis we will evaluate whether social work graduate education has become more rigorous and thereby more scientific in the last decade. The analysis is scheduled to be completed in spring 2013