



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

**CSWE**

Alexandria, VA

## **President**

### **POSITION SPECIFICATION**

Fall 2011

**WITT / KIEFFER**

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

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The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the preeminent organization convening and representing social work education in the United States and its territories Puerto Rico and Guam. As the recognized accrediting body for social work programs at the baccalaureate and masters levels nationally, CSWE is in a singular position to catalyze discussions both within the academy and at the federal level regarding the future of social work education.

To lead the organization into the future and to play a primary, visible role in increasing its impact, CSWE seeks a president to serve as its chief executive officer. Reporting to the board of directors and managing a budget of \$5 million and a staff of more than 30, the president will lead CSWE during a period of significant opportunity. As higher education becomes increasingly visible as a matter of national and international policy, CSWE is well positioned to play a principal role in discussions on such issues as accreditation, changing modes of delivery, globalization, student financial aid and indebtedness, and academic freedom. The president of CSWE, which is headquartered in Alexandria, VA, will work closely with the board and membership to add the voice of social work education to these national and international discussions.

To accomplish these ends – and to run a large and financially stable organization with a robust tradition of inclusive governance – the president must be an accomplished leader with a proven track record of securing external funds. Essential to success will be a background of leading institutions toward the attainment of their strategic goals and a history of productive working relationships with governing boards. Knowledge of the issues and challenges facing higher education nationally and globally and the ability to provide forceful, effective communications and advocacy regarding these issues is essential. Ideally, the president will have an earned advanced degree and a social work degree and should be grounded in the core values of social work through a significant professional history in social work education. Moreover, the ability to lead effectively within a national membership organization is paramount.

In summary, the president of the Council on Social Work Education will both lead the organization toward the fulfillment of its potential as the voice for social work education and will have the opportunity to make a substantive contribution to the national and international conversation on the future of social work education and higher education.

Recruitment will continue until the position is filled. Information about how to nominate a candidate or to apply for this opportunity may be found later in this document in the section entitled “Procedure for Candidacy.”

## **THE COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW**

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The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is a non-profit national higher education association representing approximately 3,000 individual members as well as more than 700 accredited baccalaureate and master's programs of professional social work education. Founded in 1952, CSWE has developed into an organization of partnerships including educators, social work programs, social service agencies providing field experiences for students, social work licensing boards, and the larger social work practice community. CSWE is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States and its territories of Puerto Rico and Guam.

The purpose of CSWE is to provide national leadership and collective action designed to ensure the preparation and continued growth of competent and committed social work professionals. This includes promoting and maintaining the quality of social work educational programs and stimulating the development of knowledge, practice, and service effectiveness designed to promote social justice and to further community and individual well-being.

### **Mission Statement**

CSWE aims to promote and strengthen the quality of social work education through preparation of competent social work professionals by providing national leadership and a forum for collective action. CSWE pursues this mission through setting and maintaining policy and program standards, accrediting bachelor's and master's degree programs in social work, promoting research and faculty development, and advocating for social work education.

### **Board of Directors**

CSWE's Board of Directors meets at a minimum two times a year and serves as the primary governance and policy body of the Council on Social Work Education. The board oversees and must approve all CSWE programs, plans, and budgets, and is responsible for the activities and accountability of all governance and program units and commissions. This responsibility includes making the final decision to adopt or reject the accreditation standards and educational policies constructed, respectively, by the Commission on Accreditation and the Commission on Educational Policy. The board also undertakes new programs, reviews resolutions passed at the annual program meeting, shapes the affirmative action plan, establishes membership dues, and conducts the president's annual performance evaluation review. Finally, the board is responsible for reporting to the membership on its activities.

### **Governance**

The direct vote of full members and an elected Board of Directors govern CSWE. The Board is composed of members from across the country and represents educational programs, faculty, practitioners, diverse ethnic and racial groups, and private citizens. CSWE's membership

includes individuals from the entire field of social work: graduate and undergraduate educational programs, public agencies, voluntary agencies, social work educators, field instructors, and other interested persons. Members volunteer their knowledge and time by serving on CSWE commissions, councils, and task forces.

More information about the governance of CSWE, including those portions of its bylaws defining the role of the board and a listing of councils and commissions, may be found on its website at <http://www.cswe.org/About/governance/15558.aspx>.

## **Accreditation**

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) is responsible for developing accreditation standards that define competent preparation and ensuring that social work programs meet them. In accordance with the requirements of the Council's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), CSWE's Office of Social Work Accreditation (OSWA) administers a multi-step accreditation process that involves program self-studies, site visits, and COA reviews.

CHEA renews its recognition of CSWE as the profession's accrediting body at regular intervals. The next renewal is due in 2013, and work toward this reaffirmation is well underway.

Given the autonomous nature of COA decision-making, the CSWE president has no direct role in the accreditation process for any institution. Through the appointment of the director of the Office of Accreditation, he or she is responsible for the overall integrity of the work of the Commission on Accreditation and on occasion organizes and participates in discussions of accreditation at the policy level. Accreditation standards are reviewed, revised, and approved, as noted above, on a seven- to eight-year cycle. The next planned process of review and revision will take place in 2015.

More information on the Council on Social Work Education, including recent annual reports that include financial data and outcomes, may be found at its Web site: [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org).

## **THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT**

The president of CSWE, who is appointed by and accountable to the board of directors, is the chief executive officer of the organization. She or he sits as a voting member on the board of directors and in collaboration with the board is responsible for the overall vision, direction, and operations of the organization and the promotion of social work education at the national and international levels. She or he will foster high ethical and institutional standards and successfully engage volunteer leaders and members in organizational activities.

The president serves as the central and publically visible representative of the organization and provides leadership in cultivating and strengthening relationships and partnerships with other higher education associations and other social work organizations, including those representing research, policy, and practice. In addition, the president is the organization's primary spokesperson in all matters related to public policy and advocacy.

The president is responsible for organizational operations including staff leadership, membership development, association finances, strategic planning, and accountability to the organization's constituents and the public at large. The president speaks for and promotes the core values of social work education and responds to the aspirations and concerns of member social work programs, staff, and affiliated groups.

It should be noted that the title "president" represents an historic change for CSWE. To this point, the organization's chief executive officer has held the title "executive director," with the title "president" reserved for the elected leader of the CSWE Board of Directors. In a bylaws modification approved by the membership in June 2010, the title was changed. The primary impetus for this development was the understanding that the organization's chief executive would have the opportunity to represent social work education in policy discussions at the highest levels of national government. To match the imprimatur of the profession, the decision was made to elevate the title of the chief executive. Thus, CSWE's next president will be its first to serve as the organization's chief executive officer. The board will henceforth be led by its "chairperson."

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP**

The following represent some of the immediate opportunities that the new president will address during the first two to three years in office. They are presented here in no particular order of priority.

### **Promote social work education**

The demand for professional social workers is very high. Factors such as high unemployment rates especially among young people and disenfranchised racial and ethnic groups, a lack of access to health care, and growing economic disparities and social injustice increase the pressure on vulnerable populations. To meet these challenges, the president will play a vital role in advocating for social work education in order to improve access to education and to graduate professional social workers from accredited social work programs both at the baccalaureate and master levels. While CSWE plays no formal role in doctoral education, its advocacy can and should have a positive impact on access to education at the doctoral level.

Central to CSWE's mission is professional and leadership development within social work education. In recent years, considerable attention has been given by the Council to this charge, and the new president will have an opportunity to continue to refine and to focus CSWE's

educational capacity and to ensure access to these opportunities. These offerings are important to the benefits of membership in the organization.

Access and diversity are primary themes for CSWE, and the president will be their champion. One example of a CSWE initiative in response to these priorities is the Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice. The mission of the center is to advance the goals of individual and community well being and social justice. As such, the center epitomizes the core mission of the social work profession, namely “to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.” (Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers)

### **Build coalitions across the social work profession**

The landscape of professional organizations across the social work profession is highly diverse. There are dozens of organizations, some large, others small, dedicated to a number of issues such as policy, advocacy, education, practice, research, and scholarship.

The variety of social work organizations is an asset of the profession as it engages many different constituencies around core issues relevant to the field, including issues of social and economic justice. At the same time, the acute challenges facing the nation and the social work profession – particularly in terms of funding, licensure, accreditation, and the employment market – require coordinated responses and a unified response on matters of national interest. Efforts to leverage the strengths of the different organizations will become critical. The president will be asked to build strong relationships with the leadership of other social work associations and related coalitions in the pursuit of collegiality and common purpose.

### **Enhance the capacity of the organization**

Led by the executive director and CSWE’s Board of Directors, the organization consolidated its finance department, created a strategic plan (please see <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=51678>), and streamlined its administration. To accomplish the latter end, the executive director undertook several innovative initiatives, including outsourcing the human resources and some of the financial functions of CSWE. Central to the accomplishments was the expansion of the organization’s activities beyond accreditation to embrace the entirety of its mission, which includes research and advocacy.

The incoming president will thus inherit an operation that is sound financially and coherent administratively. From this base, the president will assess the potential of the current organization and will work to enhance its capacity to serve its members and the social work profession.

**Diversify revenue streams**

The Council's approximately \$5 million operating budget derives principally from three sources: institutional memberships (which are tied directly to the accreditation process); individual memberships; and the overhead from grants. Thus, the president will ensure and enhance the membership totals that form the organization's most stable revenue stream. The Council recently created a membership development plan to guide this effort.

With opportunities to expand its influence and the services it provides, CSWE would benefit from multiple streams of revenue. One potential additional source of revenue would be philanthropic support. CSWE has in the past accepted gifts that have arrived over the transom, but it has no history of an infrastructure for fundraising. The president will expand the Council's fundraising efforts by committing time, effort, and prestige to engagement with potential donors and funding sources. CSWE has had some significant successes in recent years in grantsmanship, and the potential of increased support from both private foundations and the Federal government would seem highly feasible.

**Become part of the national and global conversation**

Perhaps never in the history of the United States has higher education been so visibly a part of and party to the conversation about national policy. With a myriad of issues now so much a component of the national consciousness, CSWE stands poised to play a leading role in this critical dialogue. Working with the board and membership, the president of CSWE will have the opportunity to influence policy makers as these difficult issues are resolved, building on his or her personal strengths, experience, and passions.

Of the many issues to be discussed, it will be critical that the president and the organization are heard and thus make a substantive impact on the future of accreditation. The president, working with CSWE's retained public advocacy firm, will continue to strengthen relationships with the U.S. Department of Education, CHEA, and other interested parties (e.g., the American Council on Education) and will position her- or himself and CSWE as major players in the discussion.

CSWE has also increasingly been engaged in global and international partnerships as well as conversations about social work education and higher education. The president, working with the board and its globally focused commission and councils, will participate in discussions that address human rights, and social and economic justice in international and global settings; and have opportunities to promote global awareness and collaboration on behalf of and among its membership.

## QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the candidate will have earned an advanced degree and a degree in social work. Moreover, she or he will possess a distinguished record of successful and progressively responsible administrative experience and leadership, preferably in social work education and/or higher education.

Experience in the non-profit sector, teaching, and the international arena are desirable. Experience and demonstrated effectiveness in working with boards of directors in creating and advancing organizational vision and mission are essential.

A candidate must demonstrate strong organizational and educational leadership experience that includes the ability to manage a complex organization and to work effectively with colleagues representing diverse institutions and programs. A candidate must demonstrate knowledge of the challenges and issues confronting higher education in the United States and beyond and the strategies emerging for addressing the critical issues that characterize the current educational context. The successful candidate will have demonstrated leadership in strategic planning and organizational visioning; public policy and advocacy; resource development; fiscal management; and in coalescing diverse constituents around common goals and aspirations. Last but not least, the successful candidate will value the fundamental commitment of the social work profession to its core values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

## PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

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Recruitment will continue until the position is filled. Nominations, expressions of interest, and applications (specifically, a cover letter and resume) should be submitted via email to [CSWEPresident@wittkieffer.com](mailto:CSWEPresident@wittkieffer.com). Material that cannot be emailed may be sent to:

**President**  
**Council on Social Work Education**  
c/o Witt/Kieffer  
Attention: Dennis M. Barden/Ann A. Yates  
2015 Spring Road, Suite 510  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Confidential inquiries and questions concerning this search may be directed to Dennis M. Barden at 630-575-6167 or Ann A. Yates at 651-325-7711.

Please note that, while recruitment will indeed continue until the position is filled, CSWE's National Search Committee will meet in late January 2012 to review materials and to invite candidates for interview. Those preliminary interviews for this position are scheduled for February 15 and 16, 2012 in Alexandria, VA. Finalists will meet with the CSWE board and other key constituents in Alexandria on March 2, 2012, and there is a strong presumption that the candidate of choice will formally undertake his or her responsibilities as president in July 2012.

CSWE is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, national origin, status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran, or any other classification protected by applicable anti-discrimination laws. CSWE prohibits and does not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.

It is our intention to promote the full realization of equality in opportunity and employment. It is a fundamental principle at CSWE that employment decisions are made based upon the ability of persons to perform their jobs consistent with the business needs of the Council.

This policy applies to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment including performance appraisals, benefits, compensation, disciplinary action, hiring, promotions, transfers, terminations, rehires, training, educational assistance, and working conditions. Accordingly, employment-related decisions made on behalf of the organization by an employee, consultant, or authorized representative of CSWE must be made on a non-discriminatory basis. Employees are also protected against retaliation for opposing unlawful discrimination. All CSWE employees are expected to give full support to the prevention of all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Any employee violating this policy against discrimination will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

#### Affirmative Action

CSWE maintains a written Affirmative Action Plan with goals of building a qualified workforce reflecting the composition of the community from which it draws and of ensuring that qualified minority groups, females, persons with disabilities, special disabled veterans, or veterans of the Vietnam era are introduced into the workforce, are encouraged to seek promotions, and are considered for promotional opportunities. Each employee of CSWE who participated in the hiring process will work actively to reach the goals of the Affirmative Action Plan by cooperating with outreach programs, recruiting initiatives and requirements and reporting documentation.

Human Resources is responsible for administering and monitoring CSWE's Affirmative Action Plan and the equal opportunity/affirmative action policies and procedures. Inquiries about or complaints alleging violation of CSWE's equal opportunity/affirmative action policies should be directed to Human Resources.

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The material presented in this position specification should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Council on Social Work Education documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. Naturally, while every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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