Greetings!

We would like to thank you for the work you will be undertaking in September on behalf of our students in the field. Detailed information about the structure of our program and the expectations for the field internship can be found in The Guidelines for the Field Internship which will available electronically on July 1st. Meanwhile, we have highlighted in this letter several particularly important areas for your consideration as you plan for your students’ internships.

**Advising & Support**

Each student/supervisor pair is assigned a faculty field advisor (FFA) who is a member either of our full time resident or adjunct faculty. The faculty field advisor serves as a liaison between your agency and the school, as a consultant to the student’s learning process, and is available to work with supervisors and students around any problems or concerns which may arise in the course of the internship. Students are in contact with their faculty field advisors on a monthly basis and submit several written assignments to them during the year. The faculty field advisor will visit with you and your student at the agency in both the fall and the late winter/early spring and will also be available to you as needed by phone throughout the year. You will receive the name and contact information for your assigned advisor in July. Additionally, the Director and Associate Director of Field Work, Carolyn du Bois and Katelin Lewis-Kulin, are available to you should you need or wish to be in touch at any point in the year or if there are issues or concerns that have not been resolved through contact with the FFA. Carolyn can be reached at 413/585-7987 or, via email, at cdubois@smith.edu. Katelin can be reached at 413-585-3625 or, via email, at jlewiskulin@smith.edu. Our administrative assistant and systems coordinator for field, Marybeth Stratton, is also available should you have questions about administrative matters (calendars, paperwork, due dates etc.). Marybeth can be reached at 413-585-7965 or, via email, at sswfield@smith.edu

**Caseload & Learning Assignments**

Please keep in mind that we expect students by mid-October to have built to a full caseload of between 12-15 direct service hours a week, which can be spent in a range of activities including work with groups, individuals, families and as well as outreach, clinical case management and work in the milieu.
Student learning is greatly enhanced by experience with a diverse caseload and it is extremely important for our profession that we train students to work with a range of populations. We ask that you do whatever you can to give students the opportunity to work with a racially, ethnically, and socioculturally diverse caseload. The School is fortunate to have an increasing number of students of color in our program. There have been some instances in which students of color have been given almost exclusively clients of color, in part to serve the needs of the agency. Though all students should, whenever possible, have the opportunity to work with clients of color, it is particularly important that our students of color have a diverse caseload. To give them almost exclusively clients of color, unless this reflects the composition of the community served, is to circumscribe their educational experience. We also ask that careful consideration be given when assigning cases in which a client’s primary language is other than English, again so that assignments are made that serve the student’s learning needs as well as whatever service needs the agency may have. We ask that all supervisors review with students on a regular and ongoing basis the range and composition of the student’s caseload and other learning assignments and activities. This will help supervisors hold an overview of the student’s educational experiences and will also serve to help prepare for the faculty field advisor’s visits to the agency.

**Internship Schedule**

The 2015-16 internship year runs from September 8, 2015 through April 29, 2016. Supervisors are asked to contact the field department to discuss any proposed changes to this schedule. MSW students are expected to be in the agency 30 hours a week, not including lunch time & breaks. If a student works extra hours in a given week, equivalent time should be taken off within the month; it may not be accrued and added to a holiday or to the Winter Break. Because of other work expected by Smith and because of the need of most students to be employed part time, it is very important that the agency abide by the 30-hour a week requirement. We ask supervisors to monitor with the students both formal and informal pressures which bear upon the student to be in the agency more than 30 hours. We will forward to you a field calendar which will give you information about important dates pertaining to the internship year, evaluation due dates, holidays, etc. to help in your planning.

**Process Recordings**

Each student is required to complete a minimum of two process recordings a week which should be read and responded to by the supervisor within the week in which they were completed. These process recordings serve to help students recall and reflect upon their work and provide important focus points for supervision. Students are asked to keep these process recordings in a portfolio that can be reviewed by the faculty field advisor at the fall and spring meetings.

**Minimum Supervisory Expectations**

The expectation of the School is that each intern will have a minimum of two hours of supervision weekly. These two hours are to be provided by the primary MSW supervisor and are hours that belong exclusively to each individual intern. This is extremely important as our interns are not taking classes concurrently with field and the clinical supervisor serves as the primary educator for during the internship year. While we welcome adjunct and group supervisory experiences where they are available, these should be offered in addition to the required two
hours of primary supervision. We have a very small number of agencies where the nature of the work calls for a slightly different supervisory model but these are exceptions that have been worked out on an individual basis with the School. Please note that any proposed changes in supervisory assignments or structure must be discussed with the faculty field advisor and approved by the field department prior to the start of the internship year. And finally, given the importance of the supervisory relationship we ask that whenever possible supervisors avoid taking vacation time at the very outset of the year and that they make arrangements to welcome and orient students when they first arrive.

**Interim Progress Reports & Evaluations**

Supervisors should plan to complete an interim progress report in mid-October, 2015, followed by full evaluations in December and at the end of internship in April. You will find instructions and evaluation criteria in the Guidelines and electronic copies at [www.smith.edu/ssw/field](http://www.smith.edu/ssw/field). These major evaluations are extremely important to the student’s learning and should be completed and discussed with the student by the due date noted on the field calendar.

**Student Employment**

Because of increasingly significant financial pressures, many- if not most- of our students are finding it necessary to work to supplement their financial aid awards and personal resources. The current cost of education at Smith College School for Social Work exceeds $30,000 annually, including living expenses. Financial aid awards are limited, and most students need to work to help meet their expenses. The need to work is an issue not only for social work students, but for most students pursuing graduate education, and is a reality that we must accommodate if we are to maintain student enrollments at their current levels. If an intern finds it necessary to work, we encourage that he/she be supported in seeking employment and arranging a work schedule that will not interfere with agency responsibilities. Where agency structure allows, we are supportive of a student’s effort to arrange the 30 hours within a four-day work week (Please note that three day work weeks are not permitted given our wish for students to experience a close to fulltime immersion in the work of the agency).

**Guidelines**

The [Guidelines for the Field Internship](http://www.smith.edu/ssw/field) provide detailed information about the structure and specific learning objectives for the field internship. Please review them prior to the start of the training year. Updated Guidelines will posted by July 1st on the School for Social Work’s web page at [www.smith.edu/ssw/field](http://www.smith.edu/ssw/field) with hard copies available by request.

We hope to see many of you at the upcoming Annual Field Conference in July. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Your work in the field provides the core learning experiences for our students; we thank you for all that you offer and look forward to a mutually rewarding year.