

Educational Leadership Award Nomination Dossier: Cari Gulbrandsen

Educational Leadership Philosophy Statement

My educational leadership philosophy is founded on a **relational leadership style** as described in academic scholarship. Relational leadership, as outlined by Clarke (2018) encourages me to interpret and define it for myself according to how I actualize it in my practices as an educational leader. I interpret relational leadership as balancing my focus on accountability to tasks, work quality, productivity, and timelines with nurturing collegial relationships. **Nurturing relationships** is a form of action that figures prominently in my leadership practice and is demonstrated by sincere and consistent efforts over time to build relationships on mutual respect and trust. Relationship building tends to transpire beneath the most activities in my leadership practice, yet it fulfills the potential of any project and makes shared accomplishments possible. **Shared successes** are memorable milestones in my leadership journey and validate my intentional approach to relational leadership.

My relational leadership is guided by commitment to my personal and professional values.

I actualize my fundamental personal and professional values of **trust, respect, and integrity and accountability**, by **honouring and following through on the commitments I make**, offering support to colleagues and in project work, through **vigilance in planning and monitoring**. **Professional humility** is a value that sustains my recognition that all milestones and accomplishments I associate with my leadership efforts are attributed to collective work and that my perspective is limited, biased and one of many valid perspectives. In the interprofessional and interdisciplinary contexts I serve as a leader, I balance my role as an ambassador for the University of Calgary (U of C) and the social work profession with gratitude for the contributions of university colleagues from other faculties and other health professionals that I collaborate with in social work practice. My approach to relational leadership in this regard is to seek opportunities to listen with keen interest and learn from colleagues from other disciplines and professions.

My leadership is guided by giving and receiving mentoring and collegial support.

Giving and receiving mentoring is a cornerstone of my leadership practice. A profound comment of gratitude that a BSW student recently shared with me articulated how much it meant to them that I believed in them as they embarked on developing their professional identity in a new professional world. I am deeply grateful for the gifts of mentoring that have been transformative in my own leadership development. The mentoring I offer to others is a fulfilling way to **pay forward the true gift of mentoring** and to **believe in students and colleagues in tangible ways**. The mentoring I offer includes volunteer professional supervision, providing references, and heart to heart conversations that involve the courage to talk about the realities of making one's way and thriving in an academic or social work career. I can't imagine a more important leadership function than to support the academic and career development of students and colleagues. I also **enact my belief in mentoring and collegial support** and formally support the professional development of my colleagues by serving as a primary nominator and coordinating successful nomination packages for faculty colleagues, BSW/MSW students, a sessional instructor, and a Faculty of Social Work (FSW) team who have received University Teaching and Group Leadership awards.

My relational leadership honours and responds to the holistic nature of human experience.

I am increasingly attuned to how, in any organization, institution or workplace, people bring their whole selves to their work. Relational leadership means **looking beyond individuals' roles and titles to get to know people** on a human level, and to reciprocate by sharing who I am as a person beyond my roles. It involves **looking beyond the emphasis on thinking and doing** emphasized in academia to create space for responding to other dimensions of human experience. I envision **"emotional agility"** as defined by Susan David (2016) as applicable to my leadership practices. I interpret emotional agility to mean a willingness to recognize, value and attend to the full range of human emotional experience. It means **demonstrating sensitivity** to what my colleagues are feeling and experiencing and sharing my own emotions authentically. It means **listening wholeheartedly with an intent to understand** and offering empathy and validation of the worth of other's perspectives. Finally, it means

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embracing and creating space for difficult conversations that are founded on trust, respect and good faith and inevitably involve working through colliding perspectives and emotions.

Description of Leadership Initiatives: Leadership through service and sharing expertise with FSW, University and External Committees

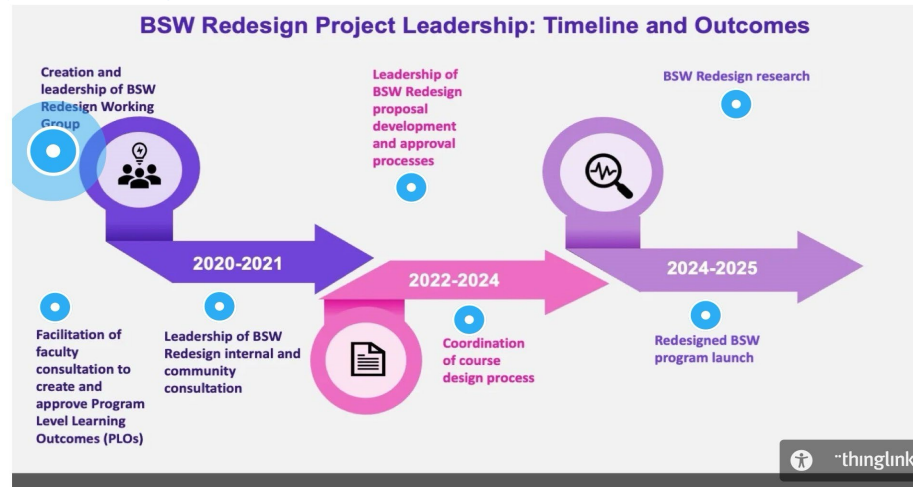
Contributions
FSW Strategic Planning Committee: Contributed successive drafts of the 2023-2027 FSW Strategic Plan, co-facilitated small group discussions with faculty colleagues.
FSW BSW Policy Committee: Served as Committee Chair in 2020- 2021, represent the FSW leadership team and Calgary BSW program, provide updates on emerging issues and concerns and invite BSW student input.
FSW Scholarship and Awards Committee: Review award applications and serve on the adjudication committees for the FSW award competitions.
FSW Teaching and Learning Committee: Provide the Committee with regular and consistent updates on the BSW Redesign process and collaborate to plan Interprofessional Practice Education events. Designed and facilitated a Teaching Days workshop.
U of C Academic Program Subcommittee: Contribute as a voting member for the University of Calgary General Faculties Council Academic Program Subcommittee, attend monthly meetings as a voting member, review curriculum and program proposals from U of C faculties and contribute to collective questions and recommendations for proposal proponents' consideration.
Calgary Interprofessional Collaborative Education Committee: Participated as a U of C faculty facilitator for two 2023-2024 IPE events, including "Greg's Wings" on January 30 th , 2024 for over 600 health profession students from U of C, SAIT and NAIT. Representing the FSW on planning committee for 2024-2025 signature IPE events, including: Health Professions Fair, Greg's Wings, Collaborative TB Case Collaborative Case #2
Bow Valley College Social Work Diploma Program Advisory Committee: Contribute to quarterly Advisory Committee Meetings to share updates on the U of C BSW program and to engage in discussion about issues pertaining to the BVC social work program. Served on the 2022 accreditation BVC Advisory Group Team, met with the accrediting body and contributed comments to the evaluation of the BVC diploma program.

Leading Change Through Inclusive Approaches to the BSW Curriculum Redesign

It was with excitement and anticipation that I accepted the offer to fulfill the role of BSW Redesign Project Team Lead in the spring of 2020. This opportunity I was offered was and continues to be a professional dream come true. I have eagerly applied my instructional design skills and academic background in education to the project management and curriculum design opportunities and challenges. Professionally, I thrive on the creative potential of instructional design, leading collaborative, multi-faceted, long-term projects, and the potential for teams to accomplish more than would be possible individually. As the Project Lead, I have assumed responsibility for defining a structure and creating formal project management plans to guide the progress of the redesign and for bringing staff, faculty, students, and community partners together to re-envision the BSW program. As I embarked on my role as Project Lead of the BSW Redesign, I became increasingly aware that progress and success of the BSW Redesign would depend on teamwork and the efforts of many.

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The following interactive graphic outlines and describes the leadership activities and accomplishments in my role as Project Lead of the BSW Redesign. Clicking on the buttons activates pop-up windows that describes the key leadership activities indicated on the timeline. A snapshot of the graphic is included below, but the pop-ups need to be activated through the link. <https://www.thinglink.com/card/1871713928803779237>



BSW Program Leadership

My role coordinating the Virtual Learning Circle (VLC) BSW Program was my first leadership role with the FSW. From 2018-2019, this role involved overseeing all aspects of the VLC program and students' experiences with the program. I was responsible for ensuring learners' smooth progressions through their programs to graduation. Teaching and serving as a course team lead for multiple VLC courses allowed me to stay in close touch with learners and instructors, to promote high quality teaching, and to foster community among cohorts of students and teams of instructors. Fulfilling the VLC Coordinate role deepened my understanding of distance learning from learners' perspectives. What I learned from VLC students and program evaluation of the VLC program informs the redesign of the BSW program.

In my role as Director, Undergraduate Student Affairs, I have supported the Calgary student body in a variety of leadership capacities and experimented with different ways to build community. My interactions with individual students have challenged me to apply my social work skills, values, and principles and to deepen my understanding of how students experience the BSW program. Each interaction with a student is a valuable opportunity to learn about students' concerns, circumstances, challenges, and barriers. My first interaction with students is typically at new student orientations, which I harness as an opportunity to introduce myself and my role serving BSW students. By extending a warm, friendly welcome to the BSW program, I aim to leave the door open for students to approach me for guidance or support. Building relationships with BSW students has allowed me to keep in close touch with what students need to succeed in their BSW programs and practicums and what they need to feel prepared to join the social work profession. Offering support to individual students has allowed me to celebrate successes and graduations with them and continue to support their transitions into the social work profession and graduate programs. My priority as a leader is to follow and respond to the needs, priorities and interests of students. Examples of my leadership practices in this regard are working and meeting regularly with Students' Union and Social Work Students' Representatives throughout the year to identify and discuss emerging issues and concerns and to support student initiatives. Specific

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examples of initiatives I have supported are the peer support partnership with Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL project) in the 2020-2021 academic year and organizing Mental Health First Aid Training for social work students in the 2022-2023 academic year.

My role in recent years has involved coordinating responses to collective issues of concern to groups of BSW students or the student body as a whole. A recent example of responding to an issue BSW students brought forward was in Fall 2022, when the Students' Union representative and representatives from the U of C Muslim Students' Association raised equity and accessibility concerns related to the new all gender washrooms in the Hunter Student Commons building. Scheduling a series of meetings with the students who expressed the concerns was an essential first step to understanding their concerns and their recommendations for change. The next steps were to liaise with the Faculty of Social Work Senior Leadership team, and from there, to organize a Talking Circle with University leaders in the Grandmother's Lodge so that students could express their concerns directly to Faculty and University leadership representatives. This experience was memorable and formative for me as a leader. I witnessed the benefit of responding to the students' concerns and the positive outcomes that are possible when stakeholders come together for the purpose of understanding diverse perspectives.

My role also involves supporting faculty and sessional instructors with course coordination, instructional design, and implementation. I review all the BSW course outlines and liaise with instructors about course outline development. When student communication or academic performance issues arise, I work closely with instructors and students to identify options or solutions. Follow up is critical to ensuring adherence to University regulations and processes. I recognize that regulations and processes (e.g., course withdrawal, grade reappraisals, grade appeals) can be confusing and daunting for instructors and students to navigate, and serving as a consistent form of support can be reassuring. I recognize that exceptional circumstances and crisis situations are often at the heart of student issues that arise, so I offer instructors and students practical support connecting with campus and community resources.

Collaborative Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Leadership

I have recently expanded the repertoire of my educational leadership practice to include leadership of and engagement in team SoTL projects. In March 2024, I was the primary applicant and principal investigator for a successful Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning grant proposal (\$39,740) *Designing Interactive, Unfolding Case Study Simulation Learning Objects*. This team endeavor focuses on creating unfolding case study and interactive video learning resources to support skill learning of BSW students in the three skills focused courses in the redesigned BSW curriculum. Additionally, I am a team member on another Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning grant project titled, *"What Are Student and Faculty Experiences and Learnings About Ethical Usage of Generative AI and IBL in Higher Education?"*. The purpose of both of these curriculum development projects is to enhance the quality of the undergraduate social work learning experience and prepare learners with the communication, helping and critical thinking skills they will need for competent social work practice.

Evidence of Leadership Impact

BSW Program Leadership Role

Cari has fundamentally transformed and enhanced the delivery of online and blended learning for thousands of undergraduate social work students.

When she became the faculty's Distance Education Director, our BSW program was delivered through a complex, somewhat disjointed mix of learning options. The faculty maintained several onsite, face-to-face BSW offerings across Alberta and an online Virtual Learning Circles (VLC) program available anywhere. These offerings

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*featured different courses, divergent schedules, and distinctive delivery models. In her role as Director, Cari immediately worked with the faculty's academics and support staff to improve students' learning experiences. In doing so, she forged a pathway to creating a reimagined, much stronger BSW program. Cari's first leadership contributions in this regard were to make the VLC program a Canadian leader in social work education. She worked with colleagues to revamp our VLC admissions process and was tireless in developing more robust orientation and mentorship programs for BSW students. She quickly became a personal, welcoming face of the VLC program and was usually the first academic whole cohorts of students met. Just as importantly, she worked with instructional designers and academic colleagues to develop common course outlines and D2L sites. With that base, she also modelled the sharing of resources across courses and instructors, helping to forge a sense of unity and mutual purpose among undergraduate instructors. **Dr. Jackie Sieppert, Professor and Former Dean, Faculty of Social Work***

BSW Redesign

Progressing to the point of implementation demonstrates the impact of my BSW Redesign leadership efforts. The redesigned BSW program will be launched in Fall 2024/Winter and Spring 2025. The redesigned curriculum/program encompasses the following redesigned courses that represent FSW strategic priorities. An accomplishment that the redesign team members and I are proud of is how a steadfast commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization and accessibility articulated in the FSW strategic plan and the BSW Redesign proposal are purposefully represented in our complement of the required courses in the redesigned BSW curriculum. The commitment to honouring equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization and accessibility was at the forefront of all stages of the redesign process and guided design of the courses.

Redesigned BSW Core Courses		UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY	Start something.
SOWK 201: Foundations of the Social Work Profession	SOWK 428: Indigenous Peoples' Histories, Cultures, and Healing Practices		
SOWK 310: Critical Analysis of Social Work Theories and Practice	SOWK 429: Africentric Social Work Practice		
SOWK 314: Communication & Relationship Building Skills	SOWK 427: Multiple Dimensions of Mental Health		
SOWK 312: Social Work Practice Skills, Processes, and Strategies	SOWK 419: Leadership and Advocacy Skills for Social Justice		
SOWK 318: Developing Identities in Social Work Practice	SOWK 436: Green Social Work and Sustainability		
SOWK 322: Social Work Research	SOWK 437: Social Work Practice in an Interconnected World		
SOWK 390: Community Engaged Practicum and Preparation	SOWK 590: Final Practicum		
SOWK 392: Community Engaged Practicum and Integration	SOWK 592: Final Integrative Seminar		

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Comments of support from Faculty of Social Work colleagues attest to the impact of my BSW Redesign leadership.

Cari effectively championed the redesign of Canada's largest and most complex BSW degree.

Almost immediately upon becoming our Director, Undergraduate Student Affairs, Cari was assigned as the project lead in an initiative to redesign the BSW degree. This was a monumental assignment. The established BSW degree was long-entrenched, any changes had to meet rigorous national accreditation standards, and revisions needed widespread support across the faculty's diverse regions/programs. In addition, the redesign had to incorporate critical social movements linked to decolonization, anti-black racism and other pressing social issues. Finally, the plan was to make the degree a fully online offering. The leadership Cari demonstrated to accomplish these goals clearly extends beyond the typical expectations of an academic administrator. She was responsible for several concurrent processes in the redesign. This included an essential reconceptualization of the BSW degree. This involved working with teams across the Faculty of Social Work, educational consultants from the Taylor Institute for Teaching & Learning, and members of the Provost's Office. The result is a degree structure that much better reflects the profession's commitment to ending marginalization and oppression. On a more detailed level, the degree's core courses had to be redesigned, and many new courses had to be developed from scratch. These included, for example, new courses focused on working with Indigenous peoples, understanding anti-black racism and completing community- engaged practica. Finally, the logistics inherent in the redesign and approval processes had to be managed effectively. To accomplish this, Cari formed and led a BSW Redesign Working Group. The group and its subcommittees met frequently over a period of years to develop the proposal for a new BSW. That proposal was completed and approved by the University of Calgary, with the new BSW degree scheduled to start in fall 2024.

*It is not just the pending launch of our new BSW degree that warrants an Educational Leadership Award for Cari. The award is also warranted based on how she performed the role of leading redevelopment of the BSW degree. Cari has a natural, relational style of working. Her passion, integrity and grace established a truly inclusive redesign process. She actively sought to engage faculty and staff, and consciously reached out to colleagues across the university to seek guidance and learning. Her work has been highly collaborative, and she proved to be highly adept at finding common ground and forging linkages between all key stakeholders in the redesign process. Finally, she was open to new ideas and creative approaches to the educational process – there are aspects of the new BSW degree that are unique in Canada. The result of these contributions is a degree model that the University of Calgary can be very proud of, one that will keep the Faculty of Social Work at the forefront of social work education for many years to come. **Dr. Jackie Sieppert, Professor and Former Dean, Faculty of Social Work***

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Angela Judge-Stasiak, Dr. Beth Archer-Kuhn, and Julie Mann-Johnson are honoured to speak about Cari and to share our experiences observing and interacting with her to support her outstanding education leadership contributions in the Faculty of Social Work. Cari's leadership occurs in her roles as Undergraduate Program Director and the lead of the Bachelor of Social (BSW) Redesign Team. In each role, Cari demonstrates patience, active listening and the ability to hold disparate viewpoints. Cari has been communicative, accountable and able to manage overwhelming data points of consultation to ensure faculty, staff, students and community members are involved and supported in and through the process of redesigning the undergraduate curriculum. Cari's personal characteristics are a large part of what makes her leadership effective; she is humble, open to feedback, organized and able to move large, complex projects forward with a spirit of collaboration. In this type of transformative leadership, Cari motivates others to take on a leadership role as she honours leadership as a process between leaders and followers. A transformational leader gives more attention to the charismatic and affective elements of leadership with an emphasis on intrinsic motivation and follower development. Transformational leaders set out to empower followers and nurture them in change by raising consciousness and supporting transcending their self-interests for the sake of others. Within the BSW Redesign process, Cari has been tasked with the very challenging role of leader and she has graciously accepted the challenge and applied her own brand of transformational leadership to this long and daunting process. Transformational leadership is required for this sort of change; faculty, staff, students and community partners have been asked to shift their thinking from an individual perspective to one of a collective. As if this daunting task was not enough, add to it what Cari has had to face: 1) a redesign process in the midst of a pandemic and social isolation; 2) faculty, staff, students, and community partners managing their own and other's mental health challenges resulting from the pandemic; 3) exclusively online meetings; 4) knowledge of financial pressures for the university and Faculty of Social Work; 5) academic freedom or the rights of faculty to teach in the manner they see fit; 6) the adoption of an Indigenous Strategy by the university; and, 7) various anti-racial movements calling for greater curriculum attention to their cause.

Now, imagine having this task and compounding it with university and Faculty of Social Work pending timelines. Throughout this multi-year process, we have observed Cari remain steadfast in her duties, focused on the vision of a new and better BSW program, one that incorporates social work values, social justice and attention to equity, diversity and inclusion. Cari has consistently held this vision for all to see, engage in discussion about, and integrate into their own thinking. This consciousness raising has been followed by ongoing encouragement for Course Leads to walk together through a best practices process of curriculum design and development. In this way, Course Leads are encouraged to be leaders in their own right and learn from one another as a collective; a true transformational process. The outcome of this redesign will support: 1) new instructors by providing structure and resources for all courses; 2) seasoned instructors will have ongoing choice for adding their own brand of material; 3) students will have greater consistency in course structure; 4) the faculty will have greater flexibility for course assignment both online and inperson; and, 5) everyone will benefit from curriculum material that addresses issues of EDI in preparing future professional social workers to aspire to their professional values in practice.

Some of us have had the opportunity to work with Cari in a variety of venues throughout the BSW redesign. The field education team has appreciated Cari's ongoing support as we revision field education. She has committed to meeting regularly with the field team as we process new possibilities, and she has been nothing but patient, kind, supportive, and exhibited great leadership through collegiality. In the Indigenous Advisory Committee, Cari has led and facilitated in ways that honour space for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating. Cari supports others to attend and develop competencies in teaching and learning, explore effective teaching strategies, engage in peer support and apply for funding such as the Taylor Institute grants to further knowledge and capacity building amongst all members of the Faculty of Social Work. We hope that the adjudication committee agrees with our first choice of candidate nomination for this year's Educational Leadership Award, Cari Gulbrandsen. In summary, we strongly recommend the committee recognize Cari's leadership and dedication to excellence in curriculum redesign and student learning. **Beth Archer Kuhn, Associate Professor, Angela Judge-Stasiak, EdD, RSW, CCDP, Coordinator, Distance Field Education, Julie Mann-Johnson, MSW, RSW, Associate Professor (Teaching), Associate Director, Field Education**

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Thank you, Cari for your contribution to our Faculty. From my vantage point over the years, you have worked diligently in the roles that I have observed. Although I wasn't focused in the direct work of the BSW redesign as you were, I've appreciated your leadership and contribution to this important process! **David Nicholas, Associate Dean, Research and Partnerships, Faculty of Social Work**

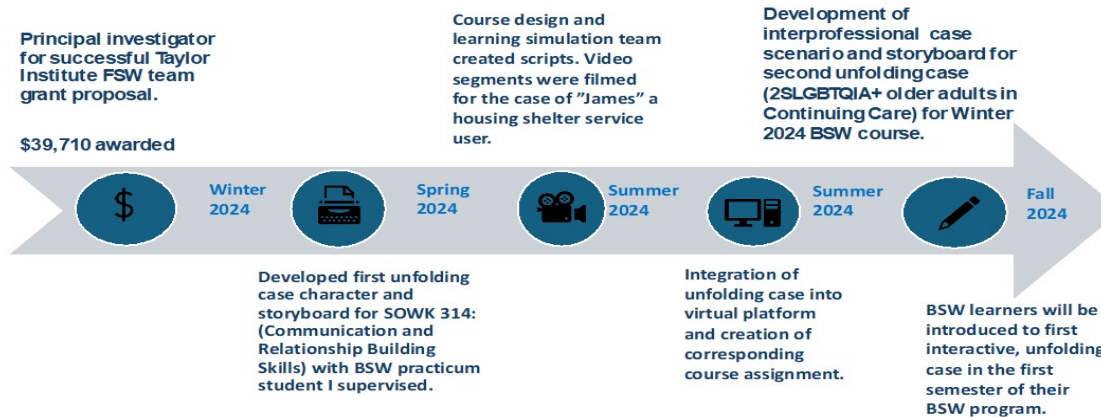
Cari has assumed leadership positions since she first joined the Faculty of Social Work, first as Distance Education Director and, since 2020, as Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs. Most noteworthy of Cari's accomplishments has been her leadership in developing the BSW redesign proposal and shepherding it through faculty and university approval processes. She subsequently designed a process for implementing the proposal and for redesigning individual courses. I was involved as a lead for one of the courses in this phase of the process. I was truly impressed by how Cari led and coordinated this complex process, which involved many faculty members and multiple subprojects. Cari distinguished herself by helping us keep a focus on the basic principles guiding the redesign and by providing help and support throughout the process, while maintaining accountability and delivering the project on time. **Dr. Peter Gabor, Professor, Faculty of Social Work**

Leading a "Designing Interactive, Unfolding Case Study Simulation Learning Objects" SoTL Project

This endeavor I am leading as the Principal Investigator of the 2024 – 2026 grant project has been and will continue to be a team collaboration. The creation of our team's first interactive unfolding case is an example of what shared leadership can accomplish. In this example, team efforts have already resulted in the creation of an unfolding case that will bring an authentic practice scenario to students in a way that elicits engagement with a character whose circumstances and characteristics learners will be able to relate to in a human way. A creative, collaborative process has resulted in an unfolding case study interactive video learning resource that will be included in Fall 2024 SOWK 314: Communication and Relationship Building Skills, the first of three skills focused courses in the redesigned BSW program. The unfolding case study featuring "James" a fictional service user who interacts with housing services, is associated with a key course assignment. The video segments are housed on the Affinity learning platform, a virtual platform that allows learners to interact with case scenarios and add their impressions as the case study unfolds. The stages of the team process are depicted below:

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BSW Program Experiential Learning Resource Development Project: Shared SoTL leadership in action



Two additional unfolding cases are currently in development for Winter 2025 and Spring 2025 BSW courses.

Other SoTL Leadership Research Accomplishments

Another form of educational leadership I have demonstrated is formal and informal evaluation of the courses I have taught. As an instructor who taught a course in the MSW Gerontology certificate, I participated in a formal evaluation of the certificate, led by the certificate coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Hewson. This holistic formal certificate program evaluation examined the experiences of both the learner and instructors. Each team member who taught the course shared in the evaluation by subjecting the course they taught to evaluation. Participating in an instructor interview was an opportunity for me to share my reflections with the rest of the teaching team, and to contribute my reflections and recommendations to the study data. This was an opportunity to engage in reflexive teaching practice and to closely examine the content, learning activities and course assignments. My participation in the 2022 MSW certificate evaluation included:

- Completing an instructor interview
- Reviewing and discussing instructor interview and student survey and focus group results.
- Co-authoring a poster presentation for the 2022 NICE Symposium. Co-authoring a manuscript for a published, peer reviewed publication. (Hewson, J., Epp, K., Walsh, C., **Gulbrandsen, C.**, & Walji-Shivji, S. (2024). Enhancing gerontological social work education: Curriculum insights from offering a clinical gerontology certificate. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960.2024.2328520>

Thereafter, I extended my own evaluation to completing a detailed self-study of the course.

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Sharing Expertise by Contributing to Faculty of Social Work Teaching Community of Practice

My educational leadership has recently expanded to include contributing to the teaching development of my FSW colleagues. I recently designed and delivered a professional development workshop during the FSW Teaching Days from May 23-24th, 2024. I delivered an interactive teaching development titled, "Diverse Assessments and Assignments for Large Classes", drawing on my own experience teaching larger class sections in the Virtual Learning Circle program and scholarly literature. My workshop offered participants a summary of scholarly literature on assessment of learning in large classes in higher education, a tool kit and resources, tangible examples of assessments I have used in my own teaching and an opportunity for participants to share their own experiences with and reflections on teaching large classes. This experience reinforced the value of developing workshops for a teaching and learning community of practice as a worthwhile educational leadership endeavor. I intend to pursue more opportunities to develop and facilitate more FSW and U of C teaching and learning workshops.

I have also created a community of practice by supporting and collaborating with faculty colleagues and sessional instructors to design and implement social work courses. Learners ultimately benefit from instructors sharing their teaching wisdom, ideas, and resources. In my leadership role with the BSW program, I recognize and value the contribution sessional instructors make to social work student learning. Sessional instructors bring a rich history of practice experience and considerable professional expertise to their sessional teaching. They pursue teaching as opportunities to contribute to the future of the social work profession, to mentor students and to share their extensive practice wisdom. I extend warm welcomes, offer support with instructional design and explicitly convey my appreciation for their contributions. The following comment validates my commitment to supporting inclusion for sessional instructors and supporting their teaching *development*.

I am pleased to provide a letter of support for Cari Gulbrandsen, PhD, RSW, Undergraduate Program Director and Assistant Professor (Teaching) application for "The University of Calgary Teaching Award for Educational Leadership (Individual)."

*Dr. Gulbrandsen is highly accomplished academic, instructor, and social work professional. She has a gentle and respectful approach when working with people, is insightful, trustworthy, and kind. She demonstrates the attributes needed to be successful in building the learning process and structures for students to advance their learning. Cari was the first to reach out to me offering support and collaboration in the SOWK 395: Practice and Evaluation with Groups course that we taught Winter 2024. We had very meaningful conversations on how to support students in building their confidence and preparedness for the profession. Students (as I do) recognize her expertise in preparing them and building their confidence for entering the profession, her profound respect for people, and her ability to build inclusive and respectful relationships. This can be seen in her Academic and Community Award achievements. She is a true servant leader; her passion, positive attitude, resiliency, and generosity is limitless, and she is a tremendous asset to the University learning environment. Students and colleagues who meet her always remark that they have been inspired to be a better version of themselves. Cari has touched many students through her passion, dignity, and commitment to the learning process. I can't think of a better candidate for this award. **Dan Holinda, Senior Charitable Sector Leader, Consultant, FSW Sessional Instructor***

*Over the years, Cari and I taught and worked as colleagues on several courses together. I have high respect for Cari as a leader and as a fellow colleague, and instructor. At the teaching level Cari is an instructor who really cares about her students and encourages students to learn and grow as emerging social workers. It was quite clear from the first time I met Cari that her leadership and work style is empathic, and relational in approach. In discussions and planning it was clear that her approach with students, and fellow colleagues was thoughtful, strength-based and empathic communication style. Cari's strength is her ability to facilitate process and, in her compassion, and openness to ideas. As a leader in the BSW redesign and within the VLC programs Cari is an amazing leader, instructor, colleague and educator. I believe her contributions to the Faculty of Social Work is immeasurable. **Carol Ing, Sessional Instructor, Faculty of Social Work***

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Self-Reflection Statement

I feel honoured to be nominated by FSW colleagues for a UCalgary leadership award. The nomination presents me with an opportunity to reflect on my professional development as an educator and leader and on how my leadership philosophy has developed through my leadership roles with the FSW and the U of C. As a social work PhD student, serving as the VP Academic with the Graduate Students' Association and serving on University and FSW committees prepared me for fulfilling leadership roles in a postsecondary education context and for balancing faculty leadership and teaching roles. I continue to believe that any leadership title must be continually earned through ethical and respectful conduct in relationships, honouring my commitments and keeping my word.

My leadership journey is marked by transformative learning and gratitude for the opportunities I have been offered. Some of my most profound learning to date as the BSW Redesign Project Lead has resulted from my collaborative team approach to instructional design and bringing faculty and staff together to work towards creating a future BSW program we can all be proud of and contribute to. I am humbled by the valuable learning opportunities that have been formative in my leadership development. First and foremost, I have learned that relationships matter the most, and that my leadership is in service to human beings. Investing time and effort in purposeful preparation means that I can focus more intently on nurturing relationships and collaboration in my teaching and leadership interactions. I strive to earn my leadership role by honouring relationships and acting with integrity in the ways I have outlined in this nomination dossier. I feel proud that I have demonstrated to my faculty and University colleagues, students, and community partners that I can be counted on and that I uphold the values that define the social work profession. I have learned that shared success is the type of success that I value the most.

Leadership Goals to Guide My Future Practice

My current leadership goals for the future stem primarily from what I have learned from the BSW Redesign process over the past four years. Now that the formal BSW Redesign proposal has been approved, my leadership is focusing on supporting continued course design and implementation of the redesigned BSW program in Fall 2024. I am discovering that different leadership approaches are required for navigating the course design process than the approaches that were effective in guiding the BSW Redesign proposal towards approval. My leadership role with the BSW Redesign will soon expand to encompass reporting to community about the BSW Redesign, marketing the redesigned BSW program and student recruitment. Embarking on these activities will challenge me to diversify my repertoire of communication skills, since they will involve communicating with new audiences. At this juncture in my professional development, my goals include pursuing formal leadership learning offered at the University of Calgary and extending my leadership activities more fully beyond the FSW. I am eager to join the leadership community of practice at the U of C. I envision this avenue of learning will position me to critically reflect on and enrich my leadership practices and strengthen my confidence to pursue FSW and U of C leadership opportunities. I intend to honour the faith colleagues and students have in me by striving to expand my leadership growth and learning and by continuing to support the leadership development of the colleagues and students I serve.

References:

- Clarke, N. (2018). *Relational leadership, theory, practice and development*. Routledge.
- David, S. (2016). *Emotional agility: Get unstuck, embrace change, and thrive in work and life*. Penguin Random House.