

SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
Report on the Strategic Planning Workshop
January 12 and 13, 2007 - Queensbury Convention Centre, Regina

A. Purpose and Overview

The purpose of the event was to provide recommendations to Council regarding future strategies for the SASW. The event was preceded by a survey of the membership, the results of which were presented at the workshop.

The following objectives were set and achieved:

- *To review, revise and regain commitment to the Association's mission (mandate) statement and vision statement;*
- *To determine strategies within each of the four strategic areas of emphasis as defined at the 2003 planning retreat: regulate, advocate, promote and support. Governance was added as a fifth area of focus;*
- *To support strategies with suggested actions prioritized over the next four years of operation;*
- *To communicate next steps and gain agreement on roles in finalizing the plan;*
- *To evaluate the planning process and workshop.*

Clearly, this workshop built upon the foundation that was set in 2003. The process this time was led by consultant Valerie Sluth of Regina, as it was in 2003.

Members of the Advisory Board and Council and other key representatives were invited to participate. Twenty-eight members confirmed attendance, however, due to unfavourable road conditions, twenty were in attendance. Participants met Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and again Saturday from 8:30 to 3:00. An informal dinner was provided Friday evening.

Details from the large group's discussions were captured on powerpoint. Small group discussion notes were captured in participant workbooks and on flipchart paper. The final strategic plan recommendations created at the workshop are drawn from these sources, and are outlined later in this report.

B. Background and Process

- **A report on the extensive 2003 strategic plan project was presented that included details on the progress made by SASW on an ambitious Action Plan that resulted. The report also identified areas where work initiated in 2003 is still under way. Workshop participants added their own additions to the items presented. The report also identified environmental factors and trends that make up our operational context, and participants added to this picture as well.**

- Valerie provided clarity that strategic planning is as much about what is to be done as it is about what is not to be done:
 - Being strategic means making conscious choices as to how we are going to use limited resources to achieve our purpose within a dynamic environment.
 - Strategic thinking therefore includes making decisions about what we will do and what we will not do, where we will focus our energies and our overall priorities.
- Clarity was also provided around the role of Council as the group responsible for the over-all operations of SASW. As such, the proposals from the workshop are recommendations to Council which in turn has the responsibility to give priority to the recommendations, determine the best use of limited resources and delegate prioritized recommendations to committees or branches for consideration and budgeting. Committees/Branches then provide recommended plans and approaches back to Council. It is then the role of the general membership to hold Council accountable for results – this is done through the regular meetings of Advisory Board, who are the representatives of the membership, and at the Annual General Meeting.

C. Mandate/Mission Statement

The following mandate was agreed to as representing the work of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers:

The Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers is a member-based organization that regulates, supports and promotes the ethical practice of social work to protect the public and strengthen the profession.
SASW pursues social justice and contributes to social policy.

Rationale for revision:

- To be more concise, i.e. inclusion of the four strategic areas within the statement as opposed to the previous mission statement which listed four separate bullet points;
- To include a statement of purpose, i.e. "...to protect the public and strengthen the profession...";
- To adjust the term "advocacy" to language that more accurately describes what the Association does, i.e. "...pursues social justice and contributes to social policy."
- Values and assumptions in the mandate were eliminated in favor of developing a separate and supporting document listing the values and principles of the Association.

Unanimous agreement was limited because one member had concern over the omission of the word "advocacy". Another member felt strongly that the blending of

the four areas of emphasis rather than separate bullet points for each diminished clarity and alignment with our action planning approach.

D. Vision Statement

The following vision was agreed to as representing the desired future state for social work in Saskatchewan:

- All social workers in the province of Saskatchewan are registered professionals of SASW;
- All social workers are supported in the delivery of good and ethical practice;
- The profession of social work is regarded as an important contributor to human and social wellbeing; and,
- Social policy is reflective of the values and principles of social justice.

This is a more minor updating of the vision statement we've had for the last four years. The first two points are as before, the third and fourth were adjusted to clarify the intended future state.

E. Goals and Action Planning

Following the development of proposed revisions to the mandate and vision statements, participants explored current strategies/actions/programs, then what would be desirable beyond what is being done now.

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats were identified and discussed and key challenges to SASW were listed.

All of this background information and analysis was then used as reference and context for a process of decision-making on where it would be best to invest our efforts and where we'd be wise to defend against threats and challenges. The goals outlined below emerged. Goals are grouped into five categories:

1. REGULATE
2. SUPPORT GOOD AND ETHICAL PRACTICE
3. PROMOTE THE PROFESSION
4. SUPPORT SOCIAL JUSTICE/ADVOCATE
5. GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATION

These five categories represent the 4 key purposes of SASW reflected within the mandate and vision statements, with governance/administration added in as the fundamental responsibility for running the organization itself. Presented in the charts below are the recommended goals under each of the five categories. Included are the suggested actions and outcomes, along with an assignment of suggested priority. The priority-setting is done by indicating in which year/years the work should be done. As the strategic plan will set the course for the next 4 years, the numbers 1 to 4 are used

1. Regulate

GOALS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	YR
INCREASE CAPACITY OF REGULATORY COMMITTEES	Ensure all PCC and DRP members receive training approved by Council	- Quality assured - Increased skill and retention	- 1 - 1-4
	Invest in ongoing recruitment for PCC/DRP/LRC Build awareness of the role and function of all three committees	Sufficient resources available - Increased support and involvement - Increased understanding of self-regulation and benefits to public/members/employers	1-4 1-4
	Communication of LRC plan	Increased understanding and support of the strategy	1
MANDATORY REGISTRATION FOR EVERYONE WITH A SOCIAL WORK CREDENTIAL	Develop and communicate a brief on scope of practice/mandatory registration	- Increased awareness and support of membership - Consistent communication and accountability	- 1 - 1-2
	Ongoing strategic dialogue with gov't, employers, unions and prospective members	Increased support from external stakeholders	1
	Develop implementation plan and build on lessons learned in other jurisdictions	Staged approach to implementation	1
IMPROVE INVESTIGATION PROCESS	Develop job description and contracting provisions	Clarity of role and reporting relationships	1
	Develop policy to guide investigation process	Consistency of investigation process	1
	Engage investigator	Timely, effective and efficient investigations	1

	Test and evaluate	Quality and efficiency assured	2
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2. Support Good and Ethical Practice

GOAL	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	YR
INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR CPE	Planned code of ethics training	Membership's awareness raised/reduced risk of misconduct	1
	Identify local resources	Speaker roster developed for Education C'ttee and Branches	2
	Partner with faculty and survey m'ship on use of variety of technological options	Options selected and promoted	2-4
EMPLOYERS KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SUPPORTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK STAFF	"Special Edition" of newsletter for employers	Increased knowledge	1-2
	Implement "employer recognition" program – award granted at AGM	Healthier workplaces	1-2
	Create mechanism for SASW/employee/ employer system-issue resolution	Healthier workplaces	1-2
SOCIAL WORKERS FEEL SUPPORT FOR GOOD PRACTICE	Research existing peer-mentoring programs	Peer mentoring service	2
	Ongoing promotion of the existing services offered by the Practice Ethics Committee	Increased access by members needing help	1
	Provide training for P.E. Committee	Committee members feel more competent	1

	Add First Nations members - P.E.C. Incorporate ethics into all presentations	Committee more relevant to F.N. members Improved awareness of fundamental nature of ethics	1 1-2
	Pamphlet for members outlining supports available	Members better aware of supports	2

3. Promote the Profession

GOAL	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	YR
INCREASE MEMBERSHIP	Develop F.N./ aboriginal task team	Brings appropriate representation to the Advisory Board	1
	Ask new team to develop plan for recruitment	Contact with 18 FN agencies and a plan of action	1
	Continue dialogue with SCR and CPS for employer-driven required registration	Eligible staff will be registered	1-4
	Continue membership drives in Saskatoon and expand – other areas	Annual event in each branch	1-4
	Personal contact with non-members to encourage reg'n	Branch action plans	1-4
CLARITY ON OUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE	Include this in the work to be done by the new trainers on the code of ethics	Increased professional pride/cohesiveness	1
INCREASED PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL WORK'S PROFESSIONAL ROLE	Free public presentations – especially during social work week	One to three presentations per branch per year	2-4

	Use inexpensive means to showcase profession	Action plan	1-4
CREATE LINKS FOR ISOLATED SOCIAL WORKERS	Survey members about interest in peer mentoring	Determine level of interest	2
	Council decides whether service should be offered	Peer mentorship committee created if directed by Council	2

4. Support Social Justice

GOAL	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	YR
INCREASED INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL POLICY	Continue meeting with SCR and build relationship	2 meetings/year	1-4
	Continue development of Children's Partnership	2-3 meetings each year	1-4
AMALGAMATE SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE AND ADVOCACY TASK TEAM	Develop membership roles within new committee	Organized approach	1
	Develop new terms of reference and set schedule for new group	Work proceeds	1
WIDEN INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES	Network with similar groups/professions/coalitions on social issues	-Strong relationships -Stronger, better-educated voice	1-4

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON SOCIAL ISSUES	Meet with Ministers/MLAs with pre-set questions on social justice issues	Better context for our social justice work	2
	Develop issues that should be presented to the public	SASW will have more opportunities to be heard	1
	Develop relationship with media, and training in relating with the media	Facilitates access to the public	2
CREATE AN ALL-PARTY POVERTY-REDUCTION STRATEGY	Research what has been done in Canada	A report on the findings	2
	Research what has been done in Saskatchewan – identify current status	A plan on how to proceed	2
	Work with faculty to get student to work on this	A report	2

5. Governance/Administration

GOAL	SUGESTED ACTIONS	OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	YR
MEMBERSHIP UNDERSTANDS ACTION PLAN	Council and Advisory Board review results of Strategic Plan workshop	Everyone informed of results	1
	Council decides on priorities, assigns responsibility for the work and collects detailed proposals for Action Plan	Action Plan assembled	1
	Active review of Action Plan at Advisory Board – information taken back to Branches/ Committees and highlighted in newsletter	Communication achieved	1-4
	Action Plan updated twice yearly	Tracking and accountability	2-4

KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT	Meet with Ministers and Opposition members	Exchange information/improve our profile	1-4
	Profile political stance of SK parties Develop political analyst (identify from within Council/ Committees)	Inform members - Inform Council - Influence policy	2 3
KNOWLEDGE OF TRENDS, BEST PRACTICES, WAYS OF COLLABORATING	Identify our key contacts (other professions/other social work organizations/ community organizations?)	Shared identification of issues and solutions	1-4
CLARITY ON ADVOCACY	Council develop an inclusive process to create/approve definition	Clear description of our approach	1
DEFINE SASW APPROACH TO EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE ISSUES	Research the issue (other professional organizations/government)	Defined stance	1
DEFINED SET OF VALUES/PRINCIPLES FOR SASW	Council determines process	Clarity of philosophy	1
BE READY FOR MANDATORY REGISTRATION	Review existing state and determine other steps – determine strategy	SASW ready to manage implications	4
ADD INVESTIGATOR TO PCC	Subcommittee of Council/PCC determine terms	Efficient investigation process	1

CONVERT REGISTRAR ROLE TO PAID POSITION	Track time required for role; determine % of full-time and available resources	Staff position identified and recruited	1-2
SUSTAINABLE , CREDIBLE ORG.	Support the functioning of the Volunteer Development Committee	Volunteers allocated to the right spots, vacancies addressed, volunteers acknowledged	1
SASW MANUAL COVERING, PHILOSOPHY, REGISTRATION, PERSONNEL, OPERATIONS and an ORIENTATION PACKAGE	Organize central manual with existing chapters	Template created/ existing information more accessible	1
	Collect/develop new information	Full slate of support information/direction available	3
IMPROVED CLARITY ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINE ROLE	Council develop a policy statement directing the functions of investigation and discipline operate without interference or influence	- provides assurance to the public - provides clarity to membership	1

F. Consultant's Recommendations

Valerie Sluth has provided her summary report to Council reminding of a number of commitments made at the time of the workshop. Some of her information is reflected in this report and several of her recommendations have also been reflected in the goals developed by the five groups and captured in the charts above (develop values and principles, statement on advocacy, statement on employer/employee relations, policy manual, fully expressed Volunteer Development Committee). The recommendation for the Volunteer Development Committee was to follow best practice and ensure that the past president and other seasoned members of the organization are placed on this committee and that the Executive Director sits ex-officio.

In addition, Valerie included recommendations covering:

- **The use of Task Teams** - to take on the work identified at the workshop that would have “a definite developmental period or life-span”. Valerie outlines that this is a good way to get quick results and engage new volunteers.
- **The creation of Interest Groups** – for diverse membership groups as a way of providing a forum for meaningful discussion, to gain insight through membership input and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources. The establishing of a First Nations/aboriginal interest group is noted above as a specific goal.

G. Development of the Action Plan

The process that will be followed is:

- **Present this document to Council for review (February meeting). Council reviews strategies within each area of emphasis to determine fit with existing committee and task team structure, or whether new committees/task teams/interest groups may be needed. Council also reviews the fit with existing resources and alignment with current and past strategies of the Association;**
- **Council reports initial thoughts to Advisory Board (February meeting);**
- **Council determines priorities, then evaluates existing committee structure to determine appropriate organizational units to deliver on new initiatives;**
- **Council directs the distribution of “Action Plan Work Sheet” to committees/task teams/branches requesting a full description of the work along with a time-frame for its completion/budgeting (see attached work sheet template);**
- **Council presents revised vision and mission statements to the AGM for approval – April 25th.**
- **Council finalizes organizational infrastructure required to support the plan;**
- **Action Plan Work Sheets are due back from committees/task teams/branches by the spring meeting of Advisory Board (June 1st).**
- **Action Plan is assembled and finalized by Council at its August Planning Meeting.**