

## MSW SATURDAY COHORT

### Cohort Demographics:

25 students were accepted into cohort for Fall of 2021  
17 students completed Fall 2021 semester  
Of the 13 survey respondents, 100% indicated that they are working while in the program  
Median working hours within the cohort is 40 hours a week  
Average working hours in the program is 45.5

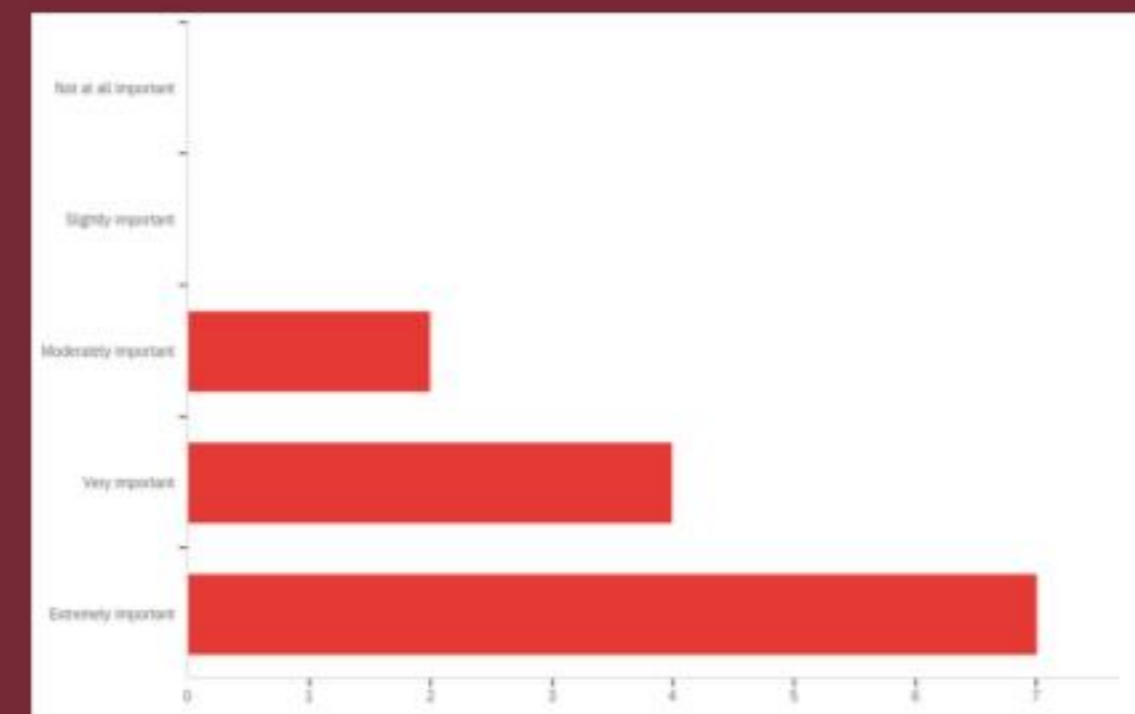
	Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits	Summer	Credits
<b>Year 1</b>	SCWK502 SCWK510	3 3	SCWK500 SCWK511	3 3	SCWK580 SCWK580	3 3
<b>Year 2</b>	SCWK530 SCWK540 SCWK590	3 3 3	SCWK508 SCWK5311 SCWK591	3 3 3	SCWK572 SCWK580	3 3
<b>Year 3</b>	SCWK512 SCWK551 SCWK592	3 3 4	SCWK541 SCWK550 SCWK593	3 3 4		

## METHODOLOGY

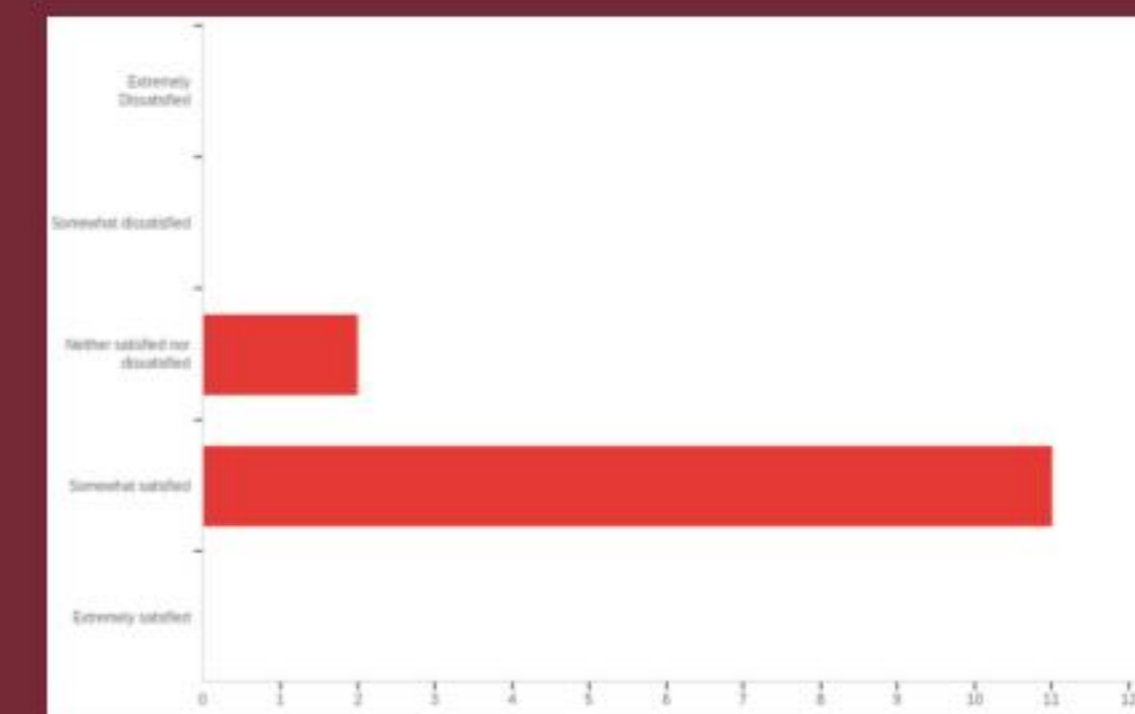
- All materials went through Bridgewater State University Institutional Review Board and was granted approval
- A brief survey was administered to all students in Saturday cohort with distribution via their Bridgewater State University emails. Survey consisted of Likert scaling questions and long form answer questions. Questions asked were used to gauge student satisfaction within the program. Additionally, the survey recruited for the focus group.
  - Likert Scale Questions**
    - Q3: On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely dissatisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied, please rank each of the areas below.
      - Satisfaction with courses
      - Satisfaction with times courses are held
      - Satisfaction with professors
      - Satisfaction with course availability
      - Satisfaction with course content
    - Q5: How does the MSW Saturday Program reach your expectations?
    - Q6: How likely would you be to recommend the MSW Saturday Program cohort?
    - Q7: How important was it for you to attend a program held on Saturday's?
  - Long Form Questions**
    - Q1: Are you currently working?
    - Q2: If you are working, on average, how many hours a week?
    - Q4: If you would like to elaborate on any of the areas listed above, please feel free to do so here.
    - Q8: If you would like to elaborate on any of the statements above, please feel free to do so here.
    - Q9: What have you found to be positive about your experience in the MSW cohort so far?
    - Q10: In what ways could the School of Social Work improve your experiences so far in the MSW Saturday cohort?
    - Q11: This space is reserved for any other questions, comments, or concerns you would like to address.
- Survey participants N = 17 ; n=13
- Focus group utilized voluntary response sampling which was held via Zoom
  - Why did you pick Bridgewater State University over other MSW programs?
  - Why did you choose the Saturday program?
  - If the Saturday program at Bridgewater State University was not an option, what would you have done?
  - What has been challenging and how did you overcome those challenges?
  - What has been positive or rewarding in the MSW Saturday cohort?
  - What are your specific career goals and how is this program helping you achieve them?
  - If you could make suggestions on how to improve your experience in the Saturday program, what would you suggest?
  - What else would you like me to know that I haven't asked?
- Focus group participants N = 17 ; n = 5
- Focus group was transcribed. Transcription from focus group was analyzed and compared to responses from survey. Through the content analysis, the following themes were developed: communication, importance of Saturday classes, support from faculty and cohort, flexibility in field education, anxiety, and diversity and recruitment.

## RESULTS

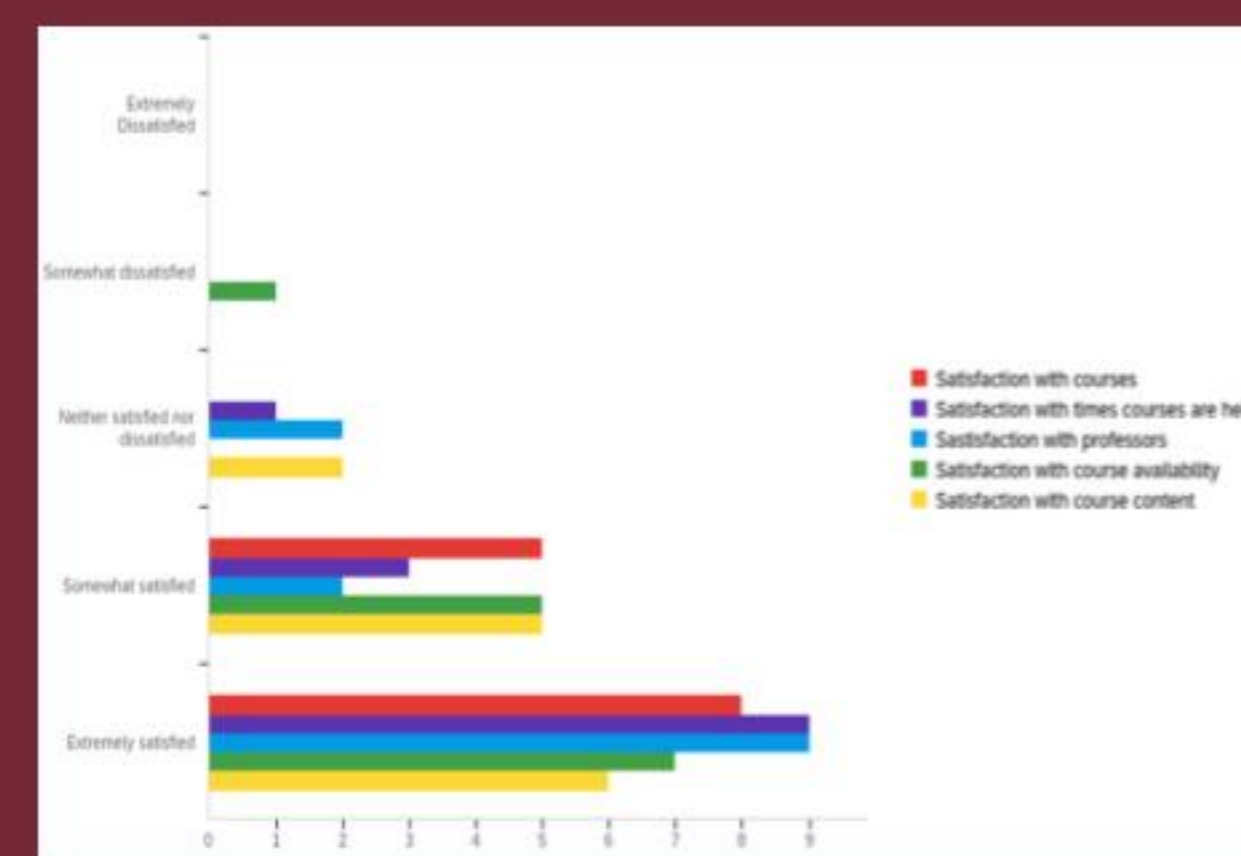
### SURVEY FINDINGS



How likely would you be to recommend the MSW Saturday Program cohort to others?



How does the MSW Saturday Program reach your expectations?



On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely dissatisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied, please rank each of the areas below.

### FOCUS GROUP THEMES

#### Communication is a barrier for students.

##### Regarding the University

- "This is like not super specific to the program itself but I think from like a Bridgewater point of view, there have been multiple times where it feels like we've been forgotten like on our last day of classes last semester when we had presentations, all the classrooms were locked, or when the snow storm was coming or no at the beginning of the semester when classes were going to be virtual for a few days and then in person like it was like virtual until Friday and then in person starting Monday so it just feels like communication wise overall Saturdays sometimes get forgotten or left out of the mix and that can be tightened up a bit from like a facilities point of view"

##### Regarding the School of Social Work

- "I honestly, I didn't even realize I was signing up for it, I thought that it was 'are you interested in this?' like I thought it was an option and then when it was like you're accepted to the Saturday program that's it I was like oh shoot, I guess we're doing Saturdays. Maybe I don't read all the details maybe that's a me thing"
- "...lack of clarity in terms of the schedule has been the most frustrating part um not really having a clear outline of when summer classes are, if they're going to be in person or online and just kinda um i guess the clarity in terms of the scheduling for me in particular have been the most challenging and frustrating part"

##### Regarding the classroom/courses

- "...there seems to be a bit of a mismatch between like time needed to complete things this semester versus last semester and my guess is that it's only going to increase next year when we're in internships" [student goes on to elaborate that in Fall semester, there seemed to be a lighter workload]

#### The newness of the program could be exacerbating some of the anxiety of the students.

- "I'm curious if there's a plan set in place for the duration of our cohort, or are we kinda still winging it at this point or are we still figuring it out"
- "it makes sense that things would be kinda up in the air but like i don't work that way, I need things to be very concrete like I need to know what's happening when and it just feels like the program as a whole wasn't really thought through"

#### The opportunity to attend graduate courses on a Saturday provides opportunities for students who otherwise might not have been able to attend.

- "Bridgewater State location wise is very convenient, it's right down the street from me, but also because it was one of the more affordable MSW programs out there"
- "...it's one of the cheaper MSW programs that you can find that still has like a pretty good reputation so that was important to me and the part time Saturday program was a big draw like I work full time"
- "Saturday part time program is really the only way I'd be able to get the masters."

#### Students overall feel supported by faculty and their cohort peers.

- "I think our professors individually have done a really great job listening to our concerns and listening to us and being flexible"
- "Our professors are also very awesome and um seem to really like respect our work and just our time and our feedback which has been really nice and they're, they're brilliant. I mean a lot of them are like really great teachers, too, so I can respect that"
- "...professors allowing everyone to share their own personal experiences who aren't in the field so it gives the lot of us to see what it's like for them or just what it's like in general"
- "I really appreciate that when I emailed Kathy with like some thoughts and concerns, within an hour she emailed me back and said she would set up a Zoom meeting with us all so I just want to specifically say that that was yeah, that was great to see and I really appreciate it."

#### Desire for flexibility in field education.

- "I know like the field placements are coming up and as far as the specialist year for like our final year, I feel like I think this was mentioned before in like other groups and everything but I feel like there should be more flexibility at least for the Saturday cohort when it comes to field placements"
- "I'm going to be able to do the majority of my internship stuff through my own place of employment, but I think if you guys could work on more paid internships for people, that would be huge, that would be enticing for folks"

#### Diversity and recruiting.

- "I do think they should do a lot better when it comes to recruiting whether its multicultural or um males as well like our cohort we have 2 males um and I think there's 4 women of color? Um, but like the majority is all white, which is not a problem, but like its like what is BSU doing in their recruitment that this is the way that its panning out because [laughs] it's just very interesting and I'm just very interested into what recruitment looks like um yeah and why it's the way that it is, um, yeah. That's all I have. So I guess that point is is like putting in more effort into recruiting a more diverse group of individuals as opposed to a certain like a majority being white women is my point."

"I think for me the biggest thing is that it feels like quite a special thing to be doing it [the MSW Saturday program] as a cohort. I feel like we have a really tight group that can lean on each other more than I would imagine folks who are just sort of taking whatever classes and not in a group together have and that for me has been the highlight for sure"

- Student feedback provided in focus group

## WHAT'S NEXT

### How does the isolation (both perceived and real) of the Saturday cohort impact their feelings of communication barriers?

As the program expands to run multiple cohorts simultaneously, it would be of benefit to examine how perceptions or feelings evolve amongst cohorts. Additionally, the university has an extremely limited amount of courses held on Saturdays, one student commented on how the Saturday program felt left behind not by the School of Social Work, but by the University as whole due to classrooms being locked and unclear guidance given regarding days off for Saturday classes. These are issues that stretch beyond peer support.

### How unique or how shared are these themes amongst other cohorts?

For the intended goals of this evaluation, only the Saturday Program cohort was sent the survey and focus group materials. It would be helpful to know how many of these themes are shared amongst other cohorts (Advanced Standing, Full Time, and other Part Time cohorts) and how many are truly unique to the experience of the Saturday cohort.

### Alternative look at field education for Saturday Cohort?

Many students called for a look at the current field education expectations, and desired increased flexibility or other modifications to the current model. A look at how evolving the current model for field education could be beneficial to the growth and strength of the program.

### Increasing diversity within the Saturday Program cohort.

The specific focus of the Saturday Program cohort is Leadership and Social Justice. Within that very vein, it is critical that we examine the current recruiting processes for the Saturday Program cohort and evaluate interventions and best practices to increase diversity within the cohort.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thank you to the School of Social Work, and the College of Graduate Studies who supported this study.

And to the MSW Saturday Cohort for their time, their willingness to share, and their dedication to the field.