Human Service

3 Points of the Triangle

Please describe how your Department contributes to the 3 Points of the Triangle:

I. Liberal Arts Foundation (200 word limit)

SOU's Human Service program combines coursework from two core liberal arts disciplines—Sociology and Psychology, in an effort to provide a broad, or liberal, base of knowledge for future human service professionals. The dual-disciplinary nature of the program is consistent with a liberal arts education that aims to create well-rounded individuals who have the tools to navigate complex social issues. Human Service students receive foundational education in Sociology and Psychology through required introductory courses. As they move deeper into the curriculum they are asked to sharpen and add complexity to their disciplinary knowledge while building practical skills based on this emergent knowledge. This means that Human Service graduates have the intellectual grounding and practical skills to be innovative in addressing challenges and social problems. Their expansive liberal arts training allows them to broaden their horizons and think creatively about making positive individual, family, and social change.

II. Regionally Responsive (200 word limit)

There is a recognized community-wide need for human service professionals who can assist with significant psycho-social issues stemming from the pandemic, the Almeda fire, and poverty and houselessness. SOU's Human Service community advisory board, which includes members working in a variety of areas and capacities within the local human service field, ensures that the program is regionally responsive with regard to the content of its curriculum and the modality of its coursework. Human Service students are required to complete a minimum of 270 hours of practicum work in human service agencies. In this capacity students fill gaps in the local human service workforce and are directly engaged in responding to community needs. Knowing that problems associated with drug use are a recognized issue in the Rogue Valley, the Human Service program provides significant course content in the sociology of drug use, which asks students to think critically and innovate beneficial responses. Recently, research among Human Service faculty has sought to understand the health and social support impacts of the Almeda fire on older adults. This research connects directly to community need and its findings have been interwoven into course lectures and activities so that students may learn from faculty research.

III. Creativity and Innovation (200 word limit)

SOU's Human Service program aims to creatively and continuously revise its curriculum to be cutting edge in the field and respond to community need. Through coursework in both Sociology and Psychology, Human Service students are asked to change and broaden their perspectives and innovate for positive social change. The program's capstone project requires students to assess community need and design a comprehensive human service program that targets a local social problem. Given the leeway to be creative and use their imagination, students have designed programs that innovatively and efficiently address housing, drug use, family, and food security issues, among others. In this way creativity and innovation are baked into the Human Service curriculum and a requirement for graduation. Human Service students are given the intellectual groundwork and practical tools through our curriculum, and then, given the time, space, and opportunity to be creative and regionally engaged. In Human Service coursework student are often called upon to offer new ideas on how thorny social problems might be addressed. Students enter the Human Service program because they want to innovate and make positive social change and we provide them with the tools and opportunities to do it.