



# 2018 CWUPP EVALUATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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We employed a mixed methods evaluation design to assess the degree to which the Ohio Child Welfare University Partnership Program (CWUPP) is achieving statewide program objectives. We utilized student surveys, supervisor surveys, syllabi reviews, focus groups, and secondary data analyses to answer four research questions.

1. To what degree is there fidelity in CWUPP coursework across the eight participating CWUPP universities?
2. To what degree do technology-based learning labs facilitate job preparedness?
3. How many Ohio PCSAs accept interns and/or hire CWUPP graduates?
4. Are CWUPP program objectives being met?

Findings from student surveys, syllabi review, and focus groups suggest that there is substantial variation in CWUPP coursework across the eight universities and the greatest variation is specific to the assessment of safety. Findings from student surveys, supervisor surveys, and focus groups suggest that the technology-based learning labs are of benefit to CWUPP students and graduates, specifically in the areas of documenting key child welfare processes in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

There was an increase in the number of counties accepting CWUPP interns and hiring CWUPP graduates and students reported being willing to seek employment at PCSAs outside of their county of residence, thus suggesting the reach of the CWUPP continues to grow.

Overall CWUPP appears to be achieving desired program objectives. Supervisors of CWUPP graduates note that they are more prepared and more confident in their work than newly hired caseworkers who are not CWUPP graduates. Findings from student focus groups highlighted the strengths of the program and identified areas for improvement.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Objectives

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the Child Welfare University Partnership Program (CWUPP) is achieving established program goals. The goal of the CWUPP is to prepare graduates from public university social work programs for long-term careers in public child welfare. The purpose of the CWUPP is to positively influence recruitment and retention in public child welfare while increasing new staff's readiness to provide quality services to children and their families.

We have four objectives for this research: (1) to assess the fidelity of child welfare coursework at the eight participating CWUPP universities; (2) to assess the degree to which technology-based learning labs facilitate job preparedness; (3) to assess the utilization of CWUPP interns and graduates by Public Children Services Agencies; and (4) to assure program objectives are being met.

## Background and Rationale

For many years, public children services agency administrators have been challenged by locating and retaining a child welfare workforce that is skilled to do the complex job of assuring child safety and promoting child and family well-being. The cost of turnover to child welfare agencies can be quite costly. One estimate suggests that filling a child welfare caseworker vacancy can cost \$10,000 (Graef & Hill, 2000). Title IV-E University- Agency partnerships have emerged as one approach to address this challenge (Ausbrooks, Benton, Smith, & Wildeberger, 2014). These partnerships allow states to use Title IV-E dollars to support university social work programs that provide social work students with specialized knowledge and expertise in child welfare. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act represents a large federal investment in child welfare training (Rheume, Collins, & Amodeo, 2011) and forty states are using these dollars to support these programs.

Research has long demonstrated the benefits of these university-agency collaborations. In Kentucky, caseworkers who completed the Title IV-E program were more likely to perform federal and state best practices than caseworkers who did not complete the

program (Barbee, et al., 2009). In her evaluation of the California Title IV-E university-agency partnership, Bagdasaryan (2012) found that MSW students who participated in the partnership's specialized education had greater child welfare knowledge than those who did not. Similarly, a study of BSW Title IV-E alumni found that these caseworkers were more likely to adhere to social work practice principles, had confidence in their abilities, and felt they were able to meet job expectations (Falk, 2015).

Research points to the positive effects of these partnerships on recruitment and retention (Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research, 2005) (Barbee, et al., 2009) (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2009). In her longitudinal survey of over 289 Title IV-E program alumni, Falk (2015) found that the average attrition rate for program graduates was approximately 4.4% as compared to 7.8% for caseload carrying staff who did not participate in the program. The strengths of these university-agency collaborations have been identified by many states (Rheaume, Collins, & Amodeo, 2011). Through these partnerships, states have observed increased resource sharing amongst universities and agencies; positive working relationships between agencies and universities; increased access to convenient child welfare training; and enhanced professionalism of the workforce and increased recruitment and retention of the child welfare workforce.

### *Preparing Students for Careers in Child Welfare*

In order to increase recruitment and retention of a skilled child welfare workforce, Ohio's public children service agencies, in collaboration with the Institute for Human Services, on behalf of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio began to explore implementing a Title IV-E university-agency partnership in Ohio in the late 1990's. By the early 2000's several public universities with accredited social work degree programs had agreed to partner with public children services agencies to provide a unique child welfare educational experience to increase the recruitment and retention of a skilled child welfare workforce. This program, the Child Welfare University Partnership Program (CWUPP) accepted its first students at The Ohio State University in 2002, with the University of Toledo, Ohio University, and Wright State University joining to accept students in 2003. Since that time, the University of Cincinnati, Youngstown State University, the University of Akron, and Cleveland State

University have joined the program, making the CWUPP available at eight of Ohio's public universities.

The CWUPP has been guided by a statewide steering committee to shape the curriculum and field experience of BSW and MSW social work students to assure program participants graduate prepared for a career in child welfare. Students in the program are required to complete two child welfare courses as part of their education, participate in a field placement at one of Ohio's 85 Public Children Service Agencies (PCSAs), gain employment at one of Ohio's PCSAs within six months of graduation, and complete one or two years of employment at the PCSA (depending on length of program commitment). In exchange for their commitment, students receive a one-time incentive. If a student fails to complete the required time commitment, they are required to repay some or all of the incentive to the CWUPP.

All participating universities are required to offer two child welfare courses that contain the same content as the mandatory Caseworker Core training provided to all new child welfare caseworkers in the State of Ohio. CWUPP graduates who complete the child welfare coursework are eligible to receive a waiver for participation in seven of the eight modules of Caseworker Core which reduces training and onboarding time for CWUPP graduates hired at PCSAs.

During the initial implementation of CWUPP, universities felt strongly that they should be permitted to maintain academic freedom as it pertains to the child welfare courses, while PCSAO and ODJFS desired standardization of course content across all participating universities. It was decided that the courses would use of the same textbooks, however universities would maintain the freedom to supplement with additional readings, create assignments, and determine how much course time is allotted to each of the required topics. This ultimately resulted in substantial difference in child welfare coursework across the eight universities. The difference in course content likely resulted in inconsistencies of CWUPP graduates' preparation for work in child welfare. To resolve these discrepancies, the CWUPP steering committee began implementing attempts to reduce variability in graduate preparedness. Efforts included the development of guidelines for field placement activities and syllabi review. Although these efforts were notable, barriers to implementation remained. Actual practice in each of Ohio's 88 PCSAs practices differs slightly, thus each internship experience differs. There is considerable variation in CWUPP university instructors'

and coordinators' knowledge and expertise in child welfare, which contributes to variations in how they teach the courses.

In 2016, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) revised half of the mandatory Caseworker Core training to include substantial content on several of the Child Welfare Best Practices adopted in Ohio's PCSAs in the last decade. The revision of these courses presented an opportunity to increase similarity of instruction across the CWUPP universities. To this end, the OCWTP developed new course syllabi to reflect the changes in content, the expected time to address each content portion, recommended assignments, and recommended readings for each topic. The OCWTP provided each university and all instructors with curricula, syllabi, assignments and rubrics, readings, and PowerPoint presentations. All CWUPP coordinators and instructors were required to attend a four-day training to learn the new content and establish a minimum foundation of expertise for CWUPP course instructors. CWUPP instructors agreed to begin implementing new content, assignments, and readings in the Autumn Semester of 2016. At the time, syllabi were reviewed for consistency by program evaluators and it was determined that a substantial amount of inconsistency still existed. In the Summer of 2017, both Child Welfare course syllabi were revised again to provide direction about the order and quantity of time to spend on each Caseworker Core module.

In addition to the change of content in the Child Welfare courses, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) developed technology-based learning labs for new child welfare caseworkers to apply the skills and concepts learned in the workshops and prepare them to use the State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). The CWUPP steering committee felt strongly that CWUPP graduates should be skilled in use of SACWIS as part of their preparedness for their career in Child Welfare. Since university instructors may not be knowledgeable about SACWIS and could not be expected to train those learning labs, it was decided that CWUPP students would be strongly encouraged, and at some universities, required, to complete the learning labs through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.

## Significance

Since 2002, over 660 students have graduated from the CWUPP at one of the eight participating universities and 466 of those graduates have gained employment in 57 of Ohio's 88 counties. This illustrates the impact the CWUPP has on Ohio's Child Welfare workforce and subsequently children and families involved in Ohio's Child Welfare system.

## Research Methods

**Research Design.** We employed a mixed methods research design to answer the identified research questions.

1. To what degree is there fidelity in CWUPP coursework across the eight participating CWUPP universities?
2. To what degree do technology-based learning labs facilitate job preparedness?
3. How many Ohio PCSAs accept interns and/or hire CWUPP graduates?
4. Are CWUPP program objectives being met?

We utilized a one-group posttest-only design to partially answer research questions 1, 2 and 4. We surveyed CWUPP students who graduated in the Spring of 2018 to assess their level of knowledge on key child welfare concepts that are required for inclusion in the course curricula and how prepared they feel to do entry level child welfare work. In addition, we asked specific questions about how the child welfare learning labs contributed to their feelings of preparedness. To provide further insight into research questions 2 and 4 we surveyed CWUPP field supervisors and hiring supervisors. We asked field supervisors and hiring supervisors about CWUPP student intern and graduate preparedness for child welfare work and their perception of the preparedness of CWUPP student interns and graduates as it specifically pertains to the use of child welfare specific technology.

We conducted a focus group with CWUPP students at each of the eight universities. Focus group content was analyzed and themed and utilized to provide additional insight into each of the identified research questions. We triangulated focus group

findings, student survey results, and supervisor survey results to answer research question two.

In addition to the surveys and focus groups outlined above, we conducted a document review of university syllabi for both child welfare courses to answer research question one. We reviewed the syllabi to determine consistency or discrepancy in required course readings, graded assignments, content, and time given to key concepts. We triangulated the results of the document review with student survey responses and focus group findings to answer research question one.

We utilized secondary data analysis to answer research questions three and four. Since 2009, CWUPP coordinators have utilized a statewide, shared database to track student application, admission to the program, field placement, employment status, program completion, and program termination if required. We conducted analyses on particular fields in this database to understand which PCSA's are hiring and or allowing CWUPP interns to be placed in their agency. We triangulated the data from the cohort survey, the document review, student focus groups, and the statewide database to determine if key program objectives are being met.

**Sample.** Participants in this study include social work students who participated in the CWUPP at one of the eight participating CWUPP universities and child welfare supervisors who have supervised a CWUPP intern or recently graduated new hire in 2017 or 2018. The student sample frame was students earning either their Master of Social Work or Bachelor of Social Work degree by completing the required child welfare coursework and field placement at an Ohio PCSA. All CWUPP students who were graduating in Spring Semester of 2018 were invited to complete the survey prior to graduation.

Fifty-eight students completed the student survey, a response rate of 90.63%. Response rates varied by university (Table 1). Sixty-eight students participated in the student focus groups, a response rate of 95.7%.

**Table 1. Student Survey Response Rates**

University	Number of students	Number of students completing survey	Response rate
Cleveland State University	6	6	100%
Ohio University	10	9	90%
The Ohio State University	13	12	92%
University of Akron	6	6	100%
University of Cincinnati	9	7	78%
University of Toledo	6	4	67%
Wright State University	8	8	100%
Youngstown State University	6	6	100%
Total	64	58	90.63%

The supervisor sample frame included all child welfare supervisors who supervised a CWUPP intern in field placement in 2017-2018 academic year or who supervised a CWUPP graduate who graduated in 2017 from the CWUPP. We emailed 62 supervisors and invited them to complete the survey, only 28 consented to participate and completed the survey. This is a response rate of 45.2%. We sent an email reminder to supervisors one week prior to the survey close. Of the 62 emails sent, three emails were returned as undeliverable and six emails bounced back, resulting in a 14.5% non-delivery rate.

**Measurement/Instrumentation.** We collected data using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. The first instrument was a questionnaire for CWUPP students developed by the researchers to evaluate research questions 1, 2 and 4. The questionnaire was designed to assess student knowledge of key child welfare concepts, student application of key child welfare concepts to case scenarios, and student perception of preparedness for a career in Ohio child welfare. The 45-item questionnaire was administered to all CWUPP students graduating in Spring of 2018 via electronic survey software. Students were invited to participate in the survey during class or seminar or on their own time. CWUPP cohorts that achieved over an eighty percent response rate were provided a small celebration with refreshments in a subsequent meeting. All students who completed the survey were entered to win an iPad Pro. Thirty-eight of the items on the questionnaire pertained to specific child welfare course content. The questionnaire is moderately reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .795. The questionnaire included items pertaining to key child welfare concepts introduced in CWUPP Child Welfare coursework specific to six domains: Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Family-Centered Practice, Fact Gathering, Service Planning, and Permanency.

The second instrument is a questionnaire we developed to evaluate research questions 2 and 4. This survey was administered to child welfare supervisors to assess their perception of student preparedness as a whole and the degree to which training labs contributed to job preparedness.

The third source of data was university child welfare course syllabi. There are eight participating universities and each university is required to offer both a Child Welfare 1 course and a Child Welfare 2 course; in total there were 16 syllabi to review. The fourth data source is the data in the statewide shared database. Data for each student admitted to the CWUPP since 2002 is housed in this database.

The fifth data source for this evaluation was student focus groups conducted in the Fall of 2017 and Spring of 2018 at each of the eight participating universities. The statewide CWUPP coordinator conducted these focus groups.

## Research Question 1:

### To what degree is there fidelity in CWUPP coursework across the eight participating CWUPP universities?

#### **Methods.** *Student surveys*

We coded each relevant student survey item as correct or incorrect and calculated an overall score and scores for each of the domains. We analyzed the scores via SPSS utilizing descriptive statistics, and ANOVA with post-hoc analysis. We calculated correlations between University and overall score and each domain to determine if there was a relationship between university attended and scores. The histogram for student scores in each domain and overall indicated one case was an extreme negative outlier. This case was excluded from all analyses.

#### *Document review of syllabi*

We conducted a document review of the syllabi for the eight CWUPP universities' child welfare courses. We sought to determine course comparability across universities by examining three components.

1. How much time did each university spend on each topic area?
2. What percentage of required student readings aligned with the recommended reading list?
3. What percentage of course assignments aligned with the recommended course assignments?

In the Summer of 2016, when portions of Caseworker Core were revised, the state training coordinator provided a recommended Child Welfare 1 syllabus to CWUPP instructors at a four-day-long training on course content. In the Summer of 2017, this syllabus was revised, and a recommended syllabus was created for both Child Welfare 1 and Child Welfare 2. These recommended syllabi, complete with timelines, course assignments, and readings were used as the basis for comparison. We analyzed each university syllabus to identify the number of weeks spent on each content area, the

number of required readings that aligned with the recommended reading list, and the number of assignments that aligned with the recommended course assignments.

We analyzed focus groups conducted by the state CWUPP coordinator for additional insight into child welfare courses.

**Results.** *Student survey*

The average overall score for all students on the questionnaire items was 78%. The range of average scores for each domain is presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Student Assessment Scores*

<b>Student Assessment Scores</b>	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.66 % - 85%</b>
<b>Safety Assessment</b>	<b>43% - 77.1%</b>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<b>80% - 100%</b>
<b>Family-Centered Practice</b>	<b>60.9% - 96.4%</b>
<b>Fact Gathering</b>	<b>70% - 95.8%</b>
<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>69.6% - 91.9%</b>
<b>Permanency</b>	<b>61.9% - 90.7%</b>

We conducted a one-way ANOVA to determine if differences in scores by university were statistically significant. The ANOVA for the overall score, safety assessment, Family-Centered practice, and Case Planning was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) suggesting that there is difference in these scores by some universities. We conducted a Tukey’s HSD analysis of overall scores to determine which university scores differed significantly. Table 3 provides further information about differences by domain.

Table 3. Score Differences Across Universities

University	Overall	Safety Assessment	Risk Assessment	Family-Centered Practice	Fact Gathering	Service Planning	Permanency
Cleveland State University	OU*, UA*, UC*	All*	NS	NS	NS	UC*	NS
Ohio University	CSU*	CSU*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
The Ohio State University	NS	CSU*	NS	NS	NS	UC*	NS
University of Akron	CSU*	CSU*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
University of Cincinnati	CSU*	CSU*	NS	WSU*	NS	OSU*, YSU*	NS
University of Toledo	NS	CSU*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Wright State University	NS	CSU*	NS	UC*	NS	NS	NS
Youngstown State University	NS	CSU*	NS	NS	NS	UC*	NS

NS= Not statistically significant.

\*Denotes significant difference between identified universities.

We calculated correlations between area of practice and assessment scores overall and in each domain. There were no significant relationships between area of practice (where the student completed their placement activities) and assessment scores, nor was there a relationship between number of practice areas and assessment scores. We also examined relationships between placement activities and assessment scores. No significant relationships existed between placement activities and assessment scores,

nor was there a relationship between number of placement activities and assessment scores.

We calculated correlations between university and overall scores and each domain. There was a moderate, significant relationship between university and the overall score ( $r=.427$ ,  $p=.001$ ) as well as between university and Safety Assessment score ( $r=.522$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Additional correlations are displayed in table 4.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

		Overall score	Safety Assessment	Family assessment	Family Centered Practice	Fact Gathering	Service Planning	Permanency
University	Pearson Correlation	.427	.522	.201	.154	.255	.156	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.300	.002	.114	.829	.417	.590	.779
	N	57	57	57	58	58	58	58

The number of weeks dedicated to particular course content varied by university. One university utilized a course timeline that aligned exactly with the recommended course timeline. Results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Content Timeline by University

Module	Recommended	Range of number of weeks allocated
Core 1	4 weeks	4 – 8
Core 2	2 weeks	2 - 3
Core 4	5 Weeks	3 - 8
Core 5	4 weeks	1 - 4
Core 6	5 Weeks	0 - 5
Core 7	3 Weeks	3 - 7
Core 8	5 Weeks	3 - 8

We investigated the relationship between time spent on specific core modules and overall score, safety assessment score, risk assessment score, and case planning score. There was a small, significant relationship between time spent on Caseworker Core module IV content (Assessment and safety planning) and overall safety assessment score ( $r=.281$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and between time spent on Core IV and service planning score ( $r=.289$ ,  $p<.01$ ). There was a small to moderate relationship between time spent on Core IV and risk assessment score ( $r=.388$ ,  $p <.05$ ). These scores are not surprising given the importance of quality assessment in understanding and completing quality case plans. The percentage of readings and assignments that aligned with the recommended syllabi varied as well. Results are displayed in Table 6.

*Table 6. Reading and assignment alignment by university.*

	CSU	OU	OSU	UA	UC	UT	WSU	YSU
Readings	32%	93%	24%	53%	43%	41%	59%	55%
Assignments	57%	86%	14.3%	28.5%	86%	42.9%	42.9%	57%

We investigated the relationship between overall score and adherence to recommended readings and assignments, there were no significant relationships. Although there were seven recommended assignments, four of the recommended assignments are integral to applying key child welfare concepts. These assignments, Safety Assessment, Safety Plan, Family Assessment, and Case Plan comprise the very fundamental knowledge and skill required to do child welfare work in Ohio. Seventy-five percent of the universities required students to complete a safety assessment and safety plan as a course assignment, only 50% of the universities required students to complete a family assessment, and 37.5% required students to complete a case plan. Universities utilized other assignments as well.

These included:

- Present a PowerPoint presentation on Developmental Disabilities
- Midterm exam
- Debate Paper
- Final Exam

- Resource Guide
- Research Paper
- Case referral

While many of these assignments are relevant to child welfare practice, the assigned topics of the assignments do not reinforce the application of key child welfare knowledge and skills required to practice child welfare in Ohio.

### *Student Focus Group Findings*

***Theme 1. Course.*** In general, respondents had positive comments about the Child Welfare courses.

- “It was an easier class because you can pay attention and apply it immediately.”
- “Compared to the other social work classes I feel ten times more prepared to enter the field.”
- “This class was more real, taught us what to expect, she gave us real life examples and her experience is invaluable.”

***Theme 2. Instructors.*** Respondents value the CWUPP instructors’ previous child welfare experience and passion for the work.

- “She has so much experience and real-life examples and that makes it so much more enjoyable.”
- “He is child welfare through and through, knows his stuff backwards and forwards, he motivates me.”
- “More knowledgeable than any other instructors, experienced.”
- “She is passionate, knowledgeable and has a lot of experience in the field.”
- “I like that she has so much child welfare experience herself and she is so strength-based. She lets us know we can do it too.”

***Theme 3. Course Readings.*** Respondents were pleased with the assortment of readings and not having to purchase a textbook. They found the readings appropriate and useful.

- “It was amazing not to have to purchase a textbook, the readings are much less intimidating, more relevant and more manageable.”
- “It was great not to have a text and still have worthwhile material to read.”
- “I liked the readings because I knew why we were reading it and that it related to what we would be doing.”

While the students were grateful not to have to purchase a textbook, many students still referenced the Field Guide to Child Welfare:

- “My placement had a copy and I will use it always.”

***Theme 4. Classroom Topics.*** Respondents identified 16 different classroom topics that directly related to the work they were doing in the field. The most frequently mentioned were:

- Assessment skills (e.g. safety, family) including use of CAPMIS tools and case planning
- Family engagement strategies
- Stages of normal child development and the impact of abuse & neglect
- Identifying child abuse and neglect. One student commented:

“After what I learned in class about the different stages of bruises I was able to show the agency that the abuse had been going on for a while.”

Other topics identified included: diversity, life books, trauma, child welfare laws, difference between AR and TR, and “make friends with everyone including the receptionist.” Many respondents also said:

“The entire class was helpful, everything we saw in the field we had covered in class.”

***Theme 5. Integrate Coursework and Field.*** Respondents had very few recommendations about how to improve the integration of course work with the field experiences. The only suggestion provided more than one time (4) was to do more on case flow, (i.e., take a case from beginning to end).

“My instructor did a great job of matching what we covered in class with what we were doing in the field. When we were learning about safety assessments we were doing them in the field.”

**Analysis.** The variability across university course syllabi and assessment scores suggests while there is some similarity across course content and students’ level of knowledge, there are substantial differences across universities in how the courses are taught. When examining overall scores, t-test results, correlations, and syllabi reviews, it is notable that there is a positive relationship between safety overall score and university and safety assessment score and university. This relationship may be further explained by the small relationships between the recommended amount of time spent on assessment in the coursework and the student scores in the safety assessment domain, family assessment domain, and the case planning domain. Notably, the university that spent the most time on assessing safety had the highest assessment scores in that domain. Further, universities were more likely to have greater consistency across readings and assignments when the assignments and readings were clearly identified in the recommended syllabus template.

It is also important to note that the mean for student assessments was 78%, at most universities, this translates to a C+, the average scores by university ranged from 66% to 85.0%, or roughly, a D- to a B. In general, this suggests that there is room to improve quality of course content and course consistency across all eight universities.

The student assessment process and syllabi review are not without limitation. Specifically, the assessment was administered as a survey and students were not given opportunity to study prior to completion, therefore, student scores may be lower than if they had an opportunity to study. Further, in many cases, we cannot determine if the scores were definitively a result of the Child Welfare Course content or if they were influenced by extraneous variables (field agency practice, existing knowledge, etc.). In addition, in some cases, university syllabi did not include a listing of required readings and therefore, it is possible that some universities did require more of the required readings, but the information was not provided in the syllabus.

According to focus group findings, student experiences in the courses were generally positive. They value the instructors’ experiences and passion for child welfare. They were pleased with the assortment of reading materials. Focus group findings confirm

the focus on assessment and the use of CAPMIS tools at many of the CWUPP universities.

**Recommendations.** The CWUPP and ODJFS will need to determine the desired degree of consistency of instruction across universities. The following strategies may be employed to increase consistency.

1. Provide more detailed syllabi templates for both Child Welfare 1 and Child Welfare 2 courses.
2. Provide course instructors electronic resources with all recommended readings.
3. Assure all course instructors complete a training on content for relevant course modules.
4. Adjust course timelines to align with recommended timelines for course content and assure all modules receive recommended time.
5. Establish a benchmark for improvement in overall scores and seek to achieve the benchmark in the coming year.
6. Assure key assignments (Safety Assessment, Safety Plan, Family Assessment, Case Plan) are required by each university.
7. Make explicit the expectation that instructors follow the syllabi provided by the OCWTP.

## **Research Question 2.**

**To what degree do technology-based learning labs facilitate job preparedness?**

The previous CWUPP evaluation showed that students lacked formal opportunities to learn relevant aspects of SACWIS. Additionally, the 2016 changes to Caseworker Core included learning labs on utilizing SACWIS, which needed to be incorporated into Child Welfare classes. To respond to this issue, the CWUPP coordinators and OCWTP state coordinator decided to roll some of the Caseworker Core, technology-based

learning labs into the CWUPP. In the 2016/2017 school year, four universities (UC, OU, AU, CSU) piloted learning labs (which include learning SACWIS) for Caseworker Core Modules IV and VI. The response was so overwhelmingly positive, the program decided to offer these labs to all CWUPP students in the 2017-2018 school year.

**Method.** *Student questionnaire*

We also utilized the 45-item questionnaire described earlier in this report to assess student perception of preparedness for child welfare practice. Three items assessed student perception of learning labs. All items used a five-point Likert agreement scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

*Survey to supervisors of interns and newly hired CWUPP graduates*

We administered, via electronic survey technology, a 30-item questionnaire to recent CWUPP field and hiring supervisors. We contacted supervisors via email and invited them to participate in the survey. Supervisor email addresses were provided by the CWUPP campus coordinators and retrieved from the CWUPP database and/or communication with CWUPP campus coordinators.

*Student focus group findings*

The state CWUPP coordinator conducted focus groups with current CWUPP students. In these focus groups students were asked about their experiences in the learning labs.

**Results.** Approximately 71% of survey respondents completed all three of the available corresponding technology-based learning labs. An additional 12.1% completed two of the labs, 1.7% completed only one lab, and 15.5% report they did not complete any of the technology-based learning labs. Lab attendance by university is included in Table 7.

Table 7. Student attendance at learning labs.

University	All three labs	Two labs	One lab	No lab	Assessing Safety	Assessing Strengths and Needs	Service Planning
Cleveland State University	50%	33.3%	16.7%	0	100%	83.3%	50%
Ohio University	100%	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%
The Ohio State University	16.7%	16.7%	0	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%
University of Akron	100%	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%
University of Cincinnati	71.4%	28.6%	0	0	85.7%	85.7%	100%
University of Toledo	100%	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%
Wright State University	100%	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%
Youngstown State University	66.7%	16.7%	0	16.7%	83.3%	83.3%	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>74.1%</b>

Seventy-four percent of respondents agreed that their participation in the technology-based learning labs helped them feel more prepared to be a caseworker. Seventy-one percent agreed that the learning labs were a valuable use of their time and 73% agreed that the practices taught in the learning labs aligned with what was taught in their field placement agency. Complete results are provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Student perception of learning lab experience.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Did not complete
Participation helped feel prepared	36.2%	37.9%	8.6%	0%	3.4%	13.8%
Valuable use of time	36.2%	34.5%	12.1%	0%	3.4%	13.8%
Practices in lab aligned with agency	39.7%	32.8%	8.6%	3.4%	1.7%	13.8%

We examined correlations between student performance on the 45 assessment questions and lab attendance. We did not find significant relationships between student lab attendance and overall student scores on the assessment. There were no significant relationships between student lab attendance and student scores on any of the individual domains as well. There was no relationship between student attendance of the Assessing Safety lab and their score in the Safety Assessment domain nor was there a relationship between student attendance at the Assessing Strengths and Needs and Risk of Future Harm lab and their score in the Family Assessment domain. There was a small to moderate relationship between student attendance of the Service Planning lab and their overall score ( $r=.40$ ) and their score in the service planning domain ( $r=.343$ ).

Eighty-nine percent of supervisor survey respondents indicated they had supervised a CWUPP intern since the technology-based labs were implemented in 2017 and 46.4% indicated they had supervised a CWUPP graduate since the technology-based labs were implemented. Response by university is displayed in Table 9.

Table 9. Supervisor survey response rates.

University	Supervised Intern (n=22*)	Supervised Graduate (n=13)*
CSU	3.6%	0%
OU	7.2%	7.7%

Table 9. continued

University	Supervised Intern (n=22*)	Supervised Graduate (n=13)*
OSU	21.4%	53.9%
UA	7.2%	0
UC	17.9%	7.7%
UT	3.6%	0%
WSU	14.3%	15.4%
YSU	3.6%	7.7%

\*Percent total is greater than 100% because some supervisors reported supervising graduates from multiple universities.

Of respondents who supervised CWUPP interns **who had completed the labs**, 73.4% agreed that the learning labs were integral in preparing CWUPP interns for a career in Ohio’s child welfare agencies. Complete responses to supervisor items are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Supervisor perception of CWUPP interns.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opportunity
The CWUPP intern understood the importance of documenting activities in SACWIS.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0	0
The CWUPP intern had the skill to create a safety assessment in SACWIS.	20%	80%	0	0	0	0
The CWUPP intern had the skill to create a safety plan in SACWIS.	13.3%	60%	6.7%	0	0	13.3%

Table 10. continued

The CWUPP intern had the skill to create a Family Assessment in SACWIS.	26.7%	66.7%	0	0	0	0
The CWUPP intern had the skill to create a family service/case plan in SACWIS.	33.3%	26.7%	6.7%	13.3%	0	13.3%
The Caseworker Core learning labs were integral in preparing the CWUPP intern for a career in Ohio's child welfare agencies.	26.7%	46.7%	13.3%	13.3%	0	0

We conducted an Independent Samples t-test for equality of means to determine if there was a difference in supervisor perception based upon student attendance at learning labs. Results suggest that supervisor perception of student skills relative to creating a Safety Assessment in SACWIS ( $p=.000$ ) and creating a Family Assessment in SACWIS ( $p=.000$ ) were higher than for those students who did not complete the learning labs.

85.7% of respondents who supervised CWUPP graduates **who completed the labs** agreed that the Caseworker Core learning labs were integral in preparing the CWUPP graduate for a career in Ohio's child welfare agencies. Complete responses to supervisor items are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Supervisor perception of CWUPP graduates.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opportunity
The CWUPP graduate understands the importance of documenting activities in SACWIS.	42.9%	57.1%	0	0	0	0

Table 11. continued

The CWUPP graduate has the skill to create a safety assessment in SACWIS.	28.6%	71.4%	0	0	0	0
The CWUPP graduate has the skill to create a safety plan in SACWIS.	14.3%	71.4%	0%	0	0	14.3%
The CWUPP graduate has the skill to create a Family Assessment in SACWIS.	42.9%	57.1%	0	0	0	0
The CWUPP graduate has the skill to create a family service/case plan in SACWIS.	42.9%	28.6%	0	14.3%	0	14.3%
The Caseworker Core learning labs were integral in preparing the CWUPP graduate for a career in Ohio's child welfare agencies.	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0	0	0

We conducted an Independent Samples t-test for equality of means to determine if there was a difference in supervisor perception based upon student attendance at learning labs. Although there were no statistically significant differences in supervisor perception of student skill for those students who attended learning labs versus those who did not, supervisors' perceptions of CWUPP graduates who attended learning labs were slightly higher than perceptions of supervisors of CWUPP graduates who did not attend learning labs. This analysis was limited by the small sample size (n=13).

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## *STUDENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS*

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Seven of the eight universities offered learning labs specifically for CWUPP students. Overall the feedback was very positive. For example:

“Very helpful, informative. I liked getting the SACWIS exposure as a learner.”

“Allowed us to apply knowledge and get feedback.”

**Theme 1. Impressions.** Respondents shared their impressions about three key areas, trainers, content, and application. The shared comments about the quality of the trainers of learning labs:

“Great instructors, they incorporated their personal experiences.”

“Our trainer was amazing, awesome, she really kept me interested.”

Respondents found the content of the learning labs valuable:

“Learning about safety assessment and case planning was really helpful.”

“Talking about casework is good, but doing it was great.”

Respondents valued the opportunities for application provided in the learning labs:

“They were proactive and hands on and we got to work alone and get our questions answered.”

“It was hands on. That helped us learn more.”

**Theme 2. Timing.** The ideal timing for the labs would be to offer them just after the content is taught in class and when the students are practicing the skill in the field.

Respondents from four universities felt the timing was perfect:

“I was learning how to do assessments and case planning just when I did the labs.”

“I was able to use the content from the labs as soon as we took them.”

Respondents from three universities felt the timing could have been improved:

“I think we should have had all three labs in the first semester.”

“The first two days should have been done in September as we were doing assessments in the field then.”

**Theme 3. Relevance of Content.** All students felt they were able to use the content learned in the labs:

“It was very nice to be able to demonstrate I knew how to do things we learned in the labs in the field.”

“I needed the labs to tie up loose ends and get questions answered.”

Students from two agencies reported the content taught in the labs was not the way their field placement did things, especially the case plan:

“What I was taught in the learning labs was not the way my field placement did things.”

**Theme 4. Preparedness.** One hundred percent of the focus group respondents felt the labs helped build their confidence to work in the child welfare field:

“A good foundation for actually doing the work. A nice appetizer.”

“I feel more comfortable and competent to do the work.”

**Theme 5. Recommendations.** Respondents had few recommendations on improving the labs. Most were related to scheduling:

“Give us more upfront notice of when they are scheduled.”

“We need a more central location.”

“I would have liked the first day of LL IV earlier in the semester and been able to practice what we learned prior to break. By the time we got back from break I forgot how to enter them into SACWIS.”

**Theme 6. Barriers to attendance.** Some respondents had to rearrange their schedules to attend the learning labs.

- 52% of the students attended the labs on their field days.
- 45% had to reschedule work to attend
- 3% had to miss class to attend

In spite of having to miss work and travel a long distance to attend the learning labs, respondents felt the labs were worth it and recommended adding learning labs on the SAR and legal aspects of child welfare practice to the CWUPP as well.

“It was worth the hike.”

**Analysis.** Students and supervisors generally agreed that student participation in technology-based learning labs helped caseworkers be more prepared. This perception was affirmed by student survey responses, student focus groups and supervisor survey responses. Supervisors reported that students who completed the labs seemed to have greater skill in creating safety assessments and family assessments in SACWIS than those who did not complete the labs. Findings relative to attending the service planning lab suggest that students who performed better in the service planning domain of the assessment were more likely to have attended the service planning lab. This offers some affirmation that the lab may have increased students' knowledge relative to service planning. Interestingly, students in focus groups reported service planning was the area most likely to be different in agency practice than was introduced in the learning lab. Although respondents identified a few challenges related to timing, location and scheduling of the learning labs, their opinions confirm integrating Caseworker Core, technology-based Learning Labs into the CWUPP experience has addressed many of the concerns cited in the prior CWUPP evaluation related to use of SACWIS and the students' desire to have greater exposure. Last year's respondents frequently identified a need to integrate practice doing safety planning, assessment, and case planning in SACWIS into the CWUPP experience. Use of the learning labs allowed this to occur.

**Recommendations.** Several strategies will likely increase the benefit of the learning labs to the CWUPP.

1. Require all CWUPP students attend learning labs.
2. Continue to streamline the offering of the learning labs in locations and at times when CWUPP students are able to attend.
3. Consider offering learning labs at times that correspond with the delivery of relevant content in the courses.

### Research Question 3:

## How many Ohio PCSAs accept interns and/or hire CWUPP graduates?

**Methods.** We analyzed data from the statewide CWUPP database to identify how many PCSAs accepted interns and hired CWUPP graduates. We analyzed relevant student focus group data as well.

**Results.** CWUPP continues to expand their reach with CWUPP interns and graduates. In the 2017-2018 school year, two CWUPP interns were placed in counties who had never accepted CWUPP placements before, Pike and Clinton. In addition, four PCSAs hired CWUPP graduates for the first time: Jefferson, Licking, Shelby, and Wood. A complete list of counties who have accepted interns since the program's inception is presented in Table 12 and a complete list of counties who have hired CWUPP graduates since the program's inception is presented in Table 13.

Table 12. CWUPP Placement Agencies.

Placement Agency	Number of Placements
Allen	1
Ashland	1
Ashtabula	2
Athens	47
Belmont	6
Brown	4

Table 13. CWUPP Hiring Agencies.

Hiring Agency	#of UPP Grads Hired
Ashland	4
Ashtabula	2
Athens	12
Butler	17
Carroll	1
Champaign	2

Placement Agency	Number of Placements
Butler	19
Carroll	1
Champaign	2
Clark	21
Clermont	4
Crawford	1
Cuyahoga	66
Delaware	6
Erie	1
Fairfield	16
Fayette	2
Franklin	145
Fulton	2
Gallia	2
Geauga	5
Greene	29
Guernsey	2
Hamilton	61
Hancock	1
Henry	1
Hocking	7
Huron	1
Jackson	1

Hiring Agency	#of UPP Grads Hired
Clark	6
Clermont	2
Clinton	1
Columbiana	1
Cuyahoga	26
Defiance	1
Delaware	2
Fairfield	17
Franklin	131
Fulton	1
Geauga	7
Greene	23
Guernsey	4
Hamilton	51
Hancock	2
Hardin	3
Highland	2
Jefferson	1
Lake	4
Licking	1
Lorain	4
Lucas	51
Madison	2

Placement Agency	Number of Placements
Knox	2
Lake	2
Lawrence	1
Licking	2
Logan	2
Lorain	1
Lucas	69
Madison	4
Mahoning	20
Marion	3
Medina	4
Mercer	1
Miami	6
Monroe	1
Montgomery	58
Muskingum	16
Ottawa	6
Perry	2
Pike	1
Portage	3
Preble	4
Richland	6
Ross	3

Hiring Agency	#of UPP Grads Hired
Mahoning	11
Marion	3
Medina	5
Mercer	1
Miami	6
Monroe	1
Montgomery	44
Muskingum	3
Paulding	1
Perry	1
Pickaway	2
Portage	4
Preble	1
Richland	4
Ross	1
Seneca	1
Shelby	1
Stark	13
Summit	36
Trumbull	17
Tuscarawas	2
Union	4
Van Wert	1



“I’ll go anywhere.”

- 36% of the students indicated they were not interested in re-locating to find employment:

“I have four county agencies within ½ hour of my home. I don’t need to move.”

“I love my county. My family is here. I could not relocate.”

**Analysis.** The reach of CWUPP continues to grow. The intent of CWUPP has always been for all 88 counties to have access to a CWUPP intern and/or graduate. Over the last three years we have seen a slight, but steady increase in the number of smaller counties (5) who accepted student interns or hired graduates. Students in this year’s focus groups seemed more willing to relocate as three students already had and several more had applied at agencies a considerable distance away from their current location.

The number of CWUPP students placed and graduates hired was extracted from the statewide database. However, since several database updates generated by the software company produced data entry challenges, the lists may not be entirely accurate.

**Recommendations.** Counties currently not using CWUPP are scattered across the state and all those counties except one have a population of 45,000 or below. Further consideration should be given to whether the CWUPP should do more to interest those PCSAs in CWUPP.

#### Research Question 4.

**Are CWUPP program objectives being met?**

**Methods.** To best address this research question, we utilized process and outcome evaluation methods. Outcome evaluation methods included the use of a supervisor survey, student focus groups, and analysis of data from the statewide CWUPP database. We included six items in the supervisor questionnaire relative to CWUPP objectives. We administered these questions only to supervisors who had supervised a CWUPP graduate (n=13). The statewide CWUPP coordinator conducted focus groups

with CWUPP students to assess CWUPP processes related to recruitment of students, field experiences, and overall experience of the CWUPP.

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## OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

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### *Graduates entering the public child welfare field*

Seventy-one students graduated from the CWUPP during the 2017-2017 academic year. There was a total of 81 students in the 2017-2018 academic cohort, ten of whom were juniors and are scheduled to graduate during the 2018-2019 academic year. Eight percent of CWUPP graduates received their MSW. Complete participation by university is displayed in Table 14.

*Table 14. CWUPP students and graduates by university.*

University	Juniors	Seniors	MSW	Total Graduates
CSU		6		6
OU		10		10
OSU		11	2	13
UA		7	3	10
UC		8	1	9
UT	2	6		6
WSU	4	8		8
YSU	4	9		9
<b>Totals</b>	10	65	6	71

Although eighty-one students were enrolled in CWUPP in 2017-2018, only 71 were eligible for graduation. Of those 71 who graduated, 58% obtained employment in one of Ohio’s 88 PCSAs. Focus group respondents overwhelmingly identified they will seek employment in an Ohio PCSA (87%, n=57). Of the remaining respondents, 17% (n=12)

plan to attend graduate school immediately following graduation, and 11% (n=8) indicated they will not pursue a career in children services. Thus, there are 9, or 13% CWUPP graduates currently seeking employment. Because the CWUPP graduated more students in 2018 than in recent years, there is an increase of 14% of CWUPP graduates seeking employment in Ohio’s PCSAs. Table 15, below, shows the number of graduating students who had accepted positions at the time this evaluation report was written. It should be noted that CWUPP graduates are allowed -180 days after graduation to find employment in public child welfare agencies.

Table 15. 2018 employment rates.

University	Number Employed	Percent Employed	Number seeking employment	Students pursuing additional education	Students opted out
CSU	3	50%	1	1	1
OU	3	30%	1	4	2
OSU	7	53.8%	0	3	2
UA	9	90%	1	0	0
UC	4	44.4%	0	3	2
UT	1	16.7%	4	1	0
WSU	5	62.5%	2	0	1
YSU	9	100%	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	41	57.7%	9 (12.6%)	12 (16.9%)	8 (11.3%)

*Preparing graduates for jobs in child welfare*

Eighty percent of supervisor respondents reported that CWUPP graduates are more prepared to do child welfare work than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program. Results for each item are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Supervisor perception of CWUPP graduate preparedness.

Item	A lot more	More	Similarly	Less	A lot less	No opportunit
UPP graduates are _____ prepared to assess safety than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%	0	0	0
UPP graduates are _____ prepared to assess family strengths and needs than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	50%	30%	20%	0	0	0
UPP graduates are _____ prepared to do safety planning than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	30%	50%	10%	0	0	10%
UPP graduates are _____ prepared to do service/case planning than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	40%	40%	10%	0	0	10%
UPP graduates are _____ confident in their job performance than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	50%	30%	20%	0	0	0
UPP graduates are _____ prepared to do child welfare work than recently hired employees who did not complete the CWUPP program.	50%	30%	20%	0	0	0

**Analysis.** CWUPP graduated more students this year than in recent years, and this has resulted in an increase in CWUPP graduates who are seeking employment. Although most students will be employed, or are seeking employment at an Ohio PCSA, it should be noted that even when CWUPP graduates choose not to pursue a career in child welfare, it is not a failure. Recognizing that child welfare is not a good

career choice and departing the field prior to employment saves PCSAs associated hiring and onboarding costs. In these cases, CWUPP allows the student, agency and university to re-direct those individuals who are likely not to succeed as child welfare workers. Even though a student might not choose to go into child welfare, their participation in CWUPP has provided them with an unprecedented exposure to the field which will benefit them (and child welfare) no matter what field of social work they pursue.

The supervisor survey results suggest that CWUPP graduates are more prepared in many areas than new caseworkers who are not CWUPP graduates. Although there was a very small sample size, findings such as this are promising. Further investigation into the experience of supervisors who supervise CWUPP graduates is necessary.

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## PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

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**Overall Findings.** Focus group findings provide much insight into the quality of the experience of CWUPP students and graduates. Overall respondents' comments about CWUPP were overwhelmingly positive:

"UPP is the greatest program. I'll put my kids in it."

"I am so grateful for the experience."

"I loved the program, the opportunity, the internship, thank you."

"I am glad CWUPP was around."

"I was burnt out on my previous focus, but I could not be happier now."

Most respondents also shared their excitement about being able to attend PCSAO conference:

"I learned so much. I feel bad other social work students did not get this opportunity."

**Analysis.** Students were very forthcoming with their feedback about what they liked about CWUPP and areas they would like to see improved. Some of these areas must be

addressed individually by the universities and some can be addressed statewide. It is important to remember an unintended, yet positive, consequence of the program is the large number of social worker students who have received in-depth training on child welfare even though they are not pursuing child welfare as a career. All of the universities open their Child Welfare 1 and 2 classes to social worker students as an elective and many of those classes have twice as many non CWUPP students as CWUPP students. An obvious benefit is social worker students receiving accurate information about child welfare work.

**Recruitment.** Respondents report learning about the CWUPP program via CWUPP campus coordinator recruitment activities such as presentations to various social work classes, campus emails, blogs, websites, pamphlets and posters. At times, other universities had presentations about the CWUPP.

“I learned about CWUPP when our campus coordinator talked to one of my social work classes.”

“My dad found out about CWUPP from the university website.”

“I did my under graduate degree at Malone University and they told me about CWUPP and the incentive.”

“I saw a poster on the walls of the Social Work Department.”

Current and former students have also become important to the recruiting process:

“My campus coordinator and two CWUPP students attended a Professional Issues seminar and talked about UPP, I was hooked.”

“I had three friends who were CWUPP students and they talked to me about UPP. I was glad they did.”

**Analysis.** UPP campus coordinators are building on recruitment strategies utilized in previous years. They continue to compile a list of potential recruitment strategies based on their own personal experiences and students’ feedback. The students suggested several new strategies this year-- many of them related to the use of electronics. Still the all-time favorite and the one most frequency requested, when asked about ways to increase recruitment, is to utilize existing CWUPP students or graduates and agency staff.

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## THE CWUPP FIELD EXPERIENCE

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**Placement Areas.** In the survey of CWUPP students, 93.1% noted they received experience in intake/assessment units and 74.1% noted they received experience in ongoing units. Complete results are displayed in table 17.

*Table 17. CWUPP student placement areas.*

Area	Number	Percent
Intake/Assessment	54	93.1%
Ongoing/Protective Services	43	74.1%
Screening	21	36.2%
Foster Care/Adoption/Kinship	17	29.3%
Other*	7	12.1%
Four practice areas	9	15.5%
Three practice areas	16	27.6%
Two practice areas	18	31%
One practice area	15	25.9%

\*Other practice areas included adult protective services, independent living, and community advocate.

A majority of focus group respondents reported they were exposed to both intake and ongoing practice (87%, n=52), while 27% (n=18) students are not. The great majority of students spent one semester in one unit and one in the other:

“I was in ongoing the first semester and intake the second.”

Other placement arrangements included:

- Exposure to all the units the first semester and a single unit the second semester

- One-worker model, where the student is exposed to caseworkers who are responsible for doing both assessment and ongoing case responsibilities
- Placed in specialized units such as sexual abuse, foster, adoption, or transitional
- Placed in a single unit for both semesters

Respondents placed in a single unit for both semesters commented about their desire to have more exposure:

“I would have liked to have had one semester in one unit and the other semester in the other unit. I never got to go out on an intake because I was in the ongoing unit the whole time.”

“I felt like I missed a lot by being in the same unit the entire year.”

**Placement Activities.** CWUPP students participated in or observed between six and 19 different case activities (see Table 18) with fifty percent of students participating in or observing between 11 and 15 different case activities.

*Table 18. Placement experiences.*

Activity	Number of Students	Percentage
Receipt of a child abuse or neglect referral	45	77.6%
Initiation of a child abuse report (Alternative or traditional response)	51	87.9%
Assessment of Safety	55	94.8%
Interview with law enforcement	19	32.8%
Family Assessment	53	91.4%
Development of a case Plan/Family Service Plan	39	67.2%
Semi-Annual Administrative Review (SAR)	40	69.0%

Table 18. continued

Activity	Number of Students	Percentage
Case Review/Family Service Plan Review	39	67.2%
Reunification Assessment	11	19.0%
Child Victim Interview	43	74.1%
Perpetrator Interview	35	60.3%
Interview with non-offending parent	40	69.0%
Observed supervised visit	45	77.6%
Home visit with children not in custody	46	79.3%
Implement a safety plan	37	63.8%
Visit with children in kinship or foster care	49	84.5%
Placement of children in care	41	70.7%
Made referral to service provider	39	67.2%
Document in SACWIS	54	93.1%

Focus group respondents highlighted the impact of these varied experiences on their CWUPP experience. Respondents in this year’s focus groups identified over 29 distinct child welfare activities they found to be “Most Valuable”. The range of experiences varied and included several severe cases (an infant in active withdrawal, a shaken baby, failure to thrive, and a child fatality). The most frequently mentioned experiences were:

**Placement.**

“We had several removals. One was a sibling group of five kids, ages 7 to 15. The guardian didn’t seem to even care.”

“Removals, the hardest part is the ride to the agency and the next day.”

### **Severe physical abuse and sexual abuse:**

“Sexual abuse and severe physical abuse, kids in the hospital. I will be forever changed by what I saw.”

### **Shadowing intake caseworkers:**

“Going out with intake, seeing the emergency hands on, real life experiences.”

“I did translation (Spanish) for a caseworker on an emergency intake.”

### **Permanent Custody Cases:**

“My first Permanent Custody stuck with me for days. The child went to where she needed to go, but it was difficult to watch.”

Respondents reported they learned a lot from watching the caseworkers:

“Seeing a client get irate and seeing how the worker dealt with it.”

“Watching people doing it differently.”

“My mentor was a wonderful intake worker, she showed me how to do so much.”

Respondents valued their field experiences with caseworkers and supervisors:

“I was impressed by the way the supervisor let me participate and be part of the staff.”

“What I learned from the caseworkers impacted me the most. They took their time with me. It is really different in real life than in the text books.”

“It all stood out to me.”

“The caseworker processed what we saw with me, that helped and then the supervisor checked in with me also.”

Respondents identified other relevant themes pertaining to their field experience.

***Theme 1. Field Placement Selection.*** Respondents at six universities reported they were instructed to identify their top three to five choices for placements and 95% of those students received their first choice while 5% (3) received their second or third

choice. Respondents felt the interview process was formal, similar to a job interview and report choosing their placement site for various reasons:

“I chose my placement based on convenience, it was close to home.”

“I wanted a bigger county.”

“A CWUPP graduate recruited me to do my placement there.”

“I am a foster parent and that restricted where I could go to do my placement.”

***Theme 2. Learning Contract.*** Respondents at universities who used the revised learning plan (50%) and its related resources had positive comments about the learning plan:

“I loved it.”

“It was really relevant with what we did.”

“It was helpful, structured what we had to do.”

“We used it to structure my placement and my supervisor reviewed it during supervision.”

Respondents at universities who did not use the revised materials, provided feedback about improvements that aligned with respondent feedback from previous evaluations.

“Too board, it needs to be more specific to child welfare, because we can only do so much.”

“Some of it is completely irrelevant.”

“I am not sure our agency knew how to use the learning contract. Could the campus coordinator work with the agency to help them make it more worthwhile?”

***Theme 3. Organization and Structure of Placement.*** A majority of respondents (75%) reported their field placement sites were well organized:

“My site was very organized; they had a welcome packet, everything set up for me, my SACWIS password ready, and they had caseworkers who would contact me to shadow them.”

“My supervisor gave us a binder with all the information I needed and a SACWIS “Look and Find” sheet. The binder met all my needs for organization.”

“Very well organized, wanted me to be part of the unit.”

Respondents who did not find their field placement to be well-organized shared common themes about the lack of organization at the site:

- Lack of understanding about what the interns were allowed and not allowed to do
- Lack of structure, no apparent plan for the interns to follow
- Lack of or poor communication between supervisors and workers
- No one identified for the intern to shadow

Some respondents noted the importance of being self-directed in creating a quality field experience:

“You have to learn to take the initiative and be independent. I got the workers’ numbers and contacted them, so I was busy.”

The importance of flexibility in the field placement was also noted:

“My placement was more structured than it needed to be. They were like helicopter moms. We missed opportunities because we had to stick to the schedule.”

Respondents valued having connection with CWUPP graduates in their field placement agencies:

“There was a CWUPP graduate in my agency, she sought me out and took me under her wing.”

A majority of respondents reported receiving their SACWIS passwords in a timely manner. Respondents reported training on SACWIS varied from very formal (three days a semester) to “I watched a caseworker do SACWIS entry and learned that way.”

***Theme 4. Supervision.*** Respondents commented on the quality and process of receiving supervision in the field agency. The majority of respondents reported routinely receiving one hour or more hours of supervision per week with their field supervisors:

“My supervisor set a specific time weekly for one hour, she was really proactive about it.”

“We had a supervision form we followed that covered our shadowing experience, that helped.”

A few respondents (8%) acknowledged the value of an open-door policy with supervisors.

“My supervisor was amazing, she had an open-door policy and I could always meet with her.”

A respondent from one university commented on the value of a group supervision process:

“I loved group supervision, you learned from what everyone else is doing.”

Respondents in some settings acknowledge a less-structured supervision experience:

“I only had supervision two times in five months.”

“Meeting with my supervisors was almost impossible, but I got my needs met. I don’t feel like we needed a set time to meet.”

***Theme 5. Linking Field to Coursework.*** Respondents cited specific ways the supervisors linked their field work to their course work:

“I would tell them what I learned in class and they would show me how to do it.”

“My supervisors made sure I had the opportunity to shadow what we were learning in class.”

“My supervisor was a CWUPP graduate so she helped me connect it all together.”

“My supervisor would ask what we were doing in class and then helped me apply it in the field.”

***Theme 6. Influence on Placement.*** Overwhelmingly respondents said a caseworker had the greatest influence on them:

“My caseworker was always willing to take me out, let me help do assessments, prompted me to ask clients questions.”

“One worker I shadowed influenced me the most by the way she approached

people, she helped me decide child welfare is where I want to be.”

Some respondents noted the impact their field supervisors had:

“My supervisor built my confidence, I needed that.”

Respondents also mentioned the impact of CWUPP graduates:

“When it was known you were a CWUPP student, the CWUPP graduates came out to help you.”

Also apparent is the fact that all staff, not just caseworkers and supervisors influence the intern:

“Everybody influences me, my supervisor, caseworker and even maintenance staff.”

***Theme 7. Impressions and Reactions.*** Respondents used 39 different adjectives to describe their internship, “eye opening” was the most common and all but one were positive:

“Inspiring”

“Marvelous”

“Amazing”

“My passion”

***Theme 8. Suggestions to Improve Field Placement.*** Respondents provided many suggestions to improve field experience:

- Better organized internships

“Units should be ready when a new student comes.”

- Exposure to both intake and ongoing units

“I only got exposed to one unit (intake) so I feel like I missed something.”

- Provide a primary caseworker for the student to shadow

“I bounced around too much, I needed one caseworker I could go to.”

- Training for field supervisors;

“My field supervisor was not trained and did not always have a plan for me, a lot of time they were not ready for me or knew what I could or could not do.”

“Do a one-page checklist of what students should be doing in the field.”

“Provide a case flow, start from the beginning to end. Work a case though the entire process. Sometimes I feel like we are just dropped in the middle of a case and don’t know what happens before or after.”

“The supervisors should have a copy of the syllabus and a copy of the expectations of what we should know when we graduate.”

“Get all the field supervisors together, from all the universities, to share how they do internships with each other.”

**Analysis.** Overall many counties need to be commended on the structure and supervision they offer to CWUPP student interns. CWUPP interns experienced child welfare first hand through a wide variety of experiences as confirmed by student responses to surveys and focus groups. The wide variety of experiences demonstrated the counties’ willingness to expose interns to ‘real’ Child Welfare while they are still within a safe learning environment. Students generally gained exposure in more than one practice area in the agency.

Consistently, respondents in prior CWUPP evaluations identified various problems/challenges with the Learning Plan. In early 2017, a group of campus coordinators updated the learning plan to reflect CSWE current competencies, identify child welfare specific tasks and created resources to help counties optimize its use. Feedback from this year’s focus groups clearly reflect the benefit of these changes for the universities who used the updated version and resources. Based on the positive feedback from the universities who used the revised learning plan it is obvious the counties and students would benefit from it being used statewide.

It is apparent linking caseworkers willing to act as a mentor to an intern provides a beneficial outcome to all. The field experience is an integral part of the social work education; research varies as to whether or not shadowing one worker is best or if the students benefits more from watching various caseworkers. Regardless of the shadowing method utilized, modeling best practice by both caseworkers and supervisors increases

the likelihood of a knowledgeable well-trained staff. CWUPP is grateful for the counties willing to take on this task for the development of future caseworkers.

**Recommendations.** The following recommendations emerged from focus group findings and supporting data.

- Continue to encourage statewide use of resources to support structured CWUPP field experiences that are consistent across universities and field supervisors. These include Recommended Practices in Field Instruction, a Guide for Field Education Sites, a Readiness Assessment to determine if an agency is ready to be a field placement site, and resources related to customizing the standardized learning contract.
- Provide increased training to CWUPP field supervisors on the variety of tools and resources available to assist with structure, organization, and assuring the field experience is meaningful and exposes CWUPP students to a well-rounded CPS placement.
- Assure new field supervisors are receiving structured training to help them provide a quality field experience for CWUPP interns.
- Assure CWUPP interns are receiving timely access to SACWIS passwords so they can quickly learn to navigate the system, thus increasing exposure to real, hands-on child welfare practice.
- As the content of the child welfare courses flows from the screening of a case through family assessment in the first semester and ends the second semester with case closure, the optimal experience and training opportunity should allow for students to have exposure to both intake and ongoing units to increase the likelihood of transfer of learning and to help the students practice what they have learned in the classroom and labs in the field.

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## CAMPUS COORDINATOR

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**Theme 1. Support of Students.** A majority of respondents held their campus coordinator in very high esteem:

“She was there when I needed her, her door is always open.”

“We always had caseworkers who were willing to work with us. She knows who wants interns and who didn’t.”

“She was a champion for us.”

“She is the type of person you want to talk to. She is the right person for the job.”

Campus coordinators supported the integration of course work and field by:

“She talks about what we are learning in class and how it applies to the field.”

“I don’t think our campus coordinator realized how constructive talking about cases the first semester and doing case presentations the second semester was, that pulled it all together for us.”

**Theme 2. Perspective on Seminar.** Four universities (OSU, WSU, UC, UT) offer CWUPP specific seminars conducted by the campus coordinator. The other four (CSU, UA, YSU, OU) offer an integrated seminar where CWUPP students attend with other social work majors. Seminars vary from being very structured (agenda, planned activities & content) to being more open-ended. Length of time and frequency of the seminars also vary from university to university. Overall respondent comments about the CWUPP specific seminars were positive:

“She really supports us with difficult cases, being able to talk about them in seminar really helped me.”

A re-occurring theme was related to the length of time in seminar:

“First semester was great, and we covered a lot but the second semester dragged.”

Respondents who participated in integrated seminars at various universities provided mixed reviews:

“It was interesting to talk to other students because our experience was so much better.”

“Seminar was challenging, I feel like we skated through some classes and seminar made it real.”

“Field seminar was a big “F”, too many assignments, but nothing ever got graded. It has potential, could have been so much more.”

“Not helpful.”

***Theme 3. Suggestions for Seminar Improvement.*** Respondents provided several suggestions to improve field seminar. Suggestions were generally related to the structure of seminar or the length of time of seminar.

**Structure**

“We need more structure.”

“We need more content the second semester.”

**Length of time**

“Only have seminar bi-weekly.”

“I think we should have only met one time a week in the second semester.”

Several respondents wanted the seminars to remain as they were:

“Keep doing it like you do.”

“I don’t think she could have done anything to make them better.”

***Theme 4. Suggestions for Campus Coordinators.*** Respondent comments relative to improvements were very specific to each university’s process:

“Schedule the first Zoom meeting and then do a survey to determine the best time to do them.”

“Fix Task Stream.”

Respondent suggestions for improvement often pertained to universities with CWUPP students placed at branch campuses.

“I would like instructors (class) to come to the branch campus more often, students are more engaged when the professor is present.”

“The only problem with this class is the distance learning, it would be nice to have the instructor come to each campus at least one time a semester. Sometimes you have questions you would rather ask in person.”

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## ANALYSIS

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### *Campus Coordinator Position*

The CWUPP Coordinators conduct a variety of activities that are crucial for the success of the program. They recruit, educate and support counties in their use of CWUPP student interns. They recruit, screen, educate and support the CWUPP students with their class and field work, as well as support their efforts in seeking employment even after they graduate from the program. To be able to do all this successfully depends upon the mutual respect the counties and the coordinators have for each other and the CWUPP as a whole. Both the counties and the campus coordinators are to be commended for the success of this program.

### *Field Seminar*

Whether a field seminar is CWUPP specific or integrated depends upon the university. Universities with students from branch campuses find it more cost and time effective to have CWUPP students attend the integrated seminars as some branches might only have one or two CWUPP students at the branch.

The increased number of comments related to structure and length of the seminar could possibly be related to some of the changes in Child Welfare 1 and 2 classes. Previously, many campus coordinators used seminar time to build on the content that was covered in the child welfare courses. The revisions to the courses have increased the content addressed in the courses and may have resulted in less content to cover in seminar.

Two universities (Akron University and Ohio University) teach the child welfare classes via distance learning, to make the classes accessible to more students, especially students from rural areas. While this serves the purpose of expanding the catchment area for students it also brings up other challenges such as those mentioned above. To address branch campus student concerns, it will be necessary to consider ways to increase the engagement between the campus coordinator and students at other campuses.

One University (OU) started meeting by Zoom to keep in touch with their CWUPP students who are scattered across many branch campuses. These meetings are structured, with an agenda and time allotted for students to discuss their concerns. OU started this process in response to student feedback requesting a CWUPP specific seminar. This strategy could prove valuable to other universities in similar situations.

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## POINTS OF ACTION

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The following is a list of suggested points of action which are informed by evaluation findings:

### **Admittance to UPP**

- Increase number of UPP interns to maximum allowable program limits (if agencies and universities can support the increase).
- Review and adjust recruitment strategies to increase the pool of CWUPP interns and to target the many reasons students pursue UPP.
- Determine if standard admission criteria should be established for CWUPP.

### **Course Work**

- Increase course consistency across universities. Establish a benchmark and encourage universities to achieve it.
- Assure all class instructors will have attended TOC for Core updates and will follow course syllabi for content, readings and assignments.
- Provide training on content and more structured updates to syllabi, content, readings and assignments as updates occur to Core and thus to CW2 and CW2.
- Provide additional support and attention to new course instructors.
- Include a case flow demonstration for instructors to incorporate into the class that takes a case from beginning to end.

## Field Placement

Increase consistency of field placement experience across universities and field supervisors, to ensure that all CWUPP graduates have similar, high quality field experiences. Consider implementing the following activities:

- Ensure all PCSAs who host interns have access to the Recommended Practice in Field Instruction, A Guide for Field Education Sites manual and support in its utilization.
- Ensure all PCSAs have access to the revised learning plan material and support in its utilization.
- Look into the feasibility of doing either statewide or regional workshops for field supervisors and PCSAs utilizing the new resources.
- Provide increased support, attention and education regarding field placements to PCSAs who are new, have recently returned to UPP after an absence, or have experienced significant turnover in their administrative staff.
- Look into the feasibility of adopting a standardized orientation for new field supervisors.
- Adopt a standardized approach to completing and utilizing the CSWE required learning plan.

## Campus Coordinators

- Review content and structure of CWUPP specific seminars for possible updates based on recent changes in CW1 and CW2 classes.
- Ensure data on all students in CWUPP is entered into the database, including students looking for employment.
- Adopt a standardized process for notifying PCSAs of CWUPP intern placements, hires and terminations (regardless of the reason).
- Engage counties not hosting CWUPP interns or hiring graduates to determine barriers and possible solutions to increase the statewide reach of CWUPP.
- Update PCSAO website for CWUPP to make it more up to date, useable, and informative.

## **Learning Labs**

- Assure all CWUPP students attend learning labs.
- Determine most appropriate timing for the labs and schedule the learning labs accordingly, and them in the course syllabi.

## **Database**

- Consider an alternative to the statewide CWUPP database. The system is a barrier to quality data tracking and analysis.

## **Future Research**

- Determine if those students placed in both intake and ongoing units fare better than those who do not. It would also be interesting to determine if counties who hire CWUPP graduates assign them to positions similar to their field placements, and whether this is a desirable practice.
- Consider conducting focus groups with field supervisors for the next evaluation.
- Further research should be done to determine if the University Partnership Program should do more to interest other counties in UPP.
- Repeat this evaluation and compare findings from previous years to assess increases in consistency and achievement of program goals and objectives.

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