

## Sacred Heart University

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From the Selected Works of Bronwyn Cross-Denny, Ph.D., LCSW

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# New Master of Social Work Program to Launch in 2017

Bronwyn Cross-Denny



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## New Master of Social Work Program to Launch in 2017

News Story: July 7, 2016



Sacred Heart University's College of Arts & Sciences is announcing a new master of social work degree expected to launch in the fall 2017 semester.

"The values and the principles of social work are so related to Sacred Heart's mission that it's a fantastic fit for our campus," says Bronwyn Cross-Denny, assistant professor and chair of SHU's Social Work department. "We've had a strong and rigorous bachelor of social work degree since 1981, so the structure for a successful master's program was already in place."

Based at the university's main campus in Fairfield, Conn., the 60-credit program is designed with an innovative approach of integrating micro and macro practice within a social justice and Catholic intellectual tradition framework.

"Micro practice is working with individuals and macro practice is working with larger systems such as large groups, organizations and communities," Cross-Denny says. "Social workers happen to provide a majority of the mental health care in the United States. We frame our work with what we call 'the person in environment' or 'the person in context.' Our clients tend to be combatting a complexity of issues often involving larger societal problems, such as poverty, housing or family issues."

Two specializations will be available in the program: direct clinical practice and direct community practice. Each will contain elements of the other to provide a balanced educational background for the students, Cross-Denny says.

She notes that social work professionals are found throughout society—in schools, with child protective services, in hospitals, in senior centers and so on.

The program will also feature an "advanced standing" component, wherein any student who completes a bachelor of social work degree can apply to the program, and if accepted, can

proceed directly into the second year of the master's program, with the benefit of potentially earning both degrees in only five years. Due to state licensing regulations, this option will be available in fall 2018.

Some of the courses already designed for the master's program include "Human Behavior in a Social Environment," "Social Policy," "Human Diversity" and "Inter-Professional Education." Classes will be offered both on-campus and online. Four new faculty members have been hired to assist in designing the program and teaching the courses.