History of Bachelor of Social Work Program at JSU

Jacksonville State University began teaching social work classes in 1979. In 1981, Dr. Rebecca Turner and Dr. Mark Fagan were hired to develop the courses necessary to offer a minor in Social Work. These courses included the Field Instruction component, which made it possible for the students to work with local agencies. In order to develop a major in Social Work, Dr. Fagan and Dr. Rodney Friery wrote a proposal for a Title III Grant from the Federal Government. This grant provided funding for five years. Ms. Donna Smith was hired in 1984, and became the Field Coordinator.

In 1986, JSU applied to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education for approval for a BSW Degree. This original request was denied. Dean J. E. Wade, Dr. James Reeves, Dr. William Carr, and Dr. Harold McGee devoted countless hours and energy into reversing this decision. The major was finally approved in November 1987. The first class to graduate with the BSW Degree consisted of 15 students; they graduated in April 1988. Initial accreditation from the National Council on Social Work Education was granted to the program in 1992. This was effective for four years. Retroactive accreditation status by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) was granted to be effective as of April 1988. Dr. Rebecca Turner became the initial BSW Program Director in 1988, and the Department Head for Sociology and Social Work in 1990. Ms. Gail Childs became the departmental secretary in 1991.

Mr. James Powe was hired in 1995, to be an agency-based Field Supervisor at the Alabama Department of Human Resources in Calhoun County. DHR began providing stipends to BSW students that did their Field Instruction at that agency. Reaffirmation of Accreditation from CSWE was granted in 1996, and again in 2004, to be effective until 2012. Dr. Mark Fagan was promoted to Full Professor in 1992, and became the BSW Program Director in 1998. He moved up to Acting Department Head for Sociology and Social Work in 1999, and Department Head in 2002.
Ms. Kim Womack was hired in 1997, as a BSW Program faculty member. Ms. Dee Barclift and Ms. Robyn Snider joined the BSW Program faculty in 1998. Ms. Charlene Stephens became the BSW Program secretary in 1999. Dr. Maureen Newton was added to the BSW Program faculty in 1999. Mr. Jonathan Adams was hired in 2001, as an agency-based Field Instructor for DHR in Etowah County. Dr. Nancy Francisco Stewart became a BSW Program faculty member in 2003. Ms. Donna Smith retired in 2005, and Ms. Robyn Snider was appointed as University Field Coordinator at that time. Mr. Jonathan Adams assumed the teaching duties vacated by Ms. Snider. Dr. Jenny Savage joined the faculty in 2006. Dr. Maureen Newton was promoted to Associate Professor in 2005. Dr. Nancy Francisco Stewart and Dr. Jenny Savage were promoted to Associate Professor in 2009. Dr. Mark Fagan retired in 2012.

The BSW Program currently has 220 majors, 60 Field Agencies, a Social Work Club, and a chapter of Phi Alpha, the Social Work Honor Society. The program has the largest number of students for any BSW Program in Alabama. There are student stipends available each year for those performing Field Instruction.