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PRESS RELEASE

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CSUSB Palm Desert Campus Master of Social Work program achieves accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education

PALM DESERT, Calif. – The School of Social Work at Cal State San Bernardino is proud to announce that the new Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus has been officially accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body for all social work programs in the United States.

The CSWE accreditation process evaluates educational programs to ensure they meet rigorous standards for quality and effectiveness in social work education. Achieving this accreditation signifies that CSUSB's MSW program meets or exceeds the educational and professional standards set forth by the Council, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in the field of social work.

This esteemed recognition marks a significant milestone for the program, affirming its commitment to academic excellence and the preparation of skilled social work professionals.

The MSW program at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes social justice, community engagement and evidence-based practice. Students benefit from hands-on training through practicum placements, allowing them to apply their learning in real-world settings while gaining invaluable experience.

With this accreditation, graduates of the MSW program will be eligible to work toward professional licensing post-graduation, paving the way for fulfilling careers as licensed clinical social workers and leaders in various social service sectors.

“This program will make such a difference in the region,” said Deirdre Lanesskog, director of the CSUSB School of Social Work. “The first 19 students will graduate from the PDC MSW program in May 2025, and we could not more proud of their commitment to social work and to the valley they call home.”

The MSW program joins the Palm Desert Campus’ undergraduate program in social work, which started in fall 2022, offering a path to professional careers in human services fields including mental health, substance abuse, child and family welfare, adult protective services, and advocacy for a range of populations and issues.

Previously, the region’s social work students commuted 2.5 hours round trip twice a week to CSUSB’s San Bernardino campus for classes. This is a heavy burden for many students who must also complete a 9-month, 20 hours per week, practicum placement with a human services agency.

“Our students are parents, caregivers and full-time employees, so providing a local option for grad school and a scholarship that covers close to half a year’s tuition is a game changer,” said Oscar Moreno-Castro, an academic advisor at the Palm Desert Campus, who drove to the university’s San Bernardino campus for two years to complete his MSW degree and will graduate this spring from the Palm Desert Campus.

The MSW program expansion at PDC is funded by a \$2.25 million grant from the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), which is charged with increasing the number of human services providers in underserved communities throughout the state. In the Coachella Valley, the lack of mental health professionals creates long wait times and barriers to treatment for those who need care. These programs at the Palm Desert Campus will help ease that burden.

The HCAI funding also provides a \$4,330 scholarship for each new MSW student at PDC in fall 2024 and fall 2025. The program offers a 1-year accelerated MSW for applicants with a bachelor’s degree in social work. Applicants with a bachelor’s degree in a different discipline may choose between a 2- or 3-year MSW program.

CSUSB social work alumnus and Licensed Clinical Social Worker Bryan R. Casier is also a major supporter of the MSW program and recently created a significant scholarship opportunity that covers one-year's tuition for a student in the program.

"It has always been my dream to have our own MSW program in the Coachella Valley, and now we do," said Casier. "I supervised the Indio Children's Clinic for County Mental Health for 20 years. In those 20 years, I witnessed many students coming out of graduate school with great student debt. Helping students keep their head above water while beginning their professional social work journey is extremely important to me. My efforts are part of my own generativity process, and I find it very satisfying."

The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus invites prospective students and interested community members to learn more about the MSW program and its offerings by visiting the [CSUSB School of Social Work website](#).

Applicants for the Palm Desert Campus' bachelor's in social work (BASW) program for fall 2025 must apply to CSUSB through [Cal State Apply](#) by Dec. 2 and must submit a separate application to the BASW program by Dec. 21. Applications to the PDC Master of Social Work (MSW) program are due via Cal State Apply by Jan. 15, 2025.

About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience in the Coachella Valley. With a focus on academic excellence and community engagement, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its students and the region.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.