



Assessing professional suitability of social workers

*King's University College
researchers
receive \$10,000
Foundation grant*

The latest research proposal to be funded by the American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation, ASWB's research arm, is titled "Models of Assessment on Professional Suitability in Canadian Social Work." The co-applicants are Dr. Dora Tam, Dr. Siu Ming Kwok, and Dr. Rachel Birnbaum, School of Social Work, King's University College, Ontario, Canada.

The proposal was submitted during the 2015 grant application cycle and recommended for approval to the Foundation Board of Directors by the Foundation Review Committee. The Foundation Board approved a \$10,000 grant over an 18-month period. The abstract appears below:

Social work in Canada lags behind social work in other developed countries and some established professions in conceptualizing and assessing professional suitability. This 18-month research project is built upon the Applicant's ongoing research in the past twelve years, and is timely as the majority part of Canada still relies heavily on the education sector to carry out its gatekeeping function. This proposed project is aimed to engage the education, practice, and regulation sectors in the research

process; examine the multi-dimensionality of and assessment of the entry-level of professional suitability; and articulate the roles of education programs and regulatory bodies in gatekeeping functions. The proposed project will use a Holistic Approach to conduct 60 individual interviews in the provinces of British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Anticipated outcome is to forward the evolution of guiding principles for models of assessment on professional suitability in Canadian social work.

The American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation, a 501(c)3 organization, supports efforts to explore the ways in which professional social work regulation affects the profession and the public it serves. Some of the projects sponsored include research on complaints and disciplinary actions taken against social workers, access to clinical supervision in rural areas of Minnesota, and an exploration of the ethical implications of students who shortcut to satisfy educational requirements. The grant program is open to social work faculty, students, and members and staff of regulatory boards or provincial colleges in the United States and Canada. The next grant cycle will begin in 2016.