



On the Path to Licensure path

Jan Fitts hits the road for ASWB's efforts to integrate licensing into social work degree programs

Since she joined ASWB as education and training senior manager last spring, Jan Fitts has been reaching out to schools of social work that have expressed interest in the ASWB Path to Licensure program. "I invited myself," Fitts said, about several of her recent visits. Rather than waiting for schools to come to her with their questions, Fitts has been actively reaching out, whether it's offering ASWB materials about social work licensure for student orientation packets, or spending time on campus talking to faculty and students.

In August, Fitts made her first Path to Licensure trip, a visit to Texas State University in San Marcos. The school of social work there was a pilot school in the Path to Licensure program, and Fitts wanted to talk with faculty and students to find out more. "I wanted to see how they've developed their program and find out what are the lessons learned that we can share with other schools," Fitts explained. "It was fascinating," she said. "I got to see what all the social work school is doing, including the distinctions between online and in-person course development." While in San Marcos, Fitts met with faculty members at Texas State, as well as MSW and BSW students.

While she was in Boston for the Council on Licensure Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) annual conference, Fitts arranged for a conversation with a social work faculty member at Boston University who had expressed interest in the Path to Licensure program.

When she's not inviting herself for a visit, Fitts has been fielding invitations as well. Most recently, she was invited to Wayne State University in Detroit. The school is launching a student-driven program called Licensure Exam and Achievement Program (LEAP) and invited Fitts, along with several members of the Michigan social work licensing board, to meet on campus to address questions and provide key information about licensure. LEAP received an internal grant from the university to get started. Faculty advisors help the students plan the program, which will feature ongoing conversations about issues related to licensure. Two student mentors facilitate the group meetings as well as consult with individual students. "It was the first time they ever met as a group," Fitts explained. One of the Michigan board members, Brian Philson, presented information on the Michigan law and application process for social workers. Fitts followed up with information

about the licensing exams and licensing in general. “The students could actually hear from board members,” Fitts said, about things like applying for a license. These exchanges can provide an invaluable opportunity for students to understand how regulatory boards and ASWB work together in the licensing process. It also gave the social work students a better understanding of the different roles of ASWB, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

“It was so valuable to have that diversity around the room,” said Fitts. “We had people with a lot of different perspectives on professional practice.” One faculty member at the meeting seemed to really understand the purpose of Path to Licensure, Fitts said. “She said ‘I really get how we need to integrate licensing and regulation throughout the program—it’s not just a course we have to teach.’”