

2026 CSWE Election: Candidate Statement

Nicholas Simons-Bracken, DSW, MSW, LCSW, LSCSW

Undergraduate Faculty Representative – CSWE National Nominating Committee

I am honored to be nominated for the Undergraduate Faculty Representative position on CSWE's National Nominating Committee. My career in social work education has centered on strengthening undergraduate education, advancing inclusive learning environments, and preparing the next generation of practitioners and leaders. I am deeply committed to supporting thoughtful, representative leadership within our national educational accreditation organization.

I serve as a Senior Lecturer/Academic Program Associate at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, where I teach across the span of the BSW, MSW, and DSW Social Work program. My teaching spans micro, mezzo, and macro practice and emphasizes the integration of classroom learning with real-world application. I am passionate about helping undergraduate students see themselves as emerging professionals with the capacity to influence systems, advocate for social justice, and engage ethically with diverse communities.

Service is a central part of my professional identity. At the program level, I have been involved in curriculum development, student engagement initiatives, and accreditation efforts aligned with CSWE standards. I have worked collaboratively with colleagues to strengthen the implicit curriculum, foster supportive learning environments, and address issues related to equity, inclusion, and belonging. These experiences have reinforced my belief that leadership in social work education must be attentive not only to formal curriculum but also to the culture and climate that shape student learning.

My doctoral scholarship further informs my perspective. My research explored student engagement through the implicit curriculum in social work education, using qualitative methods to understand how institutional practices, faculty culture, and informal learning experiences influence students' sense of connection and success. This work deepened my commitment to leadership that is reflective, equity-oriented, and responsive to student voices—particularly at the undergraduate level, where many students first encounter the profession.

In addition to my academic role, I maintain an active clinical practice. This ongoing connection to direct practice helps me ensure that undergraduate education remains

grounded in current practice realities and community needs. I believe strong educational leadership requires bridging academic preparation with the evolving contexts in which our students will serve.

If chosen, I would bring a collaborative approach, a strong commitment to inclusive representation, and a deep respect for the diversity of undergraduate programs across the country. I am especially interested in supporting leadership pathways that reflect varied institutional types, regional contexts, and lived experiences. Undergraduate faculty play a critical role in shaping the profession's future, and it is essential that our perspectives are meaningfully included in CSWE's leadership structures.

Thank you for your consideration as it would be a privilege to serve in this role and to contribute to CSWE's continued efforts to strengthen social work education nationwide.