

Brehler Student Manuscript Competition Instructions

Content

This competition will challenge you to look inward and assess your own values and the influence those values exert on your growth and development as a practicing professional. You are expected to systematically examine your own life and the decisions you have made through the lens of theoretical social work to discern one or more lessons that will enable you and others to become more competent professionals. Ideally, the paper will accomplish several interrelated objectives: First, it will describe your journey toward recognizing one or more of your own limitations, biases or prejudices. Second, it will include an analysis of this personal narrative drawing from the principles of theoretical social work. It will also describe how this enhanced self-awareness has affected your practice as a developing social worker, keeping in mind important social work ethical principles, such as respect for the client's right to self-determination or the client's personal beliefs. You may be able to draw lessons and/or achieve insights as to how professional skills are acquired, or how experiences resulting from self-examination can be incorporated into the social work curriculum.

In discussing the above, the manuscript must include discussion of two of the following main areas of content and how they relate to each other:

1. Development of your personal and professional values within the framework of the principles of social work, and
2. One of the following areas:
 - o Conflicts and Ethical Dilemmas. Conflicts or ethical dilemmas in your social work practice, including internship, which resulted from one or more of your personal values.
 - o Practice Decisions: Practice decisions in social work that flow from your personal and professional values.
 - o Social Policies: Identification and elaboration of suggested changes in social policies in the urban environment that spring from and relate to your personal and professional values.
 - o Diversity: In light of your personal and professional values, identify ways in which one integrates the value of cultural diversity into social work practice.

The manuscript must incorporate references to current literature and meaningful application and integration of ideas derived from theoretical social work. Your presentation must also include at least one reasonably well-developed vignette from your practice which defines and illustrates the issues. Any vignette or case illustration must adhere closely to the rule of confidentiality.

This will not be easy. However, previous participants have almost universally remarked that participation fostered significant personal and professional growth, to the point that the award itself became almost secondary.

We hope you find it so and we are grateful for your participation.

REMARK FROM PAST WINNER:

"The Brehler Scholarship writing competition is an excellent opportunity for Social Work students to hone their writing skills and possibly win a good sum of money to help them with the cost of their education. More importantly, this writing competition is an opportunity for personal and professional growth. For me, the challenge to look closely at my own development as a social worker was more beneficial than winning. It allowed me (or forced me) to examine my history as an activist for social change, as well as the conflicts that were arising in my internship. It was during this process of examination, while grappling with the requirements of scholarship, that I experienced a greater understanding of myself and the challenges of working for social change as a social worker. Without this painful self evaluation, I doubt if I would have continued on to complete my MSW and most likely not gone on to start my own non-profit or win my election to City Council. I highly recommend participation in the Brehler Scholarship writing competition to any student. If you win – the bonus is the privilege of joining the review committee!"

Catrina Stackpoole, Hamtramck City Council, Mayor Pro-tem, 2000 Brehler Scholarship Winner

No class can teach you about yourself. It can raise self-awareness and help facilitate the process of self-knowledge, but it can never reveal the very thread of what makes us do what we do as social workers. The very fact that I completed my Brehler paper was an incredible experience for me. I had set a goal for myself, worked hard to complete it, and in the process learned invaluable lessons about myself. In this way, my Brehler experience was the epitome of what my social work education sought to achieve: As much as we are told to start where the clients are, it is equally important to know where we start. Writing my Brehler paper helped me realize where I was and where I wanted to go.

Megan Pennefather, Research Assistant, Wayne State University, 2011 Brehler Scholarship Winner

Format

The format of the paper is as follows:

1. Scholarly paper of 7 to 10 typewritten pages, double-spaced, and in 12-point font, not including the references section.
2. Observes the principle of confidentiality as it relates to agencies, clients and other persons and items.
3. Conforms to current APA guidelines for style, citations and format.

Faculty Mentor

Each applicant/ author is required to work with a faculty mentor in the process of developing the manuscript. You may ask any faculty member to work with you as a mentor. You and the mentor must agree to the relationship, and develop a plan of work. You must turn in the enclosed form signed by both you and the mentor.

A calendar of the due dates for the competition is enclosed with this form.

Process

A review Committee that includes previous winners, faculty, and family members of Elizabeth N. Brehler will evaluate the manuscripts that are submitted by the deadline date. The review process will be “double-blind,” which is to say that both reviewers’ and authors’ identities will be concealed from each other. To this end, please make sure that the manuscript and the copies contain no identifying information. Each applicant will receive notification of the results by U.S. Mail.

Application

The Final Manuscript is due by 5 p.m. on **Friday, March 13, 2015**, in the Office of Admissions and Student Services. The submission packet should include the following: the entry form, which has all of the author’s identifying information; the original paper and two printed hard copies. Please note that *only* the entry form should contain the author’s identifying information. All papers become the property of the School of Social Work. In addition, the manuscript must be e-mailed to elizabeth.cutcher@wayne.edu by the deadline. Please include “Brehler Manuscript Submission” and the title of your manuscript, without your name or any other identifying information, in the subject line of the e-mail.

For More Information

Contact faculty Chair Dr. Antonio González-Prendes (aa3232@wayne.edu) at the Wayne State University School of Social Work.