MEMORANDUM

TO: CAS Council
FROM: Sunny Harris Rome
DATE: October 25, 2002
RE: Modified Degree Program: Advanced Standing MSW

As you know, we opened the doors of our new Masters in Social Work (MSW) program this fall. Next fall, our first-year students will continue on to their second year (it’s a 60 credit-hour masters) and we will admit a new first-year class.

In addition to the standard MSW program, most schools of social work offer a variation called “Advanced Standing.” It allows some applicants who have already completed a bachelor’s degree in social work (BSW) to move directly into the second (advanced) year of graduate study. We are proposing the addition of an Advanced Standing MSW Program at GMU, with the following admissions criteria:

- BSW degree earned within the past 5 years from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education
- minimum grade point average of 3.2 for the last 60 credits
- at least 30 credits of undergraduate liberal arts courses, including a minimum of three credit hours in each of the following subjects: statistics, human biology, English composition, history or government, and social science.

Advanced Standing students will begin their course work in the summer, by taking the two required elective courses and SOCW 670, Writing for Professional Practice.

During the fall and spring, Advanced Standing students will join students in the regular MSW program, following the identical schedule of required courses and completing the second-year practicum. They will graduate with a total of 33 credits.

Justification:

1 - Offering Advanced Standing makes good academic sense. The first year MSW curriculum closely mirrors that of the BSW program, so strong students with BSW degrees typically are well-prepared to move directly into advanced-level MSW course work.

2 - Advanced Standing programs are extremely popular! In order to remain competitive with other area programs, we need to offer the Advanced Standing option. It is especially important for our own BSW graduates who, absent a GMU Advanced Standing program, will choose to attend graduate school elsewhere. The
Social Work Department has already received many inquiries for 2003-4 regarding advanced standing; we know we lost prospective students in 2002-3 because Advanced Standing was not yet available.

3 – The entire curriculum is already in place. No new courses would need to be developed or approved. The Department has the resources to accommodate these additional students.

Attached are (1) a sample Advanced Standing Schedule, and (2) draft catalog copy. Please contact me (3-2072 or srome@gmu.edu) if you have any questions. Thank you!