

The Board of Registration of Social Workers in British Columbia

**In the matter of the *Social Workers Act*
and a hearing concerning an application for registration by**

██████████
Applicant

Decision of the Board

Hearing date: June 18, 2005

Place of hearing: Vancouver, BC

Panel: Raymond Chapman RSW
Sherry Baker
James Campbell RSW
Darlynn Gehring RSW
Deborah Jones RSW
Anne Lindsay RSW
Bessie Yellowback RSW

Counsel for the Registration Committee: Mr. Norman Wexler

Counsel for the Applicant: ██████████ chose not to have a lawyer represent ██████████

Background

The applicant applied for registration on May 27, 2004. ██████████ application for registration was reviewed by the registrar and referred to the registration committee. The registration committee reviewed ██████████ application and they were left with concerns about whether the applicant has satisfied the requirements for registration as outlined in the Rules of the Board of Registration for Social Workers in British Columbia (the "Rules"). Therefore the matter was referred to the Board to conduct this hearing.

1. The purpose of the hearing is to determine if the applicant has satisfied the requirements for registration in accordance with Rule 35(2).
2. Specifically, the Board must decide:
 - Whether the applicant's baccalaureate degree is in a related field (Rule 35(2)(a)),
 - Whether the applicant has demonstrated a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities which are substantially equivalent to those required under Rule 35(1)(a),

- Whether the applicant has provided evidence of having completed a minimum of 700 hours of social work experience through a combination of practica, internship, and work experience supervised by a social worker satisfactory to the board (Rule 35(1)(c)), and
- Whether the applicant has satisfied the board of good character consistent with the responsibilities and standards expected of a registrant.

Preliminary matters

1. Exhibit One, Volume One and Two of documents for the hearing was submitted and the exhibit was considered evidence submitted for this hearing.
2. The parties agreed that the hearing was to be heard under the Rules as revised on March 18, 2005.
3. ██████████ chose to proceed without a lawyer to represent ██████. ██████ chose to have ██████████ represent ██████ in place of a lawyer.
4. The chair proposed at the hearing and the parties agreed to look first at whether the applicant's baccalaureate degree is in a related field (Rule 35(2)(a), and that if the hearing panel decides that ██████████ degree is in a related field, the hearing panel would reconvene to hear evidence and arguments related to the other three matters to be inquired into at the hearing.

Position of the Registration Committee of the Board of Registration of Social Workers in British Columbia

The Counsel for the Registration Committee of the Board of Registration of Social Workers in British Columbia (BRSW) presented the following points during the hearing:

1. That the onus and burden of proof that the applicant has satisfied the requirements for registration is on the applicant as per Rule 31(1).
2. That a Bachelor of Arts degree specifically related to social work is a threshold to be met in order to register under substantial equivalence as per Rule 35(2)(a).
3. That ██████████ Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts from the University of ██████████ does not constitute a related degree.
4. That based on this criteria, ██████████ does not qualify for registration under Rule 35(2).

Position of the Applicant

While [REDACTED] agreed to look at degree in a related field as the initial focus of the hearing, [REDACTED] also wanted the board to consider other points in determining [REDACTED] eligibility. Specifically, [REDACTED] submitted:

1. [REDACTED] is an excellent social worker as documented by the material submitted in Exhibit One and that this should be the primary factor in determining [REDACTED] application for registration.
2. [REDACTED] experience as a social worker itself is an appropriate determination for eligibility rather than a specific degree requirement, and that the value of experience outweighs the value of a degree.
3. The Bachelor of Social Work degree is not a valid standard to use for determining if a social worker will be ethical and minimize harm to a client. [REDACTED] presented anecdotal examples where social workers with a Bachelor of Social Work degree do cause harm.
4. [REDACTED] Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts from the University of [REDACTED] included five courses in psychology in the fall of [REDACTED] and four courses in psychology in the spring of [REDACTED].
5. While [REDACTED] transcript from the University of [REDACTED] states [REDACTED] has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts, [REDACTED] intention was to obtain a major in psychology, however, the university determined [REDACTED] qualified for graduation based on [REDACTED] major in dramatic arts.
6. [REDACTED] continued to take courses in psychology in [REDACTED] at the University of [REDACTED] and the University of [REDACTED].
7. A degree in a broad area of study including courses in Roman history, English literature, introduction to logic, improvisational theatre and classical music does relate to social work.
8. The board should consider other courses outside the degree including courses [REDACTED] completed at [REDACTED] University in business administration as well as the fourteen psychology courses completed both in and after [REDACTED] degree in [REDACTED].
9. Submitted as Exhibit Two, [REDACTED] presented a copy of a [REDACTED] of a two day course titled *Family Development Response: Strength Based Practices and Interventions* which [REDACTED] was scheduled to attend on [REDACTED].

10. ■ has the right to be registered as a social worker and that the board needs to prove ■ does not qualify for registration.
11. The term related degree is not clearly outlined and defined by the board.
12. If ■ is denied registration ■ has the right to know why is does not qualify.

Analysis

1. As indicated at the hearing, the panel's decision on this matter must be made on the basis of the Rules. While ■ presented arguments that the criteria for eligibility for registration should be changed, this panel cannot disregard the requirements and parameters established by the Rules (which have been approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, in accordance with the *Social Workers Act*).
2. The hearing panel assessed whether a degree is a "degree in a related field" based on the amount of overlap in the core curriculum in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. The panel determined that a degree should have significant overlap in curriculum to be a degree in a related field.
3. The core curriculum items in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work include academic qualifications in each of the following areas: human behavior and development, social welfare and policy, social work theory, social work practice and research.
4. The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts from the University of ■ includes five courses in psychology from the fall of ■, including PSYC 2010 Research Methodology, PSYC 2700 Comparative Social Behavior, PSYC 3320 Advanced Human Learning and Memory, PSYC 3500 Abnormal Psychology and PSYC 3630 Human Sexuality.
5. The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts from the University of ■ includes transfer credit for two courses, Psychology 2400 and Sociology 1000.
6. The applicant withdrew from the five courses in psychology ■ registered in for the spring ■ term. These courses were not completed and are not part of ■ Bachelor's Degree in Dramatic Arts.
7. The above listed courses that were completed may include some core curriculum items in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work.

8. The panel considered information in Exhibit One, particularly tab 81 and 88 to determine if the courses taken by [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Bachelor Degree in Dramatic Arts included some core curriculum items in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. The board was not provided with documentation from university course outlines of curriculum content or objectives.
9. The panel decided the overlap in course curriculum was primarily in the areas of human behavior and development and research, and do not constitute significant overlap with the core curriculum items in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of the Schools of Social Work.
10. Courses completed outside of a degree completion would be part of an applicant's knowledge skills and abilities in considering substantial equivalency but are not part of determining if a degree is in a related field.
11. For a degree to be considered a degree in a related field, the applicant would need to show that the course of study covered all, not just a portion, of the subject matter established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work core requirements. Therefore an applicant would need to show that the majority of the courses making up the degree program included subject matter equivalent to the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work core requirements.

Conclusion

The panel unanimously decided that the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts from the University of [REDACTED] completed by [REDACTED] is not a degree in a related field because it does not include sufficient courses with significant overlap in the core curriculum areas in a Bachelor of Social Work degree as established by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. It was therefore decided that the applicant has not satisfied the requirements for registration in accordance with Rule 35(2).



Ray Chapman, MSW, RSW
Chair

On behalf of the Board of Registration for Social Workers in British Columbia
July 15, 2005