The University of Tennessee College of Social Work seeks to be a humane community of proactive, engaged learners who are prepared to greet change with receptive intellectual curiosity. The College aspires to be an institution that recognizes change and its implications for social work practice and that fosters leadership in social change and creativity to address human needs for social and economic justice, while remaining focused on the values, ethics, and history of social work.

The College aspires to excellence in classroom and field instruction that supports critical thinking life-long learning, and responsiveness to the needs of diverse students, practitioners, alumni, and clients. The College strives for excellence in research through the meticulous and responsible use of the best available research methods, interdisciplinary collaboration, and programs of research designed to address questions critical to social work concerns. In light of the College’s focus on outreach the College endeavors to attain excellence in public service through numerous efforts that benefit the community, profession, and University while supporting our educational and research missions whenever possible. By striving for excellence the College aspires to preeminence as a leader locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally in social work education, research and practice across the life span with regard to the quality of life of vulnerable populations, especially high-risk children and their families living in urban and rural poverty.

Excellence is fostered across the state in the three campuses of the College using high standards in the hiring of faculty and staff and in the selection of students, and applying rigorous performance standards and rewards for achievement. Excellence is supported across the state in the three campuses of the College through a supportive infrastructure, cross-location collaboration that draws on the unique strengths of the individual campuses, continuing education, a close relationship between the College, the public, and the professional community, an ongoing commitment to our alumni, the acquisition of external funding for research and training of students at all levels of curriculum as well as providing internally and externally funded stipends for the recruitment of top minority and other financially needy students, and the utilization of advanced computer technology.

In striving for excellence and preeminence our professional values, ethics, history, and future demand that social work educators, researchers, and practitioners are culturally competent and vested in responding to oppressive institutional, societal and political trends. Thus, the College seeks diversity in its faculty, field instructors, students, and staff. Cultural relevance and sensitivity to the personal, social, economic, and political needs of vulnerable, high-risk groups is emphasized throughout the education, research, and service of students and faculty.