

East Carolina University
Request to Establish a Doctoral Program in Rehabilitation Counseling
and Administration

Introduction

Following a recommendation from the Graduate Council and from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs approved on November 9, 2001 the request from East Carolina University to plan a doctoral program in Rehabilitation Counseling and Administration. East Carolina University now seeks approval to establish a doctoral program in Rehabilitation Counseling and Administration (CIP: 51.2310) effective August 2005.

Program Description

The institution describes the new program as follows:

The Department of Rehabilitation Studies is requesting permission to establish an interdisciplinary doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree program in rehabilitation counseling and administration.

The proposed program is designed primarily for master's-level practitioners with related work experience who want to become advanced service delivery professionals, administrators in rehabilitation, substance abuse, and related health care facilities, or faculty in academic settings. The primary objective is to meet the need for terminal degree professionals for clinical and administrative roles in applied service delivery and agency settings. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse Services Section, and the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services are in regular need of qualified administrators. Administrators and advanced service delivery professionals are needed at higher state office levels as well as in regional and local rehabilitation and substance abuse treatment programs.

A secondary objective is to address the need for terminal degree professionals in academic settings in North Carolina. Throughout the UNC system there is a need for university faculty who are qualified to teach in the rehabilitation counseling, substance abuse counseling, vocational evaluation, rehabilitation services, and related allied health care disciplines. The PhD program will also provide such a terminal degree option for current master's degree-level allied health professionals in such areas as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and physician assistant programs. The goal of the program is to meet the demand for

- administrators in rehabilitation, substance abuse, vocational evaluation, and related health care programs in state, regional, and local programs that deliver rehabilitation and health care services;
- substance abuse faculty and researchers at the four MS degree level substance abuse counselor education programs at ECU, ASU, UNCW, and UNCC faculty for the

undergraduate minor in alcohol and drug studies at ECU; and faculty at other UNC universities that offer substance abuse courses;

- advanced clinical professionals for rehabilitation and substance abuse counseling in clinical settings and public school programs that focus on substance abuse;
- an advanced degree option for related allied health professionals, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and physician assistant programs.

The program will be based on the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)'s standards for doctoral programs. (See Appendix A.) The standards "are intended to prepare counselor educators and supervisors and advanced practitioners for counseling and human development in both academic and clinical settings." A minimum of 96 graduate semester hours is required by the CACREP guidelines and the proposed PhD program is being developed consistent with those guidelines. Two special issues of *Rehabilitation Education* (13 (2), 1999; 14 (2), 2000) focused on recommended curricula for rehabilitation doctoral programs. Recommendations for curriculum and course content from these issues (Bieschke & Herbert, 2000; Bolton & Cook, 1999; Parker & Thomas, 1999; Berven & Lynch, 1999; Bolton & Cook, 2000; Bolton, 2000; Cook, 2000; Herbert & Bieschke, 2000; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1999, Maki & Rocklin, 2000) were also used as guidelines in structuring the required curriculum as well as in developing content in required courses. The proposed program will include curriculum in post-master's degree level rehabilitation counseling, substance abuse counseling, research, statistics, rehabilitation, and health care administration.

Program Review

The review process is designed to surface strengths and weaknesses in proposed new degree programs. Proposals to establish new doctoral programs are reviewed internally and externally. The concerns from the two review processes were summarized in a letter to the Chancellor prior to the presentation to the Graduate Council. That summary follows:

A number of issues came to the fore in the review process. The issue of demonstrating need came up with some comments by one reviewer that some of the studies, going back to 1998, could be outdated and more current data would be helpful. There was also a concern about just how many of the potential openings identified would be met by graduates of this program. Perhaps the sense that some of this analysis may be out of date can be focused on a claim in the proposal, "...especially in an economy with low unemployment and many professional vacancies." Clearly this statement does not capture current reality, and even the notion of professional vacancies needs closer scrutiny in light of the pressure on the state budget. While this could result in some shifting of positions from public to private, careful analysis needs to be done to track what the real need is.

A few curriculum issues came up. There was concern about the place in the program for supervised teaching, and topics such as professional issues, standards of practice, and rehabilitation counseling's role and function. The reviewer granted that they could be embedded in the identified courses, but they were not evident to the reader.

The size of the faculty was raised and the issue of faculty research productivity. There was a recommendation that at least one of the new appointments be at a senior level and be someone with significant research experience. Another recommendation was that one of the positions be in rehabilitation administration. The reviewer could find little evidence of faculty research funding and was concerned that the research funding was not at a level for a doctoral faculty. He recognized that changes take place with a new degree level, but seems to have reservations about how close the faculty is to the expected level of research funding.

The review process identified the evaluation plan as an area needing more development. The goal of the program is to serve the academy and provider administrators for rehabilitation organizations but neither of those shows up as measures of success for the program. While we can place confidence in the campus's internal review process, the standards for success need to be carefully laid out in an evaluation plan.

There was some concern that for a program planning to serve rehabilitation agencies, there was not much demonstration of involvement by a wide range of agency representatives, and one reviewer commented that the two agency letters were identical, which raise the question of just how much involvement there was in the details of the direction of the program.

As indicated above, the two additional faculty positions appear to be necessary to start the program, yet it appears that their funding is to be based on enrollment-based new funds. If the numbers do not reach expectation, what will happen? The level of commitment of the campus to this program needs to be carefully delineated.

With new doctoral programs there is usually an issue of how new graduate students will be supported. That is an issue here as well.

Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of the programs means reliance of other programs for some of the curriculum. Two issues there are whether the programs are willing to tailor courses specifically to meet the needs of this program and what assurance there is that departments without doctoral programs will provide service course appropriate for doctoral level education.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council had, as a basis for its consideration, the proposal to establish the program, copies of the outside reviews of the program, the summary letter to the Chancellor, and a presentation to the Council by representatives of the program. The discussion at the Graduate Council focused on whether a faculty of adequate size and experience would be in place for an August 2004 start for the program. It was the sense

of the Council that the two new faculty members needed to be in place prior to recruiting students to the program. There was discussion of the relation of the hours of the prior master's degree to the hours of the doctoral program, which was cleared up when it was made clear that the hours were not being transferred to the doctoral program but were the hours typically expected in a master's program that would feed the doctoral program.

Response

Representatives of the school pointed to the need for more doctoral-level graduates both for public and private practice and for providing college and university faculty. A program with high national standing for its master's program is in good shape to launch a doctoral program that can address some of these needs immediately. One faculty member is being hired and ECU is planning to hire another faculty member in the first year of the program. The campus plans to provide doctoral stipends and some tuition waivers.

Recommendation by the Graduate Council

After consideration of the issues raised by reviewers and Council members, the Graduate Council voted, first to move the approved start date to August 2005, then without dissent, voted to recommend approval to establish this doctoral program in August 2005 on the assumption that the two new faculty would be in place by then.

Need for the Program

The primary need for the program is that of doctoral trained graduates for public agencies in North Carolina and elsewhere, and of faculty. This would be the only doctoral program in UNC.

Resources

The commitment of faculty has been made by the dean, and other support is to come from internal reallocations and enrollment growth as well as from external funding.

Recommendations

The Office of the President recommends that the Board of Governors approve the request from East Carolina University to establish a doctoral program in Rehabilitation Counseling and Administration effective August 2005 with the proviso that the two new faculty members are in place before students are accepted for the program.

Approved to be Recommended to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs of the Board of Governors

Senior Vice President Gretchen M. Bataille

December 16, 2003