

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Doctor of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education program at
North Carolina A&T State University**

North Carolina A&T State University requests authorization to establish a Doctor of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education degree program (CIP 51.2310).

Program Description

The Doctor of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education degree program will prepare culturally competent graduates to work as counselor educators, researchers, clinicians and supervisors in academic and non-academic settings. Graduates of the program will meet the requirements for licensure by the NC Licensed Professional Counselor and NC Substance Abuse Professional Practice boards that individuals are to possess a degree in counseling from an institution accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or the Commission on the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The 79-hour post-master's program consists of a professional core (55 hours), dissertation (12 hours), and cognate (12 hours). Potential cognates include trauma informed care, as well as behavioral addictions, vocational evaluation and work adjustment, marriage and family counseling, or behavioral medicine in ethno-racial and culturally diverse populations. The proposed program curriculum includes an Instructional Theory and Methods course designed to prepare graduates for faculty positions, and efforts will be made to provide teaching assistantships for interested students. The Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness at North Carolina A&T State University serves as a key asset for clinical training and delivery of the program. The program would be the first doctoral level program in rehabilitation counseling and rehabilitation counselor education offered by an HBCU.

Mission Relevance

The proposed degree aligns with North Carolina A&T State University's mission as a doctoral/research university to offer doctoral level degrees in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines. Goal 3 of *A&T Preeminence 2020* aims to position the university as a premiere, research-intensive doctoral institution. The nature of the curriculum, including its clinical components, supports the institutional mission and *A&T Preeminence 2020* by providing students with practical experiences that connect theory and practice (Goal 4) and emphasizing cultural diversity, social justice, and leadership and advocacy skills (Goal 5).

Student Demand

The program is expected to draw applicants from counseling, social work, nursing and psychology at North Carolina A&T State University and other HBCUs, as well as other institutions. In 2010, North Carolina A&T State University surveyed its students in the rehabilitation counseling master's program, and 90% indicated interest in pursuing a doctoral degree in the field. Within the past year, the Department of Human Development and Services has received over thirty inquiries about the proposed doctoral program. The institution is also strategically positioned geographically, as only three other doctoral programs exist in rehabilitation counseling across eight neighboring states.

Societal Demand and Opportunities for Program Graduates

The Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests that employment of rehabilitation counselors is expected to grow by 28% from 2010 to 2020, faster than average for all occupations. Demand for rehabilitation counselors is expected to grow with the increase in the elderly population and with the continued rehabilitation needs of other groups, such as veterans and people with disabilities. The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services projects approximately 130 job vacancies for Rehabilitation Counselor I and II levels over the next five years. As the demand for rehabilitation counselors increases, so does the demand for rehabilitation counselor educators. Graduates of the program will be prepared with research and leadership skills necessary for academic and non-academic positions in the field. The proposal cited studies

the project the current graduation rates from rehabilitation counselor education doctoral programs will result in a significant shortage of doctoral trained professionals and educators through 2019.

Resource Implications

North Carolina A&T State University projects that five additional faculty and extended hours for an existing clinical psychiatrist are needed to launch the program. The Chancellor has committed institutional support for these positions. A \$1 million five-year award from the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration will be used towards an EPA program manager/recruiter and one-time additions of research materials for the psychological/vocational assessment library. A combination of institutional support and funds from the RSA award will be used for graduate student support. The Dean of the School of Education has allocated a half position for administrative support.

Existing library, facilities, and information technology resources are adequate for the launch of the program.

Collaborative Opportunities

While East Carolina University, UNC Chapel Hill, and Winston-Salem State University offer master's level degrees in rehabilitation counseling, only East Carolina University offers a doctoral degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and Administration. Preliminary discussions with East Carolina University resulted in identification of several research areas of collective interest, including but not limited to addictions and multicultural aspects of clinical addiction, and disability resources across urban and rural disability populations. Program leaders also discussed a multi-site process for research and dissertation projects and dissertation committee service across universities. North Carolina A&T State University is also interested in potential participation of their students in online courses offered by East Carolina.

Outcome of Consultation with Disciplinary Experts

In May 2012, the UNC Graduate Council approved without dissent North Carolina A&T State University's Request to Plan. The Request to Establish was reviewed by six independent external reviewers. External reviewers agreed that the proposed program emphases on multiculturalism and trauma-informed care were distinctive and timely. They recognized the value of this degree offering by an HBCU and acknowledged the investments already made by the institution and by Federal agencies in rehabilitation counseling at North Carolina A&T State University. Reviewers noted that student recruitment is a challenge nationally and questioned the potential for overlap with the applicant pool at East Carolina University. North Carolina A&T State University's master's level programs in counseling enjoy robust enrollments with over 100 admissions applications per semester. As an HBCU, North Carolina A&T State University expects to attract many applicants from other HBCUs with master's level programs and cited several such institutions that have maintained contact regarding status of the doctoral program. These feeder programs are unlikely to overlap with East Carolina University. External reviewers also emphasized the need to strengthen the research activity of the core faculty and to assure that additional faculty hired to the program would bring experience in research and doctoral student supervision. North Carolina A&T State University recently completed interviews for two open positions and are in the process of extending offers to two tenured faculty who would bring additional research experience to the program. Finally, external reviewers noted the potential for confusion with the program's dual focus on clinical and educator roles. Program developers assert the dual focus is appropriate and not inconsistent with that of some other programs nationally.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve North Carolina A&T State University's request to establish a Doctor of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education degree program (CIP 51.2310) effective August 2013.