



# The University of North Carolina

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs

FROM: President Thomas W. Ross

DATE: October 22, 2013

SUBJECT: Licensure of Capella University

The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina is charged under North Carolina General Statute Section 116-15 with responsibility for licensing nonpublic educational institutions to conduct post-secondary degree activity in North Carolina. In November 2004, the Board of Governors approved revisions to the document, *Rules and Standards for Licensing Nonpublic Institutions to Conduct Post-Secondary Degree Activity in North Carolina*. This document provides the guidelines for interpreting the standards, and the rules, regulations, and procedures under which the Board issues licenses to institutions to conduct post-secondary degree activity in North Carolina.

Capella University has applied for a regular license to offer the following online degree programs in North Carolina:

- Master of Science (M.S.) in Addiction Counseling
- Master of Science (M.S.) in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Master of Science (M.S.) in Mental Health Counseling
- Master of Science (M.S.) in School Counseling
- Specialist Certificate in School Psychology

Dr. Frank Prochaska reviewed the application and appointed a team of examiners to determine if Capella University complied with the licensure standards outlined in the *Rules and Standards*. On December 6, 2012, the team of examiners visited the Capella University campus in Minneapolis, MN. Following the site visit, the team of examiners issued its report which contained recommendations. For more details on the degree programs and report, please review the summary.

Thus, I recommend to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs of the UNC Board of Governors that a regular license be issued to Capella University to offer the above-named online degree programs in North Carolina, subject to annual reports and review at any time. The programs will be reviewed within two calendar years of the initiation in North Carolina to judge whether the institution continues to maintain standards for licensure.

Enclosure: Summary

cc: Frank Prochaska

Constituent Universities  
Appalachian State  
University

East Carolina  
University

Elizabeth City  
State University

Fayetteville State  
University

North Carolina  
Agricultural and  
Technical State  
University

North Carolina  
Central University

North Carolina  
State University  
at Raleigh

University of  
North Carolina  
at Asheville

University of  
North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill

University of  
North Carolina  
at Charlotte

University of  
North Carolina  
at Greensboro

University of  
North Carolina  
at Pembroke

University of  
North Carolina  
at Wilmington

University of  
North Carolina  
School of the Arts

Western Carolina  
University

Winston-Salem  
State University

Constituent High School  
North Carolina  
School of Science  
and Mathematics

## SUMMARY OF VISIT OF TEAM OF EXAMINERS FOR CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Capella University, an online, for-profit university, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Capella Education Company and is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Capella was founded in 1993 as The Graduate School of America. Originally, the university offered online master's and doctoral degrees in management, education, and human services.

In 1997, the institution achieved regional accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and became a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Shortly after becoming accredited, the institution changed its name to Capella University and has established the five Schools that exist today: Business and Technology, Counseling and Psychology, Education, Health Care and Nursing, and Public Service.

Capella University is currently licensed to offer the following five degree programs online for students in North Carolina, with each degree program requiring a practicum or an internship at a site in North Carolina:

- Master of Science in Education
- Master of Science in Human Services
- Master of Science in Psychology
- Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)
- Education Specialist (Ed.S.)

### THE APPLICATION AND SITE VISIT

Capella University has applied for licensure to offer the following five additional online degree programs, with each degree program requiring clinical practice internships and/or field experiences at sites in North Carolina:

- Master of Science (M.S.) in Addiction Counseling
- Master of Science (M.S.) in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Master of Science (M.S.) in Mental Health Counseling
- Master of Science (M.S.) in School Counseling
- Specialist Certificate in School Psychology

In accordance with the Rules and Standards: Licensing Nonpublic Institutions to Conduct Post-Secondary Degree Activity in North Carolina, Dr. Frank Prochaska, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at UNC General Administration, appointed a team of examiners to review the application, visit the institution, and evaluate its compliance with the licensure standards. The visit to Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota took place on December 6, 2012.

The team of examiners with expertise in the specific disciplines relating to the application for licensure of these five degree programs was comprised of:

- Dr. Richard E. Neel (Chair), Dean Emeritus, Belk College of Business, and Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Dr. Karen W. Gavigan, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina
- Dr. Donna A. Henderson, Professor of Counseling, Department of Counseling, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- Dr. Stephanie L. Lusk, CRC, Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources and Communication Disorders, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- Dr. Susan B. Wilkie McHale, LMFT, LPC, Professor and Director of Marriage and Family Therapy, Pfeiffer University, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Dr. Lori Unruh, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina
- Dr. Frank T. Prochaska, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, The University of North Carolina General Administration, Chapel, Hill, North Carolina, *Ex Officio*

The team's task was to review the application and accompanying exhibits and to participate in a site visit to determine if the institution demonstrated compliance with licensure standards. Before, during, or after the visit, many additional items of documentation were reviewed by the team including curricula for the proposed degree programs; course syllabi for the proposed degree programs; curriculum vitae for both the core (full-time) and adjunct (part-time) faculty members; library and electronic resources; enrollment data; audited financial statements; Capella University's 2012-2013 *University Catalog*; Capella University *Faculty Handbook*; Capella University *Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook*; and other materials.

During the visit, the team of examiners met with numerous administrators, faculty, staff, and students of Capella University.

## **PROPOSED DEGREE PROGRAMS**

### Master of Science (M.S.) in Addiction Counseling

This 92 quarter credit hour degree program is designed to prepare graduates to pursue careers in mental health counseling or addiction counseling, treatment, and prevention. The program provides students with a theoretical foundation in the field of addiction counseling as well as knowledge and skills in associated areas of wellness theory and research, relationship building, assessment and treatment, cultural competence, and ethical practice.

### Master of Science (M.S.) in Marriage and Family Therapy

The Marriage and Family Therapy master's degree program (92 quarter credit hours) is designed to prepare graduates to assume positions as marriage and family counselors/therapists serving individuals, couples, and families in institutional, public, or private practice settings. The curriculum emphasizes lifecycle and family system dynamics; assessment, diagnosis, and treatment; intervention; and systemic perspectives of working with individuals, couples, and families. Students engage in academic study and clinical training during which they demonstrate the established standards and ethics of professional counseling practice, including awareness and sensitivity to the complex individual, couple, and family systems needs of a multicultural society.

### Master of Science (M.S.) in Mental Health Counseling

The 92 quarter credit hours M.S. in Mental Health Counseling degree program is designed to prepare graduates to assume positions as mental health counselors serving individuals and groups in institutional, public, or private practice settings. The curriculum emphasizes assessment, diagnosis, and treatment; intervention; and systemic perspectives of working with children and adolescents, couples, and families. Students engage in academic study and clinical training during which they demonstrate the established standards and ethics of professional counseling practice, including awareness and sensitivity to the complex mental health needs of a multicultural society.

### Master of Science (M.S.) in School Counseling

The School Counseling master's degree program (72 quarter credit hours) is designed to prepare graduates to assume positions as school counselors serving a diverse population of students in public or private elementary, middle, and high school settings. The curriculum offers a comprehensive approach to deliver and manage contemporary school counseling programs and emphasizes assessment; intervention; individual and group counseling; classroom guidance; consultation and collaboration with teachers, parents, and the community; and advocacy of systemic change in the P–12 environment. Students engage in academic study and skills training during which they demonstrate various counseling approaches for working with P–12 children and adolescents.

### Specialist Certificate in School Psychology

This certificate program is designed for master's degree graduates with a specialization in School Psychology. Those who earn the specialist certificate typically are preparing to apply for a license or a certificate to practice as a school psychologist. The 50 quarter credits required for the specialist certificate complement and build upon the student's master's-level coursework in School Psychology.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the site visit, the *Preliminary Report to the President of The University of North Carolina from the Team of Examiners for the Licensure Visit To Review Capella University's Proposed Graduate Degree Programs in North Carolina* was submitted. In the report, the team of examiners included five suggestions and seven recommendations addressing these five proposed degree programs. Suggestions, which are offered as suggested best practices by team members, do not indicate a lack of compliance with the *Rules and Standards*. A suggestion is written for the institution's benefit, and it does not need to be implemented; the recommendations, however, must be implemented by the institution. The recommendations addressed issues of student activities in practicum experiences, student access to library support, requested additional information on Capella University students' performance on the PRAXIS examination, faculty credentials, and processes and procedures followed in practica and internships.

The team of examiners concludes its report by stating it would make its recommendation to the General Administration of The University of North Carolina regarding licensure of the proposed

degree programs after it receives the response from Capella University to the suggestions and recommendations contained in the report.

After receiving the team of examiners' report, Capella University responded to the recommendations and suggestions. Five of the seven recommendations were initially implemented to the satisfaction of the team of examiners. The remaining two recommendations addressed student activities in practicum experiences and processes and procedures followed in practica and internships. While the team agreed that Capella University made progress in addressing the two remaining recommendations, the team asked Capella to provide additional clarifying information on these recommendations.

After reviewing the institution's response providing the additional information, the team agreed that all of the seven recommendations have now been implemented to the satisfaction of the team of examiners, and the team recommends that Capella University be licensed to offer the five degree programs requested.

Dr. Frank Prochaska agrees with the team's review and recommendations. Thus, General Administration recommends licensure of the five proposed online degree programs listed above, to be offered by Capella University to students in North Carolina.

An appropriate review will be performed within two calendar years of the initiation of the new degree programs, by a team of examiners with expertise in the field, to ascertain Capella University's compliance with the *Rules and Standards*, including the recommendations contained in the report.