

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral and Social Sciences
(B.A., CIP 45.0101) at
North Carolina Central University**

I. Program Highlights

- Interdisciplinary degree program to meet current workforce needs for flexible problem solvers who seek solutions to real world challenges
- Program represents an innovative attempt to meet the academic needs of “part-way home” and “stopped out” students from NCCU and other institutions and enable them to complete their bachelor’s degree
- Reduces the number of students who file excessive hours appeals when they reach the maximum attempted hours permissible
- 124 credit hours including foundation requirements, general education, concentrations in any two behavioral and social science disciplines and general electives
- Students must complete a senior seminar capstone course with a culminating paper reflecting an examination of a behavioral or social science issue impacting society
- The degree also allows students to satisfy the minor area concentration with the translational research concentration (Ethnic, Cultural, and Gender Studies) recently approved by NCCU
- 80 full-time and 120 part-time students are estimated for the first year with enrollment projected to reach 500 students in year 4 through online and hybrid delivery formats
- No new faculty, facility, or library resources required for launch

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** No general behavioral and social science programs are currently offered in the UNC System. The only closely related programs are the B.A. in Liberal Studies at UNCG and the B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies at WSSU. The UNCG program has a strong humanities focus while the WSSU program is based on a limited number of 30 hour concentrations in the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** NCCU is grounded in the liberal arts tradition and provides students within a diverse educational and cultural environment. NCCU is committed to preparing leaders who can advance social responsibility in a diverse, global society. The proposed Behavioral and Social Sciences degree is a liberal arts degree that calls for students to engage in interdisciplinary studies offered within a diverse racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural learning environment. The Behavioral and Social Sciences degree is designed to prepare students with the interdisciplinary research tools and life-skills needed in a changing global workplace. The proposed program compliments and strengthens existing NCCU programs by allowing students to receive credit for the work already completed at NCCU or at another institution, while providing the opportunity for students could complete their degree in the shortest time possible.
3. **Demand (Local, regional, state).** Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics indicate that the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded by multi/interdisciplinary bachelor’s

degree programs increased by 66.5% between the 2002-03 and 2011-12 academic years. NCCU administrators conducted degree audits on students who are on a list of 4,730 NCCU “stopped out” students dating back to 2006. About 500 preliminary degree audits have been conducted and degree advisors identified 90 students who could enter the program immediately upon approval of the degree. A list of an additional 43,000 “stopped out” students will be reviewed to identify additional students who could benefit from the proposed degree.

4. **Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** The proposed degree does not represent duplication of services within the UNC system and identifies a critical online and hybrid niche that is not currently being explored.
5. **Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** 2104 NCWorks.gov data indicate that the skills to be gained by graduates of the proposed degree program were the top four job skills listed for all job openings advertised online in North Carolina. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data and data from programs offering a general social science indicate that persons with a social science bachelor’s degree find work as secondary school teachers via lateral entry, research assistants, market analysts, or in social work related jobs that can be obtained without being a licensed social worker. Other surveys show that graduates with a general behavioral and social science degree are in demand for civil service positions at the local, state, and federal level; community non-profit organizations; general health care jobs; adult services jobs offered through the North Carolina Division of Aging; and with non-profit groups that hire residential counselors for children who have been traumatized .
6. **Faculty Quality and Number.** More than 20 faculty will teach required courses for the major and be directly involved in instruction for the proposed degree. In addition to the behavioral and social sciences teaching faculty, this degree program utilizes faculty from across the university who deliver the undergraduate curriculum. Sociology faculty will teach sociology general education courses and upper-level sociology courses required by other majors. The social sciences in the college are all represented in this degree program, rendering an interdisciplinary perspective.
7. **Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** Because the program will serve students already in the pipeline at NCCU, facilities and services are already in place.
8. **Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** Students in the proposed degree program can take undergraduate courses in any department in the university provided they meet the course prerequisites. The primary departments supporting the degree program are Criminal Justice, Human Sciences, Nursing, Physical Education and Recreation, Political Science, Psychology, Public Health Education, and Social Work. The Global Studies and University Honors programs also support the proposed new degree program. No program improvement or expansion is needed in any of the university departments that support the proposed program.
9. **Impact on Access and Affordability.** The university received a UNC GA Non-Traditional Strategic Directions grant in the amount of \$50,000 to serve “part-way home” of “stopped out” students who are the primary target audience for the proposed new degree program. The NCCU focus on military students will also increase access for students who accumulate credits at multiple institutions because of necessary mobility in their course of duty. The online and hybrid delivery modes for the degree will also positively impact access and affordability.

- 10. Expected Quality.** The quality of the program will be assured by reliance on a core of stable experienced faculty who develop and maintain the curriculum at the university. Surveys have demonstrated that students are satisfied with the educational experience they receive in online courses and assess them as being equivalent to traditional face-to-face courses. In addition, NCCU has adopted the Quality Matters Rubric as a standard for the development and assessment of its online courses. The Division of Extended Studies is responsible for training faculty on applying the QM rubric, and the Division has provided funding for 32 faculty members to participate in the online workshops offered by QM. Three faculty members have completed the certified Peer Review course and now serve as facilitators for on-campus QM workshops.
- 11. Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** The program is proposed to enhance opportunities for a student audience already served at NCCU. No collaborations with other UNC system campuses are planned. However, NCCU is prepared to assist students who have "stopped out" of other institutions to work toward degree completion.
- 12. Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. The Council of Department Chairs in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CBSS) voted approval of the new proposal for the degree. Next, the CBSS Curriculum Committee voted approval of the proposal. The University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee voted approval of the proposal with simultaneous review from the faculty senate. And finally, the Academic Planning Council voted approval of the degree program proposal and its submission to UNC General Administration.

The Council of Department Chairs provided feedback about academic advising for students in the proposed program given the current heavy advising load. The resolution was that academic advisors assigned to the College would provide the needed advising through completion of the students' program of study.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. Prior to UNC system faculty review, NCCU responded to questions from UNC General Administration staff on student demand, curricular requirements, the learning management system to be used for the program, the support services available to online students, and faculty workload. The proposal received comments from 10 reviewers representing 7 UNC campuses. Most reviews were either "acceptable" or "acceptable with some considerations." Some reviewers indicated that additional information was needed in regards to demonstrating student demand with more specific evidence/data to show the need among NCCU students; sufficiency of the faculty and advisors to handle the anticipated growth in online enrollment; and the number and concentration of courses in specific disciplines.

NCCU provided supplementary documentation that contained satisfactory responses to all the considerations identified by the reviewers. In addressing the concern about sufficiency of advisors, NCCU stated that, "a team of graduate assistants will work with the BSS program each semester to assist in the initial screening of students interested in the program. This will allow the two degree advisors and the coordinator to focus on degree audits and continuing advising.

The use of the newly adopted Degree Works program will assist in managing this process with ease.”

To the reviewer’s concern about budgeting for growth, NCCU replied that, “Given the University’s and the CBSS’s commitment to the BSS degree enrollment growth, change of source of funds from grants and contracts, lapse salaries, and Title III monies may be used to support any additional needs beyond year four. Monies may also be redirected across the university and within the college to support growth areas such as this degree program.”

Benefits of program approval include a flexible and rigorous degree option that will attract a number of “part-way home” students and that can be achieved without significant additional resources. For these reasons, we do not recommend any alternatives to implementing the degree program.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve North Carolina Central University’s request to establish a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Behavioral and Social Sciences degree program (CIP 45.0101) effective October 2015.