

Academic Affairs

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Proposal Information

Institution: Columbus State University

Name of Proposed Program: Master of Education in Student Affairs

Brief Description of the Degree

The Master of Education in Student Affairs is designed to develop candidates who hold a special interest in college students and the environments in higher education that affect the cognitive and social well-being of those students. The proposed program is also consistent with both the goal and objectives of the University System of Georgia as well as institutional mission of Columbus State University.

The Master of Education in Student Affairs has several unique aspects. The program will be practitioner-oriented, and the curriculum will emphasize a blend of classroom learning with practical experience. The degree will require 36 semester hours of graduate credit, and a professional portfolio or thesis will be completed at the end of the program to illustrate the student's mastery of concepts and their applications. Students will also be expected to complete a final written and oral examination in an effort to display their ability to convey proficiency in regards to common practices within the field. Students will be encouraged to complete either a graduate research assistantship or professional internships in the field of student affairs or in related areas.

Institutional Mission

How does this program support the mission of your institution? How does the proposed program help meet the priorities/goals of your strategic plan and the strategic plan of the Board of Regents? Please reference the specific edition and page number of your strategic plan.

The mission of Columbus State University is "to promote educational, economic, social and cultural growth in Georgia and beyond. The university is dedicated to excellence in teaching in a student-centered environment, research, and creative activities, service to the region and the state, and community engagement through university-community partnerships."

The Master of Education in Student Affairs contributes to five goal statements or objectives found in the CSU 2006-2011 Strategic Plan (pages 10-13). They are as follows:

- Promote academic excellence at every level.
- Attract promising students; graduate educated citizens.
- Attract, develop and retain outstanding faculty.
- Improve the academic and social experiences of all students through comprehensive student services.
- Develop and sustain partnerships for the benefit of CSU and the surrounding community.

The mission of the College of Education, "...to achieve excellence by guiding individuals as they develop the proficiency, expertise, and leadership consistent with their professional roles" is congruent with and complements that of Columbus State University. The College of Education seeks to build upon this sense of academic excellence by expanding its programs to prepare highly qualified professionals who will work as scholars, practitioners, and leaders in higher education settings. The program meets the following strategic goals of the University System of Georgia:

- Create enrollment capacity to meet the needs of 100,000 additional students by 2020.
- Increase the USG's participation in research and economic development to the benefit of a Global Georgia.
- Strengthen the USG's partnerships with the state's other education agencies.
- Increase efficiency, working as a System.

Graduates of the program will be prepared to function effectively in a variety of positions within the field of Student Affairs in both two year and four year settings. In addition, this program will give working professionals in student affairs the opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge, and abilities to competitively seek positions of increased responsibilities and scope. Further, the program strives to: 1) develop the intellect of students; 2) discover and disseminate knowledge; 3) enhance awareness in the scientific, technical and cultural arenas; and 4) instill a desire for lifelong learning. Finally, the program is committed to the development of effective citizenship with particular emphasis on service to the community at large and through the promotion of cultural sensitivities.

The proposed program helps in meeting the priorities of two critical components of the existing institutional strategic plan regarding research and service to the region.

Research

The Student Affairs program expects that graduates attaining this degree will have the depth and breadth of knowledge of three major components: Foundational Studies, Professional Studies and Supervised Practice.

- *Foundational Studies* includes the study of the foundations of higher education and student affairs.
- *Professional Studies* includes the five related areas: student development theory; student characteristics and effects of college environments on student behaviors; individuals and group interventions within higher education settings; organization and administration of student personnel services and its relationship to higher education; and the role of assessment, evaluation and

research.

- *Supervised practice* consists of one or two semester-long internships/practica in a specific area of professional expertise.

The program design follows the Standards and Guidelines for the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 1997) and meets the minimum curricular requirements set by Commission XII of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). The objectives set by these publications are widely accepted for Master of Education in Student Affairs programs throughout the field. In addition, the curriculum will incorporate the development of critical thinking skills and abilities to solve problems in various areas of higher education practice. The program will also work to develop students who develop into scholar-practitioners or individuals who base practical day-to-day decisions on sound, theoretical frameworks.

The Master of Education in Student Affairs program expects that graduates will have the knowledge and ability to acquire skills that continually advance their knowledge in the field of student affairs and who will use that knowledge to improve practice within the field. Embedded in this theme is the intent that professionals in the field of student affairs should acquire skills that are reflective and thoughtful as they solve problems in a community of scholars.

Service to the Region and State

The proposed program is consistent with the commitment of the university to provide service to the region and state. The communities of Columbus, Ft. Benning, Phenix City and Auburn, Alabama together form a large metropolitan area with a wide array of higher education settings and multiple opportunities to provide instruction in regards to the development of college students. The Columbus metropolitan area alone is distinguished by a multi-ethnic population with a rapidly growing international student population which derives from the presence of several multi-national businesses in the Columbus area. Ft. Benning is presently undergoing substantial growth, adding 3000 troops by 2010 because of the closure of other military bases in the United States and overseas. These additional troop increases will provide more opportunity for individuals who may retire or detach from the military and seek job opportunities in other areas. Both the growing demand for businesses and military personnel in the Columbus area will increase the enrollment in the region's colleges and universities which will require more substantially trained professionals to work within college settings.

Is it likely that a SACS visit for substantive change will be necessary? Why?

As an addition to an existing program that will be a component of the Educational Leadership Program in the Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership, and Professional Studies, a SACS visit for substantive change will not be necessary.

Will the program require an increase in state appropriation within the next five years?

The program will be implemented using existing resources. Initially, faculty resources will be secured from existing tenure-track faculty as well as Columbus State

University administrators who will serve as adjunct faculty. Currently, faculty members within the department are considering program revisions and the redirection of some departmental resources. Additional resources to include an additional state allocation for two faculty positions will be sought in 2010-2011 to assure continued program growth and improvement and to meet the standards and guidelines for the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 1997).

If this is a baccalaureate program, will you be asking for an exception to the 120-hour expectation?

The Master of Education in Student Affairs is a graduate program.

Are there program delivery formats that will be new or different for your institution with the establishment of the proposed program? What is the program delivery format?

Some courses to be offered on-line (less than 50%).

If programs will be delivered externally, do you have an approved Instructional Delivery Plan (IDP) on file? Yes or No (Note: Please check to determine that you have a current IDP on file in the system office).

Yes.

Need

Need: Provide a brief justification and data for why the state needs graduates from this program and for why the University System needs this program.

The proposed program addresses the need to provide leadership in student personnel services. Continued problems with retention, both nationwide and within the state of Georgia, increase the need to reform the way in which many college student personnel services are delivered. The need to create innovative and high quality programs to prepare future student affairs leaders and administrators in the delivery of student personnel services parallels the national effort to reform preparation programs in Educational Leadership. Currently, graduate students in Student Affairs programs are seeking a multi-disciplinary graduate school experience that will offer them competitive experiences in a variety of student personnel settings, thus providing them with a sound basis for career choices after graduation. Employment opportunities abound in the field of student personnel and services. In Georgia alone, there are 35 public colleges and universities including 4 research universities, 2 regional universities, 13 state universities, 8 state colleges, and 8 two year colleges. Additionally, there are 64 private colleges and universities with campuses located in Georgia. With 99 college campuses located in the state, there are various employment opportunities for quality, skilled professionals in the area of university and Student Affairs.

Give a brief justification for why your institution should offer the program.

There are no masters programs in the area of Student Affairs that are served by the university or within the local Columbus area. The region served by the university encompasses a large metropolitan area with a wide array of educational settings and multiple challenges in instruction presented by the mission to educate the diverse population reflected in the region. The region is distinguished by a multi-ethnic population with a rapidly growing international student population because of the presence several multi-national business in Columbus and because of CSU's proximity to Ft. Benning, the infantry training center for the United States Army, a training center for officers from allied military forces throughout the world, and a growing military post that will add 30,000 more residents in the next two years due to base closures in other parts of the world. Additionally, there are several proprietary, public and private institutions of higher education as well as several two-year institutions in the region. These institutions can serve as critical feeders into the master's program.

At the same time, Columbus State University is uniquely poised to offer this program. Newly approved Educational Leadership programs in the College of Education are staffed by faculty who can teach courses relevant to the Student Affairs degree program. Additionally, interested and well-qualified personnel who work in the area of student affairs can assist with program delivery and mentoring. Other potential faculty include administrative staff in Judicial Affairs, Enrollment Services, advising programs, Business and Finance and other areas within the university who can teach and provide mentoring for candidates in the program.

Demand: Provide data to support the need for the program and list the source. Estimate the number of students who will graduate annually from the program in the steady state.

Specific data regarding interest and need for the program was collected through surveys distributed among student life professionals throughout the state of Georgia. The survey included 1192 respondents with a success rate of 1134 valid responses. Respondents represented 32 institutions of higher education within Georgia. The institutions represented a mix of two year and four year institutions of higher education and encompassed both public and private colleges and universities. The survey respondents represented over 60 counties in Georgia. Of the respondents 49 percent indicated a desire to enroll in a doctoral program. This fact reflects a population of residents who would be willing to remain within the Georgia workforce. Further, 58 percent of the respondents indicated a willingness to participate in a masters program which was a mixture of face-to-face, online, and video conferencing. Survey results indicated that 60 percent of respondents were interested in enrolling in a program in Fall semester 2008, with 24 percent indicating that they would pursue a masters degree with an emphasis in Student Affairs.

Are there other similar programs in the USG system? List the institutions that offer a similar program.

There is only one such program in the state and none in our service area. The existing program is located at the University of Georgia, approximately 3 hours from Columbus State University. There are no programs of this type serving the southern portion of the state.

If similar programs are geographically nearby, how does your proposed program differ?

There is only one such program in the state and none in our service area.

Budget

Estimate the steady-state cost of the program (in current dollars) and indicate the percentages from state allocation, reallocation, student fees, grants, and other outside dollars.

The proposed masters program will be implemented combining existing resources and resources developed from budget redirection. Existing graduate programs in Educational Leadership will be modified in order to capture resources (human, physical, and fiscal) necessary to initiate the proposed masters program. After initiation of the program, additional state (university) allocations will be necessary to secure national accreditation, allow for limited growth and maintain quality assurance. It is anticipated that research/service grants would be secured to assist with additional expenses. No new administrative costs are anticipated, but the program will be expected to contribute to the overall administrative budget of the college. A pool of administrators and full-time faculty from a variety of disciplines will provide the instruction and supervise the internships. Future anticipated costs include:

Additional Personnel Beginning Year Two

1. Faculty (2)	110,000
2. Support Staff (1)	25,000
3. Graduate Assistants (2)	12,000
4. Summer Teaching	300 per student

Start-up costs

1. Library	25,000
2. Equipment	20,000
3. Travel	5,000

Additional revenue includes tuition for online courses. It is anticipated that additional revenue generated by online courses during the first year will be approximately \$66,000 which will offset future anticipated costs of \$200,000.

Will the program require the addition of a new organizational unit to the institution (e.g., college, school, division or department)?

The program will be housed in an existing department, the Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership and Professional Studies in the College of Education.

Will the program require additional resources? How do you plan to reallocate

resources for this proposed program?

A critical component of the Student Affairs program will be the incorporation of distance learning opportunities in the curriculum. Whereas, distance learning and web-based instruction may seem to challenge more traditional methods of providing student services, these techniques will serve to enhance the validity of the Student Affairs program. Based on our information, using distance learning techniques will assist the program in the needs of students who have geographic constraints and who are unable to attend courses on the "physical" campus. This flexibility in teaching and instruction allows for the program to reach a greater demographic area within the region which will allow students an opportunity to interact with individuals with whom they would not otherwise have had contact in a classroom environment. The use of distance learning also provides an opportunity for the College of Education to consolidate resources and to optimize fiscal management efforts of the USG Board of Regents.

Other

Please share additional information that you seek to add concerning the proposed program before you submit the Declaration of Intent.

Among the most innovative features in the proposed program is the promise for early completion of the master's final project. Full-time enrollment is encouraged; however, an option to participate part-time through distance education will be available by the end of the second year for current practitioners who want to complete the master's degree. Two features of the program will ensure both early completion (within three years) and a high completion rate for the cohort. The first feature would be the assignment of a faculty mentor from the Educational Leadership faculty to each candidate. The faculty mentor would track the progress of the candidate throughout the program. The second feature of the program is that the professional portfolio or thesis proposal would be developed in a class during the second semester of coursework. During this time, the candidate would work with faculty in the development of a candidacy committee.

Faculty in the Columbus State University Educational Leadership Program recognize that the training of the new generation of leaders for higher education requires immersion of leadership and professionals who display a real-world application of knowledge and skills in educational settings. To accomplish that goal the Master of Education in Student Affairs proposes a course of study that has distinct phases:

- Research/Higher Education Foundations
- Student Affairs Core
- Electives and Internship

The focus of the new program model is interdisciplinary in an effort to prepare students to serve as administrators and leaders who hold diverse areas of responsibility, which include but are not limited to the areas of finance, budgeting,

marketing, public relations, strategic planning, assessment and program evaluation, event planning and programming, leadership/ team building and legal and ethical practices. Program graduates will be prepared to assume leadership roles as directors or assistant directors in such specialty areas as residence life, Greek affairs, judicial affairs, financial aid, career services, placements offices, minority/ diversity affairs, admissions, orientation programs, international student programs, student activities offices, academic advising centers, student center management, recruiting, disability services, and alumni programs. The program will integrate theoretical frameworks with practical experiences by combining academic preparation with field-based experiences and internships. The program model will also give students access to graduate-level instruction from faculty in multiple disciplines which will allow students an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the campus community and expose them to a wide variety of higher educational processes.

The major objectives of this M.Ed. degree are:

- To enhance the leadership skills of entry-level student personnel services administrators who can quickly recognize and adapt to change in the field and in the needs of college students.
- To promote an understanding of the legal and ethical responsibilities required of student service professionals.
- To familiarize students with the theoretical foundations in models of human and student development and learn to apply those concepts to the creation of more effective service units.
- To foster interpersonal communication skills.
- To promote the use of quantitative and qualitative analysis and use research to investigate and solve problems.
- To use technology to create more efficient organizations.
- To engage in strategic planning and visioning to provide services with a maximum benefit to students.
- To engage in sound financial and budgeting practices to most efficiently use the resources within institutions of higher education and external constituencies.
- To enhance student attitudes, beliefs, values, and self-awareness necessary to serve students who are culturally different from themselves.
- To enable graduates to deal effectively with interpersonal conflict and campus crises.

These objectives will be met with a co-curricular blend of in-and-out of classroom experiences. These objectives will also be used as a means of measuring student learning outcomes and to assess student performance throughout the program. The proposed program of study is listed below:

M.Ed. Proposed Program of Study

Core

EDUF 6115	Educational Psychology	3 hours
EDUF 6116	Educational Research Methods	3 hours
EDUF 6118	Statistics I	3 hours
EDUL 6246*	Introduction to Higher Education	3 hours

MPAC 7126 Public Budgeting and Financial Administration 3 hours

Student Affairs Concentration

EDUL 6247 * Student Development Theory 3 hours

EDUL 6248 * The American College Student 3 hours

EDUL 6249 * Assessment and Program Evaluation 3 hours

EDUL 6277* Higher Education Policy and Ethics 3 hours

EDUL 6279 Capstone/ Practicum Seminar 3 hours

Electives

EDUL 7698 Independent Study 2 - 4 hours

EDUL 7555 Selected Topics 3 hours

EDUL 6698 Internship 3 - 6 hours

Total 36 - 39 hours

* Denotes courses to be developed for program

There are new challenges presented by educating professionals from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, belief systems, levels of affluence, and variety of preparedness to meet the changing needs of college students, their families, external and internal stakeholders, and university administrators. As in any large metropolitan area, students in the region served by the university come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of social experiences in terms of family background and socialization. Meeting the needs of diverse students requires leaders with the research skills necessary to improve student achievement in institutions of higher education.

Review status

New proposal Review in process Approved Rejected

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