

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS**

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors establish a program in Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis, effective Fall 2019.

### **Background**

Recent Michigan legislation mandates insurance companies to cover therapeutic services for autistic persons by Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) credentialed treatment providers. There is a shortage of board-certified professionals who can provide these services to large numbers of people diagnosed with Autism. The Educational Psychology division in the College of Education has an existing certification program in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), where students can also earn a master's degree in Educational Psychology with the ABA sequence embedded. However, both a degree and the required coursework from the certification program are required to obtain the BCBA credential. There is a strong need for advanced ABA curriculum that is longer and more in-depth. Although there are several BCBA approved training sequences in the state of Michigan, only one other university offers a master's degree in ABA.

Demand is high for this program because of a shortage of certified behavior analysts in Michigan. With less than 800 board-certified behavior analysts, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that more than 1500 certified behavior analysts are needed to provide services to fully enroll all Michigan children eligible for the ABA benefit.

### **Program Description**

The key program objective is to prepare practitioners for conducting Applied Behavior Analysis, with a focus on treating those diagnosed with Autism. Prospective students are those who hold a bachelor's degree and with the goal of earning a master's degree necessary to be eligible for the BCBA credential. This master's is a 40-credit, five semester long program featuring block-scheduled curriculum (all students in each cohort start, complete all coursework and finish together).

The program meets the BACB accreditation requirements through an efficient, effective curriculum, with additional emphasis on normal and abnormal development/psychology. This is a unique approach compared to competitor ABA programs. Specifically, the students become exposed to broader mental health issues and how both Autism and ABA are situated within other contexts.

### **Admission Requirements**

Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree and have a minimum GPA of 2.75 and meet current admission standards for the WSU Graduate School. Also required are three letters of recommendation, a program area application, a professional essay and a personal interview.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

The proposed coursework includes the 40 credits in total, with 10 of those being practicum and 30 credits of formal coursework. Nine courses are required of formal coursework and five courses are required for the practicum.

### **Graduation Requirements**

All coursework must be completed in accordance with the Graduate School and the regulations set forth by the program. A minimum GPA 3.0 is required for graduation, and no more than one grade of C+ is allowed. A second grade of C+ or lower results in removal from the program; Courses cannot be repeated; Full time enrollment is expected. The graduate school six-year time limit will be used.

### **Program Administration**

The Educational Psychology division in the College of Education will provide oversight, make admissions decisions and provide advising to students. They will also be responsible for collecting and analyzing data on student progress and outcomes to evaluate program effectiveness and make modifications based on that information.

### **Budget and Resource Requirements**

There are no new resource requirements.

### **Accreditation**

The course sequence and the separate practicum have received full approval by the national BACB (Behavior Analyst Certification Board).

### **Approvals**

The proposal for the Certificate Program in Applied Behavior Analysis was approved by the College of Education's Curriculum Committee, Executive Committee, and full Faculty Assembly, the Dean of the College of Education, the Graduate Council, and the Provost.