

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

MEMO

To: The UVM Faculty Senate

From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Colby Kervick, Co-Chair

Date: September 1, 2022

Re: Approval of a proposal for a new PhD in Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Inclusive Education from the Graduate College and the College of Education and Social Services

On September 1, 2022 the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a proposal for a new PhD in Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Inclusive Education from the Graduate College and the College of Education and Social Services. The CAC vote was 17 in favor with 1 abstention.

Program Description and Rationale

This PhD in Social-Emotional-Behavioral Health and Inclusive Education (SHIE) will engage scholars in the examination of critical interdisciplinary and multi-level issues focusing on collaboration between families, schools, and communities in supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children and youth. SHIE students will engage in a rigorous curriculum and participate in research teams working in-situ to develop, implement and evaluate programs, practices, and policies in existing family-school-community partnerships. A PhD in SHIE will produce researchers for positions in higher education and state and national leadership positions who are skilled in examining complex interdisciplinary societal problems relating to special education, education, and social welfare and applying a collaborative, appreciative, and proactive lens to design research and policy aimed at optimizing children's wellbeing.

The American Association for Employment in Education indicates that the need for specially trained practitioners in special education and social, emotional, and behavioral health exceeds the current supply of specialists. Further complicating the situation, longstanding shortages in faculty with expertise in inclusive education are getting worse and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The result is a diminished school experience that challenges the wellbeing of children, youth, and their families, with deleterious effects falling disproportionately on students of color and students with disabilities. These data portend a critical need for more university faculty to train highly qualified service providers and conduct research on collaborative and innovative ways to enhance social, emotional, and behavioral health.

Furthermore, the creation of the PhD in SHIE aligns with the CESS strategic plan for expanding graduate programs and the commitment to "the welfare of individuals, families, and their communities," as well as UVM's goal to advance academic programs that address the "pressing needs of our time and the health of our communities," along with UVM's aspirations for R1 status.

Justification and Evidence for Demand

The demand for graduates of the SHIE doctoral program is evidenced by the need for professionals working in special education, with expertise in inclusive education. Overall, the percentage of students identified as in need of special education services hovers around ~15% of the public-school population. The size of this population has been increasing quickly. But over the past 30 years there has been a shift in the relative level of school inclusion that these children experience. In the late 1980's about a third of

special education students was included in regular education classrooms; now that proportion is just under ~65%. The relative expansion and transformation of the special education workforce has helped make this segment of the teacher education labor market in high demand. This demand is projected to continue and thus continue to create a corresponding demand for faculty and organizational leaders skilled in special education and inclusive education. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistic's occupational job outlook, employment in special education is expected to grow by 8% between 2020-2030, about as fast as the average for all occupations. Importantly, this growth rate is faster than many other teacher licensure areas. The effect of this demand has fueled an increased interest in masters level programs in special education, at a time when there has been a relative decrease in interest in the Master's of Education in areas like elementary education, secondary education, and the like. The proposers included supplemental market analysis that shows the high demand and growth of graduate programming in special education. Finally, Federal policy initiatives and funding flow heavily towards special education. It is well known that TEACH grants favor special education programming and Biden's proposed America's Family First has dramatically increased federal funding available for special education teacher preparation. Taken together there is ample evidence of increased employment demand for special educators, a need for master's level programming in special education and therefore doctoral level scholars that are prepared to research, teach, and lead organizations that serve in this professional field.

The proposed doctoral program in SHIE aims to become a leader in doctoral programming among mid-Atlantic and New England States. In the summer of 2021, the proposers requested a detailed market analysis of doctoral programs in Special Education. The doctoral program market analysis confirmed that UVM is poised well to enter into doctoral programming in the broad field of special education. The national and regional market analysis shows that PhD conferral rates in special education have been increasing, which the proposers attribute to increased identification of students with exceptional needs in public school settings and the concurrent demand for special educators. However, among our New England Region, including Pennsylvania and New York, there exists a dearth of university programs leading to doctoral degrees in Special Education. The market analysis identifies only eight programs, six of which conferred 3 or fewer degrees in 2020. Of the large comprehensive universities similar to UVM, their programs are quite small overall. For example, the average degree conferral rate between 2017 and 2020 at Boston University, the University of Connecticut, Pennsylvania State University and Syracuse University was just 2.5 students.

Only two programs are similar to the PhD in SHIE in the New England area: UCONN's PhD in Special Education and the University of Maine's PhD in Education with a focus on Prevention and Intervention (not currently accepting students). Neither of these programs focuses specifically on a holistic approach to working with students with social, emotional, and behavioral health needs. With a proposed graduation rate of five doctoral students per year, the CESS program is well positioned to become a regional leader upon its onset.

Relationship to Existing Programs

The PhD in Interprofessional Health Sciences in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences includes concentrations in "integrative health" and "biomedical and health sciences," the PhD in SHIE focuses on school-age students and services related to schools and education. The learning objectives, curriculum and professional outcomes of the existing PhD in Interprofessional Health Sciences and the proposed PhD in SHIE are distinctly different, with the PhD in SHIE having an explicit focus on educational equity, social justice, and applied community based participatory research.

The PhD in Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences includes two different foci, with neither the Clinical nor the Experimental track focus on preparing candidates to serve or conduct research on youth receiving special education services through community based participatory research methodologies centering family-school-community partnerships. Rather, their focus is on individuals with varying

psychological needs throughout the lifespan.

The College of Education and Social Services offers both a PhD and EdD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (EDLP). These programs focus on developing complex understanding of educational institutions, politics, culture, change processes, leadership studies and the needs of an increasingly diverse and global world. The EdD is an applied research program for professionals serving in educational leadership positions in schools, colleges, policy arenas, non-profits, and social service organizations. The PhD is a full-time program that seeks to examine complex educational and social problems of educational leadership and policy through the integration of multiple theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary lenses. The program is intended to support scholars to analyze and inform the development of educational systems and public policies that will positively impact the lives of children, youth, and families and address broad societal issues. The SHIE PhD program is broadly situated in the field of special education with a focus on an interdisciplinary approach to serving children and youth with SEBH needs and their families. There are, however, curricular efficiencies with SHIE students taking many of the research method courses offered through the EDLP doctoral program. Faculty involved in both programs are excited about the potential for collaborative funding and scholarship efforts.

Therefore, there are no PhD programs at UVM that will engage students in the examination of critical interdisciplinary and multilevel issues focusing on collaboration between families, schools, and communities in supporting SEBH of children and youth.

Curriculum

The SHIE program is a four year, 75 credit program. To remain in good standing, students must complete a comprehensive examination by the end of their third year.

Required Core Courses (15 credits)

Number	Name	Credits
EDSP 401	Prevention Science Theory	3
EDSP 402	Critical Issues in SEBH Policy	3
EDSP 403	Family School Community Partnerships for SEBH	3
EDSP 404	Research Practice Partnerships in Action	3
EDSP 405	Psycho- Educational Interventions and Single Case Research	3

Required Research Core Courses (15 credits)

Number	Name	Credits
EDFS 347	Qualitative Research Methods	3
EDLP 419	Quantitative Research Methods	3
EDLP 459	Mixed Methods	3
Two Courses from within this Group		
PSS 313	Community Based Participatory Action Research	3
EDFS 348	Analyzing and Writing Qualitative Research Methods	3
EDLP 429	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods	3
	Other advanced qualitative elective offerings	3

Required Professional Preparation Courses (6 – 9 credits)

Number	Name	Credits
EDLP 400	Proseminar Doctoral Introduction	3
EDLP 449	Dissertation Writing Seminar	3

Students will select a specialization (9 – 12 credits)

- Trauma, Restorative and Behavioral Health Practices
- Family-school-community & Interprofessional Collaboration
- Behavioral Intervention

Twenty-one dissertation credits complete the program.

Admission Requirements and Process

To be admitted, applicants must have:

- A master's degree in special education or a related field (e.g., social work, counseling, school psychology);
- Two years of professional experience (special education teacher, social worker, behavior interventionist or related role);
- Three letters of recommendation indicating excellence regarding potential for leadership and research;
- A personal statement with a clear articulation of career goals as special education faculty or related discipline;
- GRE scores (taken in the last 5 years);
- A writing sample providing evidence of excellent skills in scholarly writing, a commitment to social change and justice for students with SEBH needs, and the potential to conduct independent research.

Core faculty will use a common rating scale to evaluate applicants' application materials. We will then conduct virtual interviews with top contenders. Applications are due to UVM by February 15 of each year, with notification made by mid-April.

Anticipated Enrollment and Impact on Current Programs

The program anticipates enrolling 5 full time students per year. In Year 4, there will be 20 students in total, with five graduating that year. In the last 10 years, the M.Ed. graduates in Special Education have more than doubled (12 in 2012 to 27 in 2021) with several expressing interest in continuing their graduate education. It is not anticipated that this program will adversely affect other PhD programs and may increase enrollment in Master's programs as one is required to apply to the program.

Advising

Admitted scholars will be matched with an advisor who will support the development of a comprehensive and personalized Program of Study and mentor the student through all phases of the doctoral program. Scholars will work closely with their advisors to select meaningful electives and extracurricular activities related to research, teaching, and service. In so doing, advisors will become mentors to their advisees and the progression of the Scholars will be transparent. Advisors will also check in with their advisees around their personalized goals at least twice per semester.

Assessment Plan

Seven learning outcomes (below) are defined in the proposal with an assessment plan which will run on a

4-year cycle including both direct and indirect assessment components. Assessment reports will be distributed to CESS leadership team (Dean and Associate Deans) and with program faculty at an annual retreat. During these retreats, results will be discussed, themes will be identified, and appropriate actions will be taken regarding any changes deemed necessary (e.g., course modifications, comprehensive exam format).

Upon graduation, SHIE students will be able to:

1. Describe critical issues related to inclusive education, educational equity and SEBH of children and youth.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of theories, policies and historical frameworks that have been and can be used to prevent societal problems and address critical issues facing the educational and social-emotional-behavioral well-being of children and youth.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of practices and research related to culturally responsive family-school-community partnership aimed at supporting educational equity, inclusion, and SEBH.
4. Contribute to active research-practice partnerships and the reciprocal translation of applied, community-engaged research.
5. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in psycho-educational and relationship-based interventions with children and youth with and at risk for emotional-behavioral disorders.
6. Apply knowledge, skills, and methodological expertise to design, implement, evaluate, and disseminate theoretically-informed, applied and evidenced-based school and community practices that promote the social-emotional-behavioral health of children and youth.
7. Design and deliver effective education to pre-service and in-service practitioners.

Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget

The proposed PhD in SHIE was one of two proposed PhD programs to be awarded funding by Office of the Vice President for Research and the Graduate College to support of graduate student stipends and tuition for the first two years. Faculty workloads will be adjusted to ensure that the new required courses are taught as needed. As several faculty members can teach the core courses and some are team-taught, the program will be able to involve many faculty through a collaborative shared workload approach. Elective courses have capacity for additional graduate students, supporting curricular efficiencies involving cross-college collaboration and shared revenue from this new program. Revenue generated from the program will support additional administrative workload costs. Doctoral students enrolled may also provide teaching assistance in CESS undergraduate courses (through teaching requirement) and support the further development of curriculum and pedagogy in CESS. Co-Directors will share a one course release. A budget model predicts positive revenue beginning in year 3 of the program.

Evidence of Support

Letters of support were received from:

- Aryka Radke, JD & Brenda Gooley, MSW (Family Services Division, Department for Children and Families, State of Vermont)
- Lindsey Hayes (CEEDAR Center, Vermont State Lead & Director of Intensive Technical Assistance)
- Patrick Halladay, Ph.D. (Director, Education Quality Division, Vermont Agency of Education)
- Kirk Dombrowski, Ph.D. (Vice President for Research, UVM)
- Rebecca Callahan, Ph.D. (Doctoral Program Coordinator, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, UVM)
- Jan Fook Ph.D. FAcSS (Chair, Dept of Social Work, UVM)
- Deborah E. Hunter, Ph.D. (Interim Chair, Leadership and Developmental Sciences, UVM)
- Noma B. Anderson, Ph.D. (Dean CNHS, UVM)

- Theodore J. Angelopoulos, Ph.D., MPH (Chair, Department of Rehabilitation & Movement Science, UVM)
- Michael Cannizzaro, Ph.D. CCC-SLP (Chair, Communication Sciences and Disorders, UVM)
- John T. Green, Ph.D. (Chair, Department of Psychological Science, UVM)
- David Jenemann, Ph.D. (Dean, Honors College UVM)

Summary

Improving the outcomes of children and with social, emotional, and behavioral health needs requires the development of integrated, community-based systems of care that can address multiple domains of challenges facing these children and their families. SHIE graduates will be trained in collaborative interdisciplinary approaches and community-engaged research integrating families, schools and communities and they will be well positioned to become tenure-track faculty in higher education or hold positions of leadership in state and local governments.

If approved by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees, the new PHD program would begin in the Fall of 2023.