

## **IBHE Review Summary**

- 1. Reporting Institution:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** M.S. in College Student Affairs
- 3. Date:** 1/16/2020
- 4. Contact Person:** Richard Roberts, Ph.D., Chair,  
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- 5. Overview**

The mission of the M.S. in College Student Affairs is to provide a dynamic curriculum for students interested in leadership careers in the field of student affairs in higher education. The program provides a strong foundation for knowledge and skills development needed for effective administration, efficient use of technology, and humanistic support of undergraduate and graduate education. Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared for entry and mid-level student affairs positions in post-secondary public and private education as well as state and federal agencies. Students are encouraged to pursue additional studies in Ph.D. programs and other terminal degrees.

The Master of Science in Higher Education Leadership at Eastern Illinois University has been recognized as a First Choice program which ensures the highest standards of scholarly excellence are met as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the Graduate School. The program utilizes a cohort model with a low faculty-to-student ratio. The department currently offers an M.S. in Higher Education Leadership with concentrations in either College Student Affairs (CSA) or Leadership in Higher Education and Community College (HECC - online). The programs incorporate the standards developed by the American College Student Affairs (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) as its benchmark for assessment. The purpose of our training, which includes supervised practical experience in a variety of settings, is to equip students to become qualified, ethical and culturally competent leaders in Higher Education.

The department has seen significant changes to the program since the last IBHE review. We have increased faculty and student research output and received renewal designation as a First Choice Program as of July, 2018. Graduate programs achieving First Choice have been applied for and been subjected to rigorous review from EIU's Council on Graduate Studies – with oversight from the Graduate School to ensure they meet the highest standards of scholarly excellence as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the council in 2006 (2011-2013 Graduate Catalog).

### **6. Major Findings and Recommendations**

**Major findings:** The following items have been identified by our students as strengths of the program (2019 CSA Exit Survey):

- The schedule is conducive to the needs of students.
- Having counseling and educational psychology faculty teach courses in the program provides unique perspectives.
- The required Graduate Assistants provides the on-campus program with a blend of theory and practice and ensures the graduates have the necessary skills to succeed in the field of CSA.
- The faculty are seen as supportive.
- The class size, location and subject matter are strengths.
- The required Thesis adds rigor to the program.
- Scholarship opportunities are beneficial to the students' experience.
- The two year program provides opportunity for professional and personal growth.
- Diversity of students adds to the overall learning experience.
- There are scheduled professional development opportunities for students.

**Recommendations:** moving forward the CSA faculty are interested in developing a 10-person committee to provide feedback on the program. We can do this with local alumni who have won awards and achieved success as leaders in student affairs

## 6.1 Description and assessment of any major changes in the program

The field of college student affairs continues to evolve, reflecting changes in student demographics, higher education policy, and legal and ethical issues. Although the department has been graduating students from its program since the 1950's, it too has been evolving to meet the current demands of college students. The mission of the M.S. in College Student Affairs is to provide a dynamic curriculum for students interested in leadership careers in the field of student affairs in higher education. To that end, in 1996, the department (formally the Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance) began the process to align program offerings with the standards of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). After an external review, the department changed the 48 credit hours requirement to 43 credit hours as of 2019. This will allow students to have a higher amount of time to complete their thesis.

The program now provides a strong foundation for knowledge and skills development needed for effective administration, a strong theory to practice component tied to our graduate assistantship and internship requirement, and enhanced understanding and application of research through our thesis requirement. Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared for entry and mid-level student affairs positions in post-secondary public and private education as well as state and federal agencies. Some students also decide to pursue additional studies in Ph.D. programs and other terminal degrees. As of 2019, the program has achieved enormous progress toward our mission resulting in a name change (Department of Counseling and Higher Education). This commitment to excellence is ongoing and continues to be evaluated to insure that future college student affairs graduate students are highly prepared for professional practice.

The field of administration in Higher Education continues to be a growth oriented occupation. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the field will grow by about 7% through 2028 which is as fast as the average for all occupations. Employment change for student affairs professionals is projected to increase by anywhere from 7% (postsecondary administrators) to 24% (education administrators, all other). Administrators considered "other" in higher education

typically refer to student affairs positions, so the 24% growth rate is more accurate for our graduates. Median salaries for “other administrators” in higher education range from \$44,130 to \$141,000. From 2015 to 2018, the department realized 90% yearly placement rates of its graduates with many job offers occurring before they completed the degree.

Data to consider from the Bureau of Labor Statistics is related to Postsecondary Education Administrators. Within Illinois, the employment number is 8,330, the hourly mean wage is \$47.93, and the annual mean wage is \$99,690. This indicates that there are a variety of opportunities within Illinois student affairs should students decide to work in-state.

Our department works very hard to maintain a productive and efficient program. In reviewing the latest state data available comparing similar programs in the state of Illinois, our department was lowest in costs per credit hour at \$333.35 compared to the highest at \$600.43. In 2019, our fall enrollment was on the lower end of the range at 44 students compared to enrollments in other programs ranging from 41-74. Degrees conferred were lowest (15 compared to 20-33) compared to other state institutions with CSA programs. This is most likely due to our requirement of a thesis which has delayed some students from graduating in May, although most graduate by summer. We continue to improve the thesis process and our completion rate has steadied at 90% or higher from 2015-2019 (see table below).

| <b>Thesis Projects</b> | <b>Thesis Completion by 2<sup>nd</sup> year deadline</b> | <b>Current % completion</b> |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2015                   | N= 23/24 or 95%                                          | 95%                         |
| 2016                   | N= 21/21 or 100%                                         | 100%                        |
| 2017                   | N= 18/18 or 100%                                         | 100%                        |
| 2018                   | N = 17/19 or 90%                                         | 90%                         |
| 2019                   | N = 11/13 or 90%                                         | 90%                         |

Lastly, Eastern Illinois University provides the opportunity to attend graduate school at a lower cost. Students receive tuition waivers and stipends while working in graduate assistantships. The only area they need to pay for is student fees at \$2,361.12 per academic year.

## **6.2 Description of major findings and recommendations; including evidence of learning Outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.**

The College Student Affairs program incorporates the standards developed by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) as its benchmark for assessment. Additionally, The Department’s learning goals and the Graduate School Student Learning requirements are used to guide its curriculum.

Our first learning goal is that **candidates will display the required academic preparation and professional dispositions necessary to succeed in the graduate program in Counseling or Higher Education Leadership.**

Our second learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of depth of content knowledge.**

Our third learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of maintaining professional disposition.**

Our fourth learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of critical thinking and problem solving skills.**

Our fifth learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of effective oral and written communication skills.**

Our sixth learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of advanced scholarship through research/or creative activity.**

These learning goals are reflected in students presenting at conferences, earning awards, being graduate assistants, and participating in NODA (Association for Orientation, Transition, Retention in Higher Education) and ACUHO-i (Association of College and University Housing Officers – International) summer internships. Students are able to apply the CSA curriculum to professional practice.

### **Internships**

Here is a chart detailing summer 2019 internships:

| <b>Student Name</b> | <b>Summer Internship Location (2019)</b> | <b>Department</b>                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Emmanuel Ayiku      | Washington University in St. Louis       | Office of Summer Conferences         |
| Tori Daniels        | Eastern Illinois University              | Gender & Sexual Diversity            |
| Philip Fennell      | University of Illinois at Chicago        | Conference Services                  |
| Chas Figueroa       | Eastern Illinois University              | Athletics - Compliance               |
| Jacqueline Garcia   | University of Louisville                 | Orientation Programs                 |
| Caitlyn Gastfield   | Arizona State University                 | Camps & Conferences                  |
| Chanell Hall        | Governor's State University              | Orientation Programs                 |
| Sierra Headrick     | Lake Land College                        | Orientation Programs                 |
| Zachary King        | Georgia Southern University              | Residence Life – Residence Education |
| Alex Martens        | Lake Land College                        | Orientation Programs                 |

|                    |                                    |                                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Douglas Michaels   | Eastern Illinois University        | Military Student Assistance Center           |
| Blake Miller       | Arizona State University           | Camps & Conferences                          |
| Kurt Ness          | Eastern Illinois University        | Housing & Conference Services                |
| Sophia Sarver      | Pitzer College                     | Residence Life Office                        |
| Naomi Saxon        | Eastern Illinois University        | Study Abroad                                 |
| Libby Siecinski    | MOH Community College              | Gateway to College                           |
| Shakeitra Simmons  | University of Washington - Seattle | Facilities                                   |
| Louis Soltysiak    | Arizona State University           | Camps & Conferences                          |
| Alexis Straub      | Eastern Illinois University        | NSFP                                         |
| Alexandra Thompson | University of Iowa                 | Orientation                                  |
| Candace Thompson   | Johns Hopkins University           | Housing                                      |
| Kiona Webber       | University of Illinois             | Undergraduate Affairs in College of Business |

Recently, there were students who presented at Student Affairs 101 at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. These students included first-year students: Cloe Bourdages, Nora Kollar, Derek Deeney, Anna Goldberg.

### **Awards**

Hamand Award: the Hamand Society of Graduate Scholars recognizes degree-seeking candidates nominated from among each year's class of Distinguished Graduate Students whose achievements in both scholarship and service have had a documented impact on the discipline and the community. The quality and impact of the scholarship and service achievements of the Hamand Society Scholars reflect the highest ideals of the engaged graduate student.

The following CSA students won this award:  
 2018 – Paul Higgerson;  
 2019 – Amber Webb

### **Graduate Assistantships**

All admitted CSA students are given a Graduate Assistantship. These assistantships provide valuable learning experiences, as well as a tuition waiver and stipend for students who have a 3.0 GPA or higher.

## **6.3 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices and curricular changes**

Since our last IBHE report, we have updated our professional standards based on ACPA and NASPA competencies. We have maintained our first-choice status. Our current courses for the on-campus program are necessary and fit with these professional standards. We have also developed a new online program in Higher Education and Community College.

The department currently offers an M.S. in College Student Affairs (CSA) with an online option in Higher Education and Community College (HECC). The programs incorporate the standards developed by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) as its benchmark for assessment. The purpose of our training, which includes supervised practical experience in a variety of settings, is to equip students to become qualified, ethical and culturally competent leaders in Higher Education. The learning goals are the same as the on-campus program for College Student Affairs.

The online option was designed for the working professional looking to gain additional knowledge in the area of Community College and Higher Education. Because the entire program is online, the student can remain employed full-time while working toward the degree. Along with the convenience of online education, many of the factors listed for attending campus also apply to the online degree including a curriculum aligned with ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies.

Online surveys assisted the faculty in making changes to sequence of courses and we have added a new 3 credit special topics course. Our admission process is working well. The “CSA Days” committee continues to improve the admission experience and better coordinate with CSA offices seeking Graduate Assistants. The interview questions and rubrics were successfully implemented, and the overall pool was deep and diverse.

2015: Depth of content was measured using faculty feedback, thesis completion, and exit surveys. We exceeded our 90% threshold for meeting courses objectives. Ninety-five percent of CSA students completed their thesis by the summer of 2015. Exit surveys resulted in meeting our 75% threshold on all categories. Departmental strengths indicated positive faculty characteristics, class size, cost, application of material and courses offered. Areas needing improvement included some assignments were unrelated to objectives.

We spend considerable time ensuring our students maintain a professional disposition throughout the program. The remedial process we have in place works given that only two students were flagged with a warning due to neglecting their thesis. We meet regularly with Student Affairs Directors and Administrators to support students in the process. We continue to monitor this issue closely; Rubrics were utilized in this assessment cycle and Faculty members are highly satisfied with their efforts to meet critical thinking objectives.

2016: The major change in the assessment report was the adoption of student evaluations of course objectives. We surveyed the students in each class to have them rate how effective the class met syllabi objectives. Overall the assessment data indicated we are producing graduates who are well-prepared to enter the profession based on exit surveys. We need to develop and utilize internship supervisor surveys to provide additional feedback on the program. Assessment data was collected on our recently revised curriculum which is based on the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) competencies. Surveys indicate we are meeting our threshold on course objectives.

2017-2018: We changed the name of the Department to “Counseling and Higher Education” (CHE). We also added an online option to the M.S. in College Student Affairs. This is the Higher Education and Community College option. We changed the mission statement for the M.S. in College Student Affairs. Our department modified the following courses to be online/hybrid ready: 5505, 5710, 5715, 5720, 5725, 5735, 5741, 5750, 5760, and 5880. Four new courses were added: 5506, 5585 (online only), 5886 (online only), and 5887 (online only). The credit hours were to be reduced from 48 to 43 beginning 2019.

Based on the data, our admission process indicated we had a strong application pool and selected above average yield. Our target recruitment goal is 20 and we admitted 25 full-time students. A 3.0 GPA was maintained by students currently enrolled in the CSA program. Three courses fell below the 80% satisfied threshold: Multicultural Competencies, Governance and Finance, and Supervised Experiences. We revised the syllabus for those three courses and reviewed the survey data at the end of the year. Lastly, we added an additional research course (5505) to assist in Thesis completion.

Exit surveys resulted in meeting our 80% threshold on all categories with two exceptions. Satisfaction of Academic Advisement (70%) and Satisfaction with Assistance in Obtaining a Professional Position (73%) will need further attention. Exit data indicated students appreciated the cohort model and the fact that all full-time students have graduate assistantships in the CSA field. They enjoyed positive relationships with faculty and the GA/Internship supervisors. The emphasis on theory to practice and completing a thesis were listed as strengths of the program.

2018-2019: We worked on coordination among assignments to reduce redundancy and advertised the online option for the CSA program. We are currently working with our revised curricula based on standards from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Association (NASPA) competencies. Assessment data indicate we are meeting most of our course objectives (94%). Our admission process indicate we had a strong application pool and selected above average yield. Our target recruitment goal is 20 and we admitted 17 full-time students. A 3.0 GPA was maintained by students currently enrolled in the CSA program.

Students indicated all courses are meeting syllabi objectives with a mean rating of 94%. Specific objectives that fell below the 80% target were as follows:

- Aware of the diverse life experiences within H.E. – 78% agree
- Analyze social systems and their impact in H.E. – 70% agree
- Appropriately use facilities management procedures – 67% agree
- Knowledge of research methodology – 75% agree

These objectives will be reviewed for modification in the coming year. Completion rate on the Thesis was 90% for the cohort just completing their coursework. We have added an additional research course (5505) for the new cohort and reduced their overall hours from 48 to 43 so they can spend more time dedicated to the Thesis.

Exit surveys resulted in meeting our 80% threshold on all categories with one exception: Satisfaction of Academic Advisement – 75% agree. We have split the advising to three faculty

members which should help even the workload in this area. Exit data indicated they appreciated the cohort model and the fact that all full-time students have graduate assistantships in the CSA field. They enjoyed positive relationships with faculty and the GA/Internship supervisors. The class size and schedule were repeatedly emphasized as a strength.

**7. Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues**

**8. Outcome**

**8.1 Decision**

**X\_\_\_\_\_ Program in Good Standing**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Program flagged for Priority Review**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Program Enrollment Suspended**

**8.2 Explanation – PROVOST FEEDBACK**

The CSA program continues to be a campus exemplar of engagement and excellence. The enrollment and graduation rates exceed IBHE standards. As such, the program is in “good standing”.