

Contact: Rachel Boon

REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA: BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COUNSELING AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa for a Bachelor of Arts in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services in the College of Education.

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this program.

Description of proposed program. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services is designed to prepare undergraduate students with foundational knowledge for a career in the helping professions. Students will obtain critical thinking, organizational, and advocacy skills, with a special emphasis on counseling-related skills, to prepare them for a wide variety of interests, career paths and opportunities to serve our communities. This proposed degree will prepare students for entry level helping profession positions in non-profit organizations, government or public agencies, community centers, health related organizations and clinics, and private industry. Additionally, it will prepare students who are interested in graduate coursework in helping profession- and counseling-related programs.

Academic objectives. The proposed BA in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services will require a minimum of 120 semester hours, including general education courses, electives and 36-39 semester hours of major course work. The curriculum can be completed in eight semesters (four years). Students earning the degree will be able to:

- Recognize and define the concepts and functions of the helping professions, and their respective professional environments.
- Demonstrate basic interpersonal communication, leadership and ethical problem-solving skills used in the helping professions.
- Illustrate how social, economic, cultural and other contextual factors affect behavioral health care access and disparities.
- Exhibit critical thinking, problem-solving, and written and oral communication skills to strategically address complex issues and formulate innovative, holistic and sustainable solutions.

Need for program. Through the College of Education's work with Iowa schools and communities, a growing need was identified for bachelor-trained professionals, including in rural communities. This proposed BA in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services will provide students with a skillset that applies broadly to many helping professions and complements other human services and public health programs. Housing this degree in the University of Iowa's College of Education will leverage their faculty's expertise in counseling and education. Partnering with other colleges, such as the College of Public Health, on core courses and approved electives also gives students a unique opportunity to learn more about the helping professions landscape. The proposed major will focus on interpersonal communication, personal problem-solving, program navigation, and resource identification skills, with an emphasis on counseling-related skills, whereas other programs in the state are more specialized in areas of social services.

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. This proposed new major will complement, but not duplicate, the following existing majors at the University of Iowa: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences BA in Interdepartmental Studies, Applied Human Services Subprogram; College of Public Health BA in Public Health; and College of Education BA in Educational Studies and Human Relations. This proposed BA in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services was designed

to have a core focus with a wide range of approved interdisciplinary electives permitting students to develop a program within their area of interest and to provide them with a multidisciplinary skillset. Additionally, it will prepare students who are interested in graduate coursework in helping profession- and counseling-related programs.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. The following programs at other Iowa colleges or universities have some similarities to the proposed program. The programs offered at ISU and UNI have a distinct focus on human development, whereas this proposed degree will have a focus on counseling-related skills.

BA in Educational Studies, Buena Vista University
 BA in Human Services, Grandview University
 BA in Human Services, Simpson College
 BS in Human Services, Upper Iowa University
 BA in Family Services, University of Northern Iowa
 BS in Human Development and Family Studies, Iowa State University

In addition to the other Regent institutions, the College of Education reached out via email to representatives from Buena Vista University, Grand View University, Simpson College and Upper Iowa University providing a description of this proposed major and offering the opportunity to discuss questions or concerns. No major concerns were identified.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. The college expects to meet the initial needs of the program, including development of new courses, with reallocation of resources and additional tuition generation. No new facilities are needed. Any new tuition revenue generated from this proposed program will also be used to cover costs.

Student demand. The College of Education conducted informal surveys of undergraduate students in their minor in human relations. Results suggested the interest is high for a bachelor's degree major that would prepare students for entry level professional positions in this area.

Workforce need/demand. There is a growing need in Iowa, particularly in rural areas, for bachelor-trained helping professionals. Data from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), which includes employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, show significant projected growth in new openings for bachelor-trained professionals in human services, case management, and substance abuse and behavioral disorders.

Funding and Cost. Financial resources needed to support the proposed program will be reallocated from the department and/or college.

Projected student enrollment.

Undergraduate	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Majors	60	100	120	130	150

Accreditation. The program is covered under the institution's accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. No additional programmatic accreditation will be sought.

Date of implementation. Fall 2024.

Letter of Support



March 20, 2024

To the Board of Regents:

The Council of Provosts discussed the University of Iowa proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Counseling and Behavioral Health Services and reviewed associated documentation. The university has the resources and expertise for this program already in place through the College of Education, and there is evidence of student demand among current students and workforce benefit in the state of Iowa and throughout the Midwest where positions in community organizations addressing mental health, substance abuse and other human service areas are growing. The plan indicates due diligence with the other Regent universities regarding related programs and that it will complement existing programs at the University of Iowa in the areas of human services and public health. Based on the evidence and documentation, this program is likely to benefit the University of Iowa and the state of Iowa.

The Council of Provosts is supportive of the program and wishes the University of Iowa the best in its implementation.

DocuSigned by:
Jonathan Wickert
66186D7527534E0...

3/20/2024

Jonathan Wickert
Sr. Vice President and
Provost

DocuSigned by:
Kevin Kregel
E2CB1E4CA5D34F3...

3/20/2024

Kevin Kregel
Exec. Vice President and
Provost

DocuSigned by:
Jose Herrera
0E4B9A1870CF4F5...

3/20/2024

José Herrera
Exec. Vice President and
Provost