



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** Douglas E. Lentivech 

**SUBJECT:** State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse (SUNY Upstate Medical University): Master Plan Amendment to offer a program in Behavior Analysis Studies leading to the Master of Science (M.S.) degree.

**DATE:** April 26, 2018

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

## **SUMMARY**

### **Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents approve an amendment to the master plan of the State University of New York which authorizes SUNY Upstate Medical University to offer the M.S. program in Behavior Analysis Studies, the College's first master's level program in the discipline area of the Social Sciences?

### **Reason for Consideration**

Required by State regulation.

### **Proposed Handling**

This question will come before the full Board for consideration at its May 2018 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

### **Procedural History**

Master plan amendment is required because this would be the College's first master's level program in the discipline of social sciences.

## **Background Information**

SUNY Upstate Medical University requested to register an M.S. program in Behavior Analysis Studies (BAS). The purpose of the proposed BAS program is to produce competent behavior analysts who demonstrate excellence across a variety of therapeutic skills related to the treatment of autism spectrum disorders in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains. The 53-credit program can be completed in six semesters (24 months). The curriculum includes both didactic instruction and practicum experience. Didactic instruction consists of coursework in treatments for autism, ethics, record keeping and privacy, child psychopathology and behavior disorders, school-based consultation for autism, principles of learning, single-subject research experimentation, advanced applied behavior analysis, and special topics in behavior analysis. Students will complete 1,500 contact hours in their practica. Additionally, a thesis project will be required in which students will complete a research project under the supervision of a faculty member. The clinical sites for the proposed program will all be housed within the Academic Medical Center of the institution and no external placements will be needed. This will promote an optimal clinical learning environment for interprofessional collaboration and teamwork in which behavior analysts work alongside physicians, psychologists, nurses, and other health care professionals.

Admission requirements for the proposed BAS program include a bachelor's degree with a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0, completion of a standardized graduate entrance examination (GRE or MCAT), a personal interview, a personal statement, submission of a CV/resume and three letters of recommendation, and compliance with the program's technical requirements (i.e., proficiency in computer use and MS Office applications, ability to bend and lift individuals in their care).

The estimated first year enrollment for the M.S. in BAS program is approximately 5 students with a slight increase in new admissions in the following years (Year 2 – 10, Year 3 – 12, Year 4 – 13-14, Year 5 – 14-16). It is anticipated that the student body will be as diverse as the institution's other degree programs with approximately 26 percent of students from historically underrepresented minorities, an average age of 24 years for students entering the program, and an equal representation of students across gender.

The program will use the classroom space available in the New Academic Building as well as in space adjacent to the exiting clinical programs at the institution that provide behavior analytic services for children with autism (i.e., the Family Behavior Analysis Program and the Center for Development, Behavior, and Genetics). The primary clinical practicum site consists of 6,000 sq. ft of dedicated programming space for behavior therapy for individuals with autism. The site is equipped with one-way observation windows as well as necessary equipment (e.g., laptops, therapy tools) to complete the practicum experience. In addition, there is conference-capable A/V equipment, student workstations, printers/scanners, a fax machine, and related office equipment. Currently there are 4.8 FTE faculty with plans to hire 1.5 FTE more faculty when the program starts. There is support staff with time allocated on their employment percent effort (0.5 FTE) to support the administrative needs of the program.

**Canvass Results:** A canvass was conducted of all institutions in the central region of New York State. Two intuitions responded. One institution supports the proposed program and stated that SUNY Upstate Medical University is in a strong position to offer the program. The other institution acknowledged the need of the proposed program and voiced two concerns: 1) competition in student recruitment; and 2) lack of outreach to consider opportunities for collaboration. In its response, SUNY Upstate Medical University indicates that the proposed program is different in its focus, design, and objectives and will not draw from the same applicant pools. It further provided examples of collaboration in program planning, student training, research, and education.

**Department Review:** The Department has determined that the proposed program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

### **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve the amendment to the master plan of the State University of New York authorizing SUNY Upstate Medical University to offer its first master's level program in the social sciences discipline area, an M.S. program in Applied Behavior Analysis. The amendment will be effective until May 2019, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

Amendments to the State University of New York master plan require approval by the Governor. If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will transmit it to the Governor with a recommendation for favorable action. Following gubernatorial approval, the program will be registered.