



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

**FROM:** David H. Hamilton *David H. Hamilton*

**SUBJECT:** Daemen University: Master Plan Amendment to offer a PhD Program in Behavioral Science

**DATE:** December 4, 2025

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Bellamy*

### **SUMMARY**

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

Should the Board of Regents approve the master plan amendment (MPA) for Daemen University to offer a PhD program in Behavioral Science?

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State Statute.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This question will come before the full Board at its December 2025 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

#### **Procedural History**

A Master Plan Amendment is required as this is the institution's first program at the doctoral level in the social sciences disciplinary area.

#### **Background Information**

The proposed PhD program in Behavioral Science is designed to prepare students for leadership roles in research, teaching, consulting, advocacy/public policy, and systems change. The proposed program has been developed with a focus on the science of human behavior. It is aligned with the mission of the University, which emphasizes the preparation of "creative, ethically minded leaders for a diverse and interconnected world by integrating the intellectual strengths acquired through the liberal

arts with the preparation necessary for professional excellence to make meaningful contributions to society.”

Qualified applicants for the program must possess a master’s degree in behavioral analysis from an accredited college or university and have a 3.4 GPA or higher. Applicants must submit a personal statement/letter of interest and three letters of recommendation. In addition, interviews will be part of the admission process. Applicants without a New York State ABA licensure or a BCBA certification must have completed prerequisite courses in the following subjects: behaviorism, concepts, and principles in behavioral science; research methods and experimental design; functional assessment; ethics and professional conduct; advanced applications of behavioral science; and organizational behavior management.

The curriculum includes 56 credits of required courses: Behavior Analysis of Child Development, Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis, ABA in Education, Severe Behavior Disorders, Verbal Behavior Disorders, Critical Thinking, Public Health Biostatistics and Lab, Behavior Science and Social Justice, Leadership and Advocacy, Advanced Research Methods, Thesis (waived for students who have completed an experimental thesis or the equivalent), Implementation Science, Advanced Behaviorism, Teaching at the College Level, and Dissertation. In addition, students who hold a New York State ABA licensure have the opportunity to take the Advanced Practice in Behavioral Science course (3 credits). Students also have the option to take additional elective courses to have a concentration in one of the following areas: teaching, intellectual & developmental disabilities, or behavioral health.

It is anticipated that the program will enroll a cohort of six (6) students in years one through three, with new enrollment growing to nine (9) students by year five. Six existing full-time faculty will teach in the proposed program. All faculty hold doctoral degrees and possess a wide variety of experience in clinical practice and research.

To assess the need of the program, faculty from the Department of Behavioral Science at the University designed and administered an Employer Survey. Participants includes potential employers of doctorly-trained behavior analysts and members of the local and regional behavioral science communities. Based on the analysis of survey results of 62 respondents, there is a critical need in New York State, and especially in Western New York, for this type of program. New York, and especially the Buffalo region, currently finds itself in a crisis situation related to the supports and services available for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have complex needs.

Survey results show that career opportunities for doctorly-prepared professionals in behavioral science include, but are not limited to: development and oversight of parental and family support services; leading systems change projects in industry, schools, human-service organizations, among others; development, oversight, and consultation to school-districts multi-tiered systems of support; leadership in residential and vocational settings to support individuals with the greatest needs, including challenging behaviors; leadership on interprofessional teams and specialized programs for supporting patients and youth who are struggling in hospitals, foster care, and

juvenile justice settings; leadership roles in business, particularly in organizational behavior management and training; and public policy advocacy and legislative roles.

**Department Review and Canvass:** Academic review of faculty, curriculum, and other program aspects of the proposed program has been completed by the Department. The Department has determined that the program meets the standards for registration as set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. A canvass was conducted of degree-granting institutions in the Western Region of New York. There were no objections to the proposed program.

### **Related Regents Items**

A charter amendment item for Daemen University to award the PhD degree will be presented at the December 2025 meeting.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve an MPA to authorize Daemen University to offer the PhD program in Behavioral Science. This amendment will be effective until December 16, 2026, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case the master plan amendment shall be without term.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will proceed to register the program.