

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:  
MASTER OF ARTS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: STUDENT AFFAIRS (ONLINE)**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa for a Master of Arts in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs in an online format College of Education.

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

**Description of proposed program.** The Master of Arts in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs program already exists at UNI as a residential program. This proposal is to begin offering an online version of the program. The online offering will meet the needs of non-traditional students who are already working in the field, but want the MA degree to further their careers.

A career in student affairs provides a path to meaningful, important work with college students. Through the Department of Educational Psychology, Foundations and Leadership (EPFLS), the Master of Arts in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs degree prepares students for this field and helps them further advance their career.

Student affairs professionals provide services and programs designed to support students and enhance campus life across a wide variety of college and university settings. Research has shown that co-curricular activities - everything that happens on campus outside of the classroom - are an important complement and partner to academic work in shaping the whole student.

Over the last five years, there have been frequent requests for the program to be delivered entirely online. These requests came from students both geographically close to UNI and far away. With delivery modifications prompted by COVID, faculty have developed an online delivery for students as they have been in various states of quarantine or need to be away from the classroom. This enabled experimentation with how the program could be completed virtually, thus reaching a wider audience.

**Academic objectives.** The online program will be identical in coursework and academic objectives to the residential program that is already offered.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

- Students will demonstrate strong written communication skills on a research project that will involve creation of a topic, review of previous literature, determination of method, and completion of the project.
- Students will demonstrate oral communication abilities as evidenced during the presentation of their oral portfolios at the end of the program.
- According to the ten competencies designated by ACPA / NASPA as important for the field of student affairs, students will be able to identify and select appropriate artifacts that demonstrate knowledge in each competency area through the organization and completion of their learning portfolio (completed through the use of a Google Drive). Additionally, students will demonstrate growth in each of the ten competency areas over the program as evidenced by their self-reflections. The 10 competency areas are:
  - o Personal and Ethical Foundations
  - o Values, Philosophy, and History
  - o Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

- o Law, Policy, and Governance
- o Organizational and Human Resources
- o Leadership
- o Social Justice and Inclusion
- o Student Learning and Development
- o Technology
- o Advising and Supporting

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. An online program will not duplicate the existing model, rather it will increase student success by providing a pathway to completion for students who can no longer be a part of the residential model due to job changes, geographic location, or other needs. The residential and online cohorts will have a degree of interchangeability ensuring that all students who begin either modality will be able to finish the program and attain their MA degree.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. This will be the only online MA degree in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs in Iowa. Both Iowa and Iowa State currently offer student affairs programs through a residential model. Both institutions have a larger focus on research, while UNI's focus is applied and career focused. This program's online modality to complete a degree is different from existing programs.

Unique features. A key feature of the program is that it will expand access to a high-quality master's program to students who cannot attend courses on campus -- many of whom will be employed full-time. In addition, due to the success of the residential cohort and its growth from five years ago, this is the next step to continue the progression of the program.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. UNI has outstanding faculty currently in place to staff this program, in addition to the systems of support for faculty who teach online and students who pursue degrees at a distance. If numbers achieve the desired targets, a third faculty member will be requested, but in the meantime highly qualified part-time faculty can be utilized until such time as a third faculty member is needed.

Student demand. UNI has consistently received requests for an online delivery mode. By moving the current curriculum to online delivery through a cohort model designed for part-time students, the program will serve a wider geographic audience and meet the needs of a new student population.

Workforce need/demand. Based on data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an expected 4% growth in the number of postsecondary education administrators over the next 10 years (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/postsecondary-education-administrators.htm>).

With growing attention to student recruitment, retention, and student success, Iowa's colleges and universities continually seek out individuals who are prepared to meet the needs of students across academic and student affairs divisions.

Cost. The cost of offering the program in a new format will be low since it will rely on existing faculty, facilities and equipment. Any incremental costs will be covered through department reallocations, or tuition revenue from increased enrollments.

Expected incremental costs:

Year 1: \$50,000

Year 2-7: \$100,000 annually

Projected student enrollment.

	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Y 7
Graduate	20-25	40-50	40-50	40-50	40-50	40-50	40-50

Accreditation. Accreditation for this program is not feasible as the accrediting body (CACREP) requires a 60 hour program, which is not conducive for UNI students.

Evaluation plan. In addition to the annual program review required by the University, this program will undergo periodic Academic Program Reviews on a seven-year cycle as required by the Board of regents. Financial viability of the program will be assessed annually.

Date of implementation. August 2021.

Letters of Support

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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April 19, 2021

Oksana Grybovych Hafermann, Ed.D. Associate Dean, College of Education University of Northern Iowa  
150 Schindler Education Center

Dr. Grybovych Hafermann,

Please accept this letter of consultation and support on behalf of the Iowa State University College of Human Sciences and the School of Education in regard to the proposed online Masters of Arts program in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs at the University of Northern Iowa. I have consulted with faculty members in our student affairs and higher education programs and, although we see some inevitable overlap in curricular offerings, the proposed curriculum is not overly duplicative of our existing programs. Further, your focus on place-bound students pursuing a student affairs degree opens a new market for this important focus in education.

We wish you well as you continue to develop this new curriculum and delivery model.

Sincerely,



Laura Dunn Jolly Dean and Dean's Chair  
College of Human Sciences Iowa State University

**IOWA**

**College of Education**

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April 19, 2021

Associate Dean Oksana Grybovych Hafemann  
College of Education  
University of Northern Iowa  
150 Schindler Education Center  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614

Dear Associate Dean Hafemann:

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about the University of Northern Iowa College of Education's intent to propose an online version of the Master of Arts in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs degree to the Iowa Board of Regents. We understand that an online version of this degree will be identical in coursework and objectives to the in-person offering, and will meet the needs of non-traditional students who are already working in the field and would benefit from the degree to further their careers.

The University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa all offer residential masters programs in higher education and student affairs. The program that the University of Northern Iowa's College of Education proposes would be the first online version of a higher education and student affairs degree in the state. We recognize that expanding access to higher education in Iowa means exploring an array of degree options and modes of delivery that meet that diverse needs of learners in our state. We wish you success and look forward developing similarly innovative programs in the College of Education at the University of Iowa.

The University of Iowa's College of Education supports this proposal and has no objections to your new offering.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Clay, Ph.D., MBA  
Dean and Professor