# M.A. in Leadership in Disability Services
## *Program Policy Statement*

## *Part I.  Program History*

### *A. Purpose*

According to US Census data nearly one in five Americans is living with some form of a disability and over 20 million American families have at least one member with a disability.  The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. [1]  People can be born with disabilities, they can be identified during childhood, or disabilities can be acquired through trauma, disease, or as a result of the normal aging process.  People with disabilities include those with physical, sensory, psychiatric, or cognitive/intellectual disabilities. With healthcare improvements and demographic changes leading to larger numbers of Americans living to an advanced age, there will be a concomitant increase in the prevalence of disabilities over the next several decades. The World Health Organization notes that disability "is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers." [2]

The proposed Master of Arts in  Leadership for Disability Services will embody the values expressed in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which states that "The nation's proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for [persons with disabilities].[3] All course offerings will uphold the values expressed in the ADA and in the preface of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (the DD Act) which states that "disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of United States society."[4] The values conveyed through course offerings support the goals of the DD Act, applied to all people experiencing disability, which are "to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, through culturally competent programs authorized under the law."[5]

A variety of nonprofit, for profit and government agencies and organizations provide a range of services for individuals with disabilities. However, the quality of these services varies. There is a significant need for leaders in these agencies and organizations who have the appropriate knowledge base, values, organizational and administrative skills, and overall understanding of and respect for individuals with disabilities and their families. This is the impetus for the creation of the M.A. in Leadership for Disability Services.

Realizing that the expertise for this program is shared among faculty in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, the Department of Behavioral Health and Nutrition, and the School of Education, the decision was made to design an interdisciplinary program. A group of ten faculty and administrators from these units formed a working group to develop the proposed program. The process included a number of meetings, review of similar programs at other institutions, and several iterations of related documents.

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[1] Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990)

[2] http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/

[3] Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990)

[4] *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000*

[5] Ibid

Being an interdisciplinary program, this degree is jointly offered by the Colleges of Education and Human Development and Health Sciences. As such, there is no one "home department" for the program. The organization and administration of the program is described in Part VI.

### B.  Current Status
The M.A. in Leadership for Disability Services will enroll students beginning in fall 2017 and will be reviewed for permanent  status in 2022.

### C. Degree Offered
The degree awarded to those who complete this program will be a Master of Arts in Leadership for Disability Services.

# Part II.  Admission

### A. Admission Requirements
Applicants must submit all materials directly to the University Office of Graduate and Professional Education using the online admission process before admission can be considered.  Admission applications are available at: https://grad-admissions.udel.edu/apply/

The program admission process is completed as follows: Completed applications consisting of  the online application, undergraduate/graduate transcripts, three letters of recommendation, and the written statement of goals and values, are reviewed by the Program Committee. A GPA of at least 2.75 is preferred. Applications are evaluated based on a combination of record of academic achievement, recommendations, and the applicant's statement of professional goals and values. The Program Committee will make admission decisions and assign accepted students to faculty advisors.

International applicants must submit official proof of English proficiency such as TOEFL or  IELTS scores. The recommended minimum TOEFL score is 100 and/or IELTS of 6.5.

### B. Prior Degree Requirements
A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university is required.

### C. Application Deadlines
For priority consideration, students should apply for admission to the program for fall enrollment no later than April 1st. All students begin the program in the fall semester.

### D. Special Competencies Needed
This is an introductory master's degree and no special competencies are required.

### E. Admission Categories
Students admitted into the Program may be admitted into  one of  three categories.

1) **Regular**: Regular status is offered to students who meet all of the established entrance  requirements.

2) **Conditional Admission**: Successful applicants are typically admitted conditionally because stated information is self-reported and uploaded documents are unofficial. Fulfilling  the conditions stated on an offer of conditional admission by the first  date of graduate coursework is critical, so the instructions stated on the  letter must be followed carefully. Failure to clear all stated

conditions  by the start of graduate coursework may result in revocation of admission to the graduate program.

### F. Other Documents Required

Three letters of recommendation from individuals who have direct knowledge of the candidate's academic and/or professional capabilities are required. Candidates must also submit a personal statement describing how their academic, professional, and personal background has prepared them to be successful in the degree program and explaining how completion of the program will contribute to their professional goals.

### G. University Statement

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not  guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded  from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

# Part III. Academic Degree: Master of Arts (MA)

### A. Degree Requirements for the Master of Arts (MA)

#### 1) Required Courses and Program of Study

All accepted students are expected to submit a program of study developed with their advisors by the end of their first semester.

| Required courses | 15 Credits |
|---|---|
| Introductory Course | 3 |
|     HDFS642 Leadership in Human Services | |
| Research Course (choose one) | 3 |
|     HDFS615 Research Methods | |
|     EDUC691 Applied Statistics and Research Methods | |
|     HLPR632 Health Science Data Analysis | |
| Collaboration Course (choose one) | 3 |
|     HDFS693 Group Dynamics | |
|     EDUC745 Collaborative Teaming | |
| Disability across the Lifespan (choose one) | 3 |
|     EDUC673 Transitions to Adult Life & Disability | |
|     EDUC697 Introduction to Exceptionalities | |
|     HDFS603 Adult Disability Issues | |
|     HDFS880 Families, Disabilities, and Institutions | |
|     HLTH605: Self-Directed Supports for People with Disabilities | 3 |
| Capstone Course | 3 |
|     EDUC/HDFS/HLPR666 Special Problem | |

(Under the supervision of a faculty sponsor, each student will plan and implement a project related to leadership in an organization that provides services to individuals with disabilities. The project culminates in a descriptive written paper and oral presentation.)

| Elective courses | 15 credits |
|---|---|

A 3-credit internship is a required elective for students who have not worked in disability services at a professional level, as determined by the faculty advisor (choose one)          3

    HDFS669 Supervised Field Experience and Study

In consultation with a faculty advisor, students may select elective courses from one or more of the following suggested specialization areas:

- Health, Family, and Disability
- Leadership and Management
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Autism and Significant Disability

TOTAL CREDITS FOR DEGREE        30

SUGGESTED SPECIALIZATION AREAS
Students required to do a 3-credit internship will select 12 credits and students not required to do the internship will select 15 credits of elective coursework. Elective credits may come from one specialization area or from several.

Health, Family, and Disability
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|---|---|
| HLPR605 Concepts of Chronic Disease Management | 3 |
| *HLPR807 Topics and Issues in Health Promotion | 3 |
| HLPR815 Health and Older Adults | 3 |
| HDFS605 Impact of Aging on the Family | 3 |
| HDFS670 Family Risk and Resiliency | 3 |
| BHAN645 Health, Physical Activity, and Disability (NEW) | 3 |

*May only be selected when the course covers topics related to disability.

Leadership and Management
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|---|---|
| *HDFS624 Introduction to Leadership & Disabilities | 3 |
| HDFS640 Early Childhood Administration, Leadership and Advocacy | 3 |
| EDUC890 Leadership: Theory and Research | |
| HLTH606: Values-Based Management of Disability Service Agencies | 3 |

*Workshop-style course that requires a week on campus.

Program Planning and Evaluation
| | |
|---|---|
| HDFS614 Evaluation Practices | 3 |
| HDFS637 Program Planning, Assessment and Evaluation | 3 |
| HDFS/EDUC756 Advanced Seminar in Evaluation | 3 |
| EDUC827 Analysis of Secondary Data for Decision Making | 3 |
| EDUC846 Collection and Analysis of Data for Decision Making | 3 |

Autism and Significant Disability
| | |
|---|---|
| EDUC624 Introduction to Autism and Severe Disabilities | 3 |
| EDUC625 Special Education Instruction/Curriculum: Autism/Severe | 3 |
| EDUC626 Functional Communication for Individuals with Autism and Severe Disabilities | 3 |
| EDUC652 Introduction to Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation | 3 |
| EDUC654 Augmentative and Alternative Communication | 3 |
| EDUC655 Assistive Technology: Autism/Severe Disabilities | 3 |
| EDUC681 Techniques for Behavior Change & Behavior Support | 3 |

## 2) **Internships**
As indicated above in *Required Courses and Program of Study*, students with no previous employment history involving disability services must complete a 3-credit internship, counted as an elective, as part of the requirements for the degree. The faculty advisor will evaluate any previous employment history to determine whether an internship will be required. If required, the internship will normally be undertaken after most of the courses for the degree have been completed as agreed upon by the student and faculty advisor.

## 3) **Changes to the Program of Study**

Students may need to alter approved programs of study due to scheduling conflicts or the creation of new courses directly related to the student's goals. Students who wish to make minor changes to their program of study must obtain permission from their advisor. Major changes to the program of study, such as the substitution of one or more core courses, must be approved by the Program Committee. All changes in a previously approved program of study must be approved by the Program Director.

### 4) GPA Requirements

A grade below a B- will not be counted toward the course requirements for a degree but is calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average. To be considered in good academic standing, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale each semester. To be eligible for an advanced degree, a student's cumulative grade point average shall be at least a 3.00 and the student's grades in courses counted toward the degree requirements of the program shall equal at least a 3.00.

### 5) Independent Study and Transfer Credits

Independent study credits will be allowed only under special circumstances and require the approval of the Program Committee. With the approval of the Program Committee, a maximum of 9 graduate credits may be transferred from another institution to the degree as electives.

### B. Non-Thesis Degree and Advisement

The program does not require a thesis and there are no provisions for students to undertake a thesis. Instead, a leadership project is required in the capstone experience— HDFS/EDUC/HLPR666 Special Problem. This 3-credit capstone experience is to be a project related to leadership in an organization that provides services to individuals with disabilities. The project is developed under the supervision of a faculty sponsor, who may or may not be the student's faculty advisor. It is each student's responsibility to obtain a faculty advisor for the Special Problem prior to signing up for the capstone experience. The project culminates in both a descriptive written paper and an oral presentation.

### C. Timetable and Satisfactory Progress towards Degree

#### 1) Academic Load and Satisfactory Progress

The program will follow the University of Delaware, Office of Graduate and Professional Education recommended policy for determining students' failure to make Satisfactory Progress towards degree requirements and time limits for completion. Students may be enrolled on a full-time (9 credits per term) or part-time (fewer than 9 credits per term) basis.

#### 2) Grade Requirements

Students must have a minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the degree and the grades in all courses applied toward the degree program must be at least 3.0. All graduate-numbered courses taken with graduate student classification at the University of Delaware are applied to the cumulative index. Credit hours and courses for which the grade is below "B-" do not count toward the degree even though the grade is applied to the overall index.

#### 3) Grievance Procedures

Students concerned that they have received an unfair evaluation or have been graded inappropriately may file grievances in accordance with student guide to University of Delaware policies. Students are encouraged to contact the Program Director prior to filing a formal grievance in an effort to resolve the situation informally.

## Part IV. Assessment Plan

The program will follow the Academic Program Review (APR) schedule, policies and procedures, established by the Provosts office and faculty senate. Data will be provided by

the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, in conjunction with faculty/student interviews, measures of scholarly productivity, and alumni. Annual meetings will be held to discuss curricular changes, review analyzed data, identify action items, and establish timelines and assignments for responsibilities. The program will continue consultation with the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning to periodically reexamine appropriate learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and benchmarks for success.

## *Part V. Financial Aid*

This is a professional master's program and students are expected to pay graduate tuition.

## *Part VI. Program Organization and Administration*

### A. *Affiliated Program Faculty*
The inaugural group of affiliated program faculty who have been involved in program planning and development include:
Al Cavalier
Steve Eidelman
Laura Eisenman
Rena Hallam
Beth Mineo
Iva Obrusnikova
Nancy Weiss

Administrators also involved or consulted include:
Ralph Ferretti
Susan Hall
Kathy Matt
Mike Peterson
Bahira Trask
Carol Vukelich

Additional faculty with interest in the program may become affiliated by submitting a CV to the Program Director and receiving the positive majority vote of program faculty.

The affiliated program faculty agree to fulfill the following responsibilities:
1) Accepting a reasonable number of student advisees.
2) Participating in program faculty meetings.
3) Overseeing a reasonable number of student capstone leadership projects.

### B. *Program Director*
The Program Director shall be a faculty member affiliated with the program who is appointed by mutual agreement of the Deans of the Colleges overseeing the program (currently the Colleges of Education and Human Development and Health Sciences) for a term of two years. The Program Director serves at the pleasure of the overseeing deans.

The responsibilities of the Program Director include:
1) Providing leadership and oversight for the program.
2) Organizing and leading meetings of affiliated faculty and the Program Committee.
3) Communicating as necessary with the University Graduate Office.
4) Serving as the first point of contact for issues arising with program students and faculty.
5) Approving all changes to programs of study.
6) Approving all changes in faculty advisors.

## C. Program Committee

The Program Committee shall consist of two members of the affiliated faculty elected by the faculty from each unit not represented by the Program Director, one faculty member or professional from the Center for Disabilities Studies, and the Program Director. The two-year terms of these Program Committee members shall be staggered, such that each year at least one member is replaced. A Program Committee member may serve two consecutive terms with an affirmative vote of the affiliated faculty.

The responsibilities of the Program Committee include:
1) Making annual admission decisions on student applicants.
2) Matching students to faculty advisors.
3) Approving all new programs of study and major changes to existing programs of study, including any transfer credits or independent study credits.

## D. Program Resources

The following terms are agreed upon for managing resources related to this interdisciplinary professional master's program:
1) Tuition income for students in this program will flow to the college of the instructor of record for each course.
2) Since this is a professional master's program, the participating units are not expected to provide graduate assistantships for the enrolled students.
3) With the approval of the Program Committee, the administrator overseeing the department/school home of the Program Director will determine the appropriate workload allocated to the responsibilities of the program, with the general expectation that this will be .25FTE of the Program Director's workload.
4) The home department/school/college of the Program Director is expected to make appropriate secretarial or other staff assistance available to the Program Director for conducting necessary program business.