

## BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

### KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

### Master of Science in Applied Social and Behavioral Research

#### Executive Summary/Recommendations:

**This program clearly meets the Chancellor's standards for new graduate degree programs. The Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study recently voted approval for the new program. There were no serious concerns raised in the review.**

**Request:** Kent State University's College of Arts and Sciences requests approval for a Master of Science in Social and Behavioral Research degree program.

**Program Purpose/Mission:** The two key purposes of the proposed Master of Science in Applied Social and Behavioral Research program is to instill applied research skills for students in community-based research and assessment, including an understanding of the principles and practices of prevention and intervention and the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in applied social and behavioral research, and to apply prevention/intervention principles and applied research skills to address specific community problems, including violence, crime, and community behavioral health problems.

Students in the proposed ASBR program will complete intensive training and practical experience in applied social and behavioral research and the implementation and evaluation of social and behavioral interventions at the individual and community levels. Its intent is to fill a growing and established need for applied social and behavioral researchers with master's level training to fill positions in private, state and local agencies that are increasingly affected by accountability measures.

The proposed ASBR will prepare highly motivated students for employment in applied research positions in fields related to the prevention of violence and crime and the intervention into community behavioral health problems. The program will establish a solid academic foundation for students interested in pursuing doctoral level studies.

Most students will be oriented toward becoming professionally trained applied researchers for positions in public and private community-based agencies. Other students will be oriented toward pursuing a Ph.D. degree

beyond their master's level training. The ASBR degree program prepares students for both of these opportunities.

**Enrollments:** Kent State University projects an average incoming class of 20 students, which appears to be a conservative estimate given the fact that 90 students indicated their desire to apply for the program for Fall 2009.

Faculty members in the new department have worked in Justice Studies to increase the number of minority graduate students. They have worked with a significant number of McNair Scholars and undergraduate Honors College students (who include women and minorities). There also have been efforts to increase the number of undergraduate minority students in Justice Studies which might lead to an increased presence of minorities in the new ASBR degree program.

Faculty members have close working relationships with international students through the Turkish Institute of Police Studies affiliated with the Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Justice Studies have had numerous Turkish students join the graduate program over the last several years and these students have pursued their Ph.D.'s in the Political Science department. Ideally, KSU would like to develop an ambassador program where the current undergraduate and graduate students act as ambassadors to increase student interest and knowledge about the new program.

**Curriculum:** The proposed course descriptions reflect a broad applied social and behavioral science curriculum. Students have the opportunity to conduct individual investigation and a capstone research project in an applied social and behavioral science area of their choice. Students must have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA, students must complete a minimum of 37 total credit hours, and a capstone research project is required. The new core courses include; Theory and Methods in Qualitative Research, Quantitative Methods for Applied Community-Based Research, Advanced Methods and Analysis for Applied Community-Based Research, Etiology of Aggression and Violence, Behavioral Health and Community Structure, Individual Investigation, and a Capstone Research Project in Applied Social and Behavioral Research.

**Faculty, Facilities and Resources:** The proposed program will utilize existing faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. The initial six core faculty will include current faculty members from Justice Studies who are associated with the Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence and will transfer to the new Department of Applied Social and Behavioral

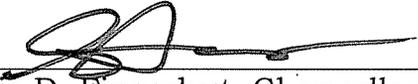
Research. A clerical staff person will be needed to assist the chair and faculty in coordinating the program. Office space for the core faculty and for graduate assistants, exists.

**Evidence of Need:** The need for the proposed degree arises from several recent trends: the explosive growth of evidence-based practices; the rise of accountability mandates; the gap between research and practices in violence/crime prevention and community behavioral health; the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to deal with complex community-based social and behavioral problems. The proposed master's degree helps to close the gap between research and practice by training researchers in the art of translating research evidence into applied prevention and intervention strategies to address problems of violence and community behavioral health. The program is intended to fill a growing and demonstrated need for applied social and behavioral researchers with master's level training to fill positions in private, state and local agencies and other community entities that are increasingly affected by accountability mandates.

In Ohio, only one program is somewhat similar in scope to Kent State University's ASBR. Wright State University's Master of Arts in Applied Behavioral Science program primarily is focused on training practitioners for the criminal justice system, rather than training applied researchers for community-based prevention, intervention and outcome assessment. While there is some overlap with the Wright State program, the proposed Master of Science in Applied Social and Behavioral Research degree is unique to the State of Ohio.

Employers seek master's trained individuals who can fill the roles of quality assurance manager, program evaluators, cost-benefit analysts, intervention specialists, evidence-based practice developers and accountability analysts. The proposed program helps to close the gap between research and practice by training researchers in the art of translating research evidence into applied prevention and intervention strategies to address problems of violence and community behavioral health. Graduates of the program will be ideal candidates for a growing number of positions in applied social and behavioral research settings created by federal, state and private foundation accountability mandates.

End of Comment Period: April 16, 2009  
No Comments Received: Recommend Approval

Approved	
	4/23/09
Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor	Date

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