

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant

Online Master's Degree Programs –
North Carolina

UNC-WILMINGTON

- Masters in Education
 - Leadership, Policy and Advocacy in Early Childhood
- Admission of students
 - Fall 2014-40
 - Summer 2015-20
 - Spring 2016-20
 - Spring 2015-40
 - Fall 2015-20
 - Summer 2016-20?

Key Highlights

- Courses in Leadership, Policy and Advocacy
- Courses in Organizational Development, Budget and Finance
- Internships and Culminating Projects
- Study Abroad Opportunities

Key Outcomes

- First group to graduate in Spring 2016
- Anecdotal reports
 - By the way - I wrote the grant based on the class and we found out yesterday we got it. So that means my research for Culminating II will be done in the fall -- and it is one of the largest grants we have ever rec'd for our agency outside of SS .. all because of this program.. just sayin..so thank you.

Challenges and Issues

- Level of academic writing
- Level of computer/online learning skills
- Unrealistic expectations
- Plagiarism
- Faculty with early childhood background

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Online Master's Degree:
Early Childhood Leadership and Program
Administration



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

Program of Study & Enrollment

- Interdisciplinary program is jointly administered and run through the Departments of Human Development & Family Studies and Specialized Education Services
- Online synchronous program – classes run from 5 to 6:50 pm on the computer
- 37 credit hours
- Completed in 2 years (including 2 summers)
- 80 to 90% of the courses taught by full time faculty at UNCG
- Individualized leadership internships during final semester
- Cohort 1 has 21 students who we anticipate will graduate in May 2016
- Cohort 2 has 22 students who we anticipate will graduate in May 2017



Courses

- HDF 650 Theory & Research in Early Childhood Development
- ERM 604 Methods of Educational Research
- SES 601 Introduction to Inclusive Birth – Kindergarten Services
- SES 602 Inclusive Family-Centered Practices in Early Childhood
- SES 603 Screening/Assessment in Inclusive Early Childhood Services
- HDF 602 Administration of Early Care & Education Programs: Financial & Personnel Management
- HDF 633 Advanced Curriculum in Early Childhood Education
- HDF 636 Leadership & Mentoring in Educating Young Children
- HDF 634 Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Policy
- SES 605 Diversity and Inclusive Early Care and Education
- SES 604 Internship in Inclusive Early Childhood



Internships & Final Portfolio

Final Internships

- Leadership internships carried out with collaborative community partners
- Underwent rigorous proposal development and review in Fall semester

Final Portfolio

- 5 essays serving as comprehensive exams demonstrate student learning throughout the program
- Oral defense of written essays with two faculty and a professional community member



Course Evaluation Data

Student ratings from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on 14 items (e.g., quality of course, quality of instruction, course organization, effectiveness of instructor, evaluation of work, curiosity stimulated, atmosphere to promote learning):

- Spring 2015 – average rating = 3.9 (N=43)
- Summer 2015 – average rating = 4.4 (N=35)
- Fall 2015 – average rating = 4.5 (N=80)



Survey Data – Spring 2016 (N=28)

Ratings from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Question	Average
The online format of the BK graduate program provides and opportunity for high-quality learning.	4.43
The online format of the BK graduate program contributed to my decision to apply to the program.	4.57
The technical aspects (overall use of computer, equipment, and Internet) of the BK graduate online courses are easy to use.	4.07
Blackboard Collaborate is easy to use for my online classes.	3.96
The asynchronous work for classes contributes to course content in meaningful ways.	3.89
The 5pm class start time adequately meets my needs (e.g., work schedule).	3.82
The level of communication with the instructor during online classes is adequate.	4.29
The level of communication with other students during online classes is adequate.	4.18
The BK graduate program is addressing my professional needs.	4.50
The BK graduate program is helping me advance my career goals.	4.50

Please describe how the online BK Graduate Program meets your personal and professional needs. (First 7 responses)

The use of the online BK Graduate Program makes it possible for me to be present in class when I would otherwise not be able to due to occupational obligations.

exposure to other professionals in various roles

Personally it was great not to have to drive to the campus. It also gave me the knowledge and skills that I need to be a leader in the field today. Also led me to solidify the next steps in my career.

Absolutely love it!!!

This program provides me the flexibility to acquire a Masters while working a full time job.

I can easily access my courses without going to campus three days a week. I currently work full-time and feel this online program is the best fit for me to attain my Masters Degree at UNCG.

Class hours have made attending very reasonable. While the work load is significant, this was expected due to the level of graduate studies. Teachers have been very knowledgeable and have helped me learn so much.

Student preferences for learning (ranking)

1. Whole group discussion
2. Small group discussion
3. Individual assignments
4. Asynchronous work outside of class
5. Small group assignments



Challenges

- Some technical problems with Blackboard Collaborate (we are switching to WebEx in the summer)
 - Getting kicked off during class
 - Some sound issues
 - Limited ability to use webcams
- Confusion during the transition from Blackboard to Canvas in summer 2015
- Group discussions with 20 students
- Making asynchronous work most beneficial
- Full time work and full time graduate school (9 credit hours)



Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement on a scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree."

Question	Average
Overall I feel supported by the BK graduate faculty	4.61
Overall I feel my questions and concerns about the BK graduate program are answered in a timely manner.	4.46
Overall I feel the online format contributes to my understanding of course content, requirements, and assignments	4.43
Overall I feel the courses are organized in a way so I understand what is expected of me.	4.32
Overall I feel part of a collaborative learning environment.	4.36

Final Comments -

- “It has been a tremendous experience. I am extremely grateful for the faculty in the program for sharing their knowledge and supporting us fully in becoming leaders in our field.”
- “Awesome journey I am on and I can't wait to attain my Masters Degree”
- “I love this program! It is providing an opportunity to complete a life-long goal of a master's degree.”
- “Overall, I was pleased and I am honored to be a part of this program. I hope there will be opportunities to interact periodically with our fellow students and the staff.”



- “For me, this BK program is making a difference in how I approach parents with challenges they are facing with their children, I feel more confident in working with them. I hope to have the opportunity to work with teachers to improve their skills in working with children, especially at-risk children that need us the most.”
- “UNCG has done an amazing job at providing a high quality graduate program for working professionals. It has been wonderful learning under such a knowledge group of professors that all have seemed to be concerned for our professional growth and I feel confident that this program will provide me with the foundation to advance my career and knowledge to make a greater impact in early childhood.”
- “thank you for offering this program!”



Next Steps

- Faculty have voted to make the Early Childhood Leadership and Program Administration a permanent concentration; the concentration proposal is currently under curriculum review.
- We are currently reviewing applications, writing samples, and interviewing prospective students for next fall.
- We anticipate having a yearly cohort of 10 to 15 students for this concentration.

