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These four themes guide the work of the Watson College of Education. Through thoughtful collaboration amongst dedicated and engaged faculty and students, the college is preparing education leaders of tomorrow.

**Mission**

The mission of the Watson College of Education is to develop knowledgeable and proficient education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society. We address this mission by:

- Providing academically rigorous programs.
- Producing and using meaningful scholarship.
- Partnering with schools, organizations, and diverse communities.
- Advancing the profession.

**Values**

Decades of educational research demonstrate that outstanding education professionals must know their content, know how to effectively engage learners and assess learning, and embrace and enact appropriate dispositions and values. Our mission, which guides the work of our faculty and staff in preparing education professionals, is predicated on the following set of values:

- Advocacy
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Global Perspective
- Innovation
- Inquiry
- Nurturing
- Reflection
About the M.Ed. in Higher Education Program

The Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Education includes a specialization in Higher Education. This specialization is designed for people who wish to enter or advance in administrative and/or academic support roles in colleges and universities. It provides social, historical, philosophical, developmental, and international perspectives of postsecondary education.

The program supports the Watson College of Education Conceptual Framework of developing highly competent professionals to serve in educational leadership roles. The program has been designed in accordance with the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators listed by ACPA and NASPA organizations.

Specialization Objectives

Upon completion of the M.Ed. in Higher Education program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, students will be able to:

• Understand the history and sociology of higher education, and organizational student development theory.

• Advocate for the inclusion of practices and policies that represent the differences and diversity of postsecondary student, faculty, and staff populations.

• Think critically as a member of a complex and global society with responsibilities in postsecondary institutions.

• Effectively use data for assessment for decision-making, including the design and evaluation of effective postsecondary programs.

• Effectively use marketing, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills.

• Effectively use technology and distance learning, along with traditional communication methods.

• Respond with innovative solutions to contemporary shifts and challenges in the higher education landscape, including social, political and economic changes which directly impact the higher education profession.
About the Department of Education Leadership

The M.Ed. in Higher Education program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington is housed in the Department of Education Leadership in the Watson College of Education.

Mission

The Department of Educational Leadership in the Watson College of Education is a diverse and dynamic group of educators and scholars committed to improving leadership at all levels of education. Through our teaching, scholarship, and service, we facilitate understanding, research, and implementation of practices that promote social justice, global perspectives, creativity and innovation, and capacity building—practices we believe are essential to educational leadership.
Admissions Requirements

All applications are reviewed by program faculty members, who utilize a holistic review process. This means that we consider all submitted documents when making admissions decisions. If you have supplemental materials that you would like for us to consider, you should upload those documents with your application. Supplemental materials are strongly encouraged when applicants have noted deficiencies (e.g., GPA).

The following materials are required:

Official copies of transcripts from each institution you have attended that confirm an undergraduate grade average of “B” (GPA: 3.0) or better. Applications with less than a 3.0 will be considered, but applicants should address any deficiencies in academic coursework in a supplemental letter or essay.

Three recommendations from individuals who can attest to the qualifications of the applicant for admission to this program. At least one recommendation must be from a faculty member who can speak on your ability to perform well at the graduate level is strongly encouraged. Other references should be professional if possible.

Each application must include an essay that identifies a current issue in higher education and discusses potential ways in which the issue can or should be addressed by leaders in the field. Where possible, candidates should discuss how their career goals align with their interests in addressing this issue.

Additional supplemental materials encouraged:

- Resume or curriculum vitae
- Letter or essay that explains any notable deficiencies in the application
The M.Ed. in Higher Education program requires a minimum of 36 credits including electives that are selected from course offerings in Education Leadership and other disciplines. The program requires students to engage in supervised professional practice, which provides the opportunity to connect theory to practice while working in a community college or university administrative or student support office or program.

**Core Courses:**

- EDL 523: Research in Education
- EDL 550: Foundations of Higher Education (3 credits)
- EDL 551: Student Development Theory (3 credits)
- EDL 552: Critical Issues in Higher Education (3 credits)
- EDL 553: Evaluation and Assessment in Higher Education (3 credits)
- EDL 555: Legal Issues in Higher Education
- EDL 558: Social Justice Topics in Higher Education
- EDL 560: Introduction to Higher Education Practice
- EDL 596: Culminating Project I (3 credits)
- EDL 597: Culminating Project II (3 credits)
Prospective students for the M.Ed. in Higher Education are eligible to apply for Graduate Assistantships at UNCW in multiple ways. First, students can indicate their interest in a Graduate Assistantship on their application for admissions. When doing so, students’ information is shared with open positions in academic affairs and support services. These positions are usually filled near the start of each semester, typically just a few weeks before classes begin.

The second option for Graduate Assistantships is for positions that are more closely related to Student Affairs and other student support services on campus. In order to be considered for these positions, prospective students must apply for admissions to the Higher Education program by the priority deadline, which is typically in March. Graduate faculty will review all applications submitted by the priority deadline and extend invitations to admitted students to attend an interview weekend that will be held on campus. All candidates will receive this information about the GA Interview Weekend following their acceptance into the Higher Education program.

For more information about the GA application process, please visit the Higher Education program website.

Internship Requirement & CIP Program

As required to complete the M.Ed Higher Education program at UNCW, all students must complete at least two internships. The M.Ed in Higher Education program and the Career Center have partnered to provide a framework for students completing practical experiences in the field of higher education. Students enrolled in M.Ed Higher Education program at UNCW will participate in the Certified Internship Program (CIP) for one or more of their Graduate Internship/Practicum experiences.

How to enroll?

Step One: Secure an internship/practicum site. You may find new opportunities via the weekly newsletter sent to all program candidates. For any assistance in securing an internship, please meet with the higher education faculty, or visit the Career Center at UNCW.

Step Two: Enroll by completing the application on the CIP website. The program structure for M.Ed Higher Education students is very similar to the traditional CIP, with a few modifications that will be explained during an orientation session. Deadlines to apply for the CIP can be found on the CIP website.
International Internship Experience

UNCW’s Higher Education at Maynooth program provides students with meaningful internship opportunities to practice administrative and leadership work, conduct assessment or research based projects, or develop educational or social programming for student and academic service units at an international institution of higher education. Interns work alongside international colleagues in applied experiences that augment their existing skills and experiences. Program objectives include gaining awareness of how Irish history and culture influence contemporary Irish life, including higher education; developing an understanding of the organization and practice of higher education in an international context; and comparing the needs of Irish and U.S. students and the services developed to support their engagement, development, and learning.

Eligibility Requirements

- Good judicial Standing
- 3.0+ GPA at time of application
- Completed 9 credit hours in M.Ed. or Ed.D. Higher Education Program
- Letter from employer
- Personal Statement
Culminating Project Process

Each student enrolled in the M.Ed. in Higher Education program at UNCW is required to complete a culminating project that demonstrates their engagement in an original line of inquiry. While the traditional academic finale for graduate work in a Master’s program is a thesis, the culminating project provides students with an opportunity to develop a unique representation of what they have learned throughout their program while also producing a product that has the potential to enhance their professional profile. Each student will identify not only the topic in which they focus their culminating project, but also the format that will represent their work. In order to support students’ work on the culminating project, all students will enroll in a two-course sequence (EDL 596 & EDL 597) during which the culminating project will be developed and completed. Additionally, each student will work with a faculty mentor (committee chair) and defend their culminating project before a committee that includes all Higher Education faculty mentors.

EDL 596: Culminating Project I (3 credits)

In EDL 596, students will delve into the literature that informs their culminating project and conceptualize their methodological approach to the project. Feedback from both faculty members and peers will contribute to a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment that enhances learning and innovation. Here is a summary of activities that will be completed in EDL 596:

- Develop project timeline;
- Develop project proposal (to be shared with Higher Education faculty);
- Develop and revise extensive literature review on project topic;
- Identify ideas for project methodology and final deliverables;
- Approval of project proposal.

EDL 597: Culminating Project II (3 credits)

In EDL 597, students will engage in their respective project’s completion and prepare for their defense. Feedback from your faculty Chair will provide support throughout the project’s completion. Here is a summary of activities that will be completed in EDL 597:

- Finalize project methodology and deliverables
- IRB proposal and approval (if necessary)
- Conduct project steps (e.g., data collection, reflective journals, grant development, etc.)
- Prepare multiple drafts, including final product, for review by faculty Chair and committee of Higher Education faculty
- Prepare poster for final defense
- Revise and submit final project to Chair and committee
Possible Project Formats

Academic, technical, or other professional report: Report prepared for an office, program, administrator, professional organization, or other appropriate stakeholder that is based on empirical data and/or critical review of literature.

Alternative format presentation: Video, website, art display, visual re-presentation, poetry, performance, or other appropriately formatted presentation that represents what the student learned from engagement in an original project grounded in empirical evidence and/or critical review of the literature.

Assessment project: Development and completion of an assessment project in collaboration with an office, program, or administrator in an educational setting. Students must prepare a presentation and report for the respective area in which they complete their assessment.

Auto-ethnography: Reflective journals and critical analysis about the student’s personal and professional development as a leader in his/her/their respective field.

Critical Review of Literature: Exhaustive review and thematic analysis of the literature on a focused topic in the student’s discipline. Students must prepare a written report that discusses their findings and aligns with standards for scholarly publication.

Curriculum plan or adaptation: Development of a complete curriculum plan or adaptation for a specific discipline or grade level. The adaptation of traditional modes of instructional delivery to innovative modes is also acceptable.

Grant: Completed and submitted grant informed by findings from a project developed in collaboration with a faculty member, administrator, campus organization, community group, and/or government agency.

Scholarly publication: Publication of a research project in a scholarly journal or other peer-reviewed publication (e.g., book, book chapter).

Traditional thesis: 5 or 6 chapter academic report that includes an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion. Students interested in pursuing a doctoral degree are encouraged to utilize this format.
Students enrolled in EDL 595: Culminating Project II will complete the following requirements for their final presentations:

1. Prepare a final paper in a format that is accepted and approved by your Chair.
2. Prepare a poster presentation that is accepted and approved by your Chair.
3. Attend the in-person defense of your Culminating Project during the poster session.

**Paper Guidelines**

Guidelines for your final paper should be negotiated and agreed upon between you and your Chair. The following elements represent the aspects that all papers must address, but do not necessarily reflect sections or headings for the paper.

1. Rationale for the purpose or need for your project. Why is it important to explore this topic?
2. Review of relevant literature that informs your project. What do we already know about your selected topic from the work of prior researchers, scholars, and practitioners?
3. Methods you used in your project to collect information about the topics you explored. From what sources did you collect information? What information did you collect? In what ways did you critically examine (analyze) the information you collected?
4. Discussion about the findings or important elements that emerged from your analysis. In what ways do your findings relate to the points discussed in the literature from point #2?
5. Significance and implications of your project for practice, research, theory, or personal/professional development. What did you learn from this work? How can that information be used to inform the work of others?
Poster Guidelines

Posters should be presented as a summary (not copy and paste) of the components included in your final paper. Each section of your paper should also be addressed on your poster. The poster will be formatted as a 24” x 36” PowerPoint slide that can be printed for free through SURCA.

During the final poster session, you will be required to discuss your project in 2 ways:

1. The first hour of the poster session will be an open forum where all posters are displayed. Students will remain with their poster to answer questions from faculty and guests. Guests will include your committee, student affairs staff throughout campus, and distinguished guests including Education Leadership Department Chair, Dean of Watson College of Education, the Dean of Students, and the Provost of the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

2. During the second portion of the session, each student will provide a maximum 5 minute summary of what they did and what they learned from their engagement in their culminating project.

For more information, please contact the Higher Education Graduate Ambassador.
Academic Advising

The Program Coordinator is the official academic advisor for all students enrolled in the M.Ed. in Higher Education. While students are encouraged to consult program faculty members and instructors, all approvals, course substitutions, and other academic issues must be addressed by the Program Coordinator.

Recommended Course Sequence

Although each student is encouraged to develop a plan for completing the program that aligns with their professional goals and responsibilities, the recommended course sequences below should align with most students’ pathway through the program.

Full-Time Enrollment

Students who enroll at full-time status should complete 9 hours or 3 courses in each of their first 2 Fall/Spring semesters, and should complete the following core courses in their first year of study:

- EDL 523: Research in Education – take before EDL 553
- EDL 550: Foundations of Higher Education
- EDL 551: Student Development Theory
- EDL 553: Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
- EDL 558: Social Justice Topics in Education
- EDL 560: Introduction to Higher Education Practice

Summer enrollment is optional. Courses in summer are typically offered online and asynchronous in 4 ½ week summer terms. Elective topics vary each summer and align with instructors professional and/or scholarly interests. Any electives completed in summer would reduce course load in the final Fall and Spring semesters. For students who begin enrollment in Spring, summer courses are encouraged.

Remaining core courses and electives must be completed in the final 2 semesters of coursework. EDL 596: Culminating Project I must be completed in the semester prior to EDL 597: Culminating Project II. In some cases, it may be possible to complete EDL 597 during a summer semester. EDL 552 can be completed in either of the final 2 semesters of coursework.

Part-Time Enrollment

Students who enroll at part-time status will typically complete 3-6 credits or 1-2 courses each semester they are enrolled in the program. Part-time students are strongly encouraged to consider multiple factors that may affect their course plan (e.g., desired graduation date/timeline, work commitments, tuition waiver support), and consult with the Program Coordinator to develop a plan that aligns with each students’ personal and professional goals.
Part-time students should endeavor to complete the following 7 core courses as early as possible in their program of study:

- EDL 523: Research in Education – take before EDL 553
- EDL 550: Foundations of Higher Education
- EDL 551: Student Development Theory
- EDL 553: Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
- EDL 555: Legal Issues in Higher Education
- EDL 558: Social Justice Topics in Education
- EDL 560: Introduction to Higher Education Practice

The remaining core courses should be completed near the end of the students’ program of study and sequenced as appropriate:

- EDL 552: Critical Issues in Higher Education (capstone course)
- EDL 596: Culminating Project I – must be completed the semester prior to EDL 597
- EDL 597: Culminating Project II

Elective courses may be worked into the program of study for part-time students at any point, but summer electives are strongly encouraged.

**Coursework Plan Examples**

**Fall Full-Time Enrollment – Sample Course Plan 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall I</th>
<th>EDL 523, EDL 550, EDL 560</th>
<th>Spring I</th>
<th>EDL 551, EDL 553, EDL 558</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>2 electives completed</td>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 596, EDL 555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 596, EDL 555</td>
<td>Spring II</td>
<td>EDL 597, EDL 552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fall Full-Time Enrollment – Sample Course Plan 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall I</th>
<th>EDL 523, EDL 550, EDL 551</th>
<th>Spring I</th>
<th>EDL 553, EDL 558, EDL 560</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>No courses enrolled</td>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 552, EDL 596, Elective 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 552, EDL 596, Elective 1</td>
<td>Spring II</td>
<td>EDL 555, EDL 597, Elective 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spring Full-Time Enrollment – Sample Course Plan 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring I</th>
<th>EDL 523, EDL 550, EDL 551</th>
<th>Fall I</th>
<th>EDL 553, EDL 558, EDL 560</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer I</td>
<td>2 electives completed</td>
<td>Summer II</td>
<td>EDL 597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall I</td>
<td>EDL 553, EDL 558, EDL 560</td>
<td>Spring II</td>
<td>EDL 552, EDL 555, EDL 596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spring Full-Time Enrollment – Sample Course Plan 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring I</th>
<th>EDL 523, EDL 551, EDL 560</th>
<th>Fall I</th>
<th>EDL 550, EDL 553, EDL 558</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer I</td>
<td>1 electives completed</td>
<td>Fall I</td>
<td>1 elective completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 552, EDL 597</td>
<td>Fall II</td>
<td>EDL 552, EDL 597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. James DeVita
Ph.D., University of Tennessee Knoxville

James M. DeVita is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW). He earned both his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration and M.S. in College Student Personnel from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. James currently works with the Applied Learning and Teaching Community (ALTC) as a Senior Associate Fellow, and serves as the Program Coordinator for the Higher Education concentration of the M.Ed. at UNCW. He also serves as the Lead Evaluator for a $1.4 million dollar State Department grant awarded to a group of UNCW faculty in 2015.

Dr. DeVita has presented at numerous international conferences, and published over 20 peer reviewed publications to date. He currently teaches both master’s and doctoral level courses that focus on student learning and development, social justice topics in education, and research methods. His research examines the experiences of targeted populations in higher education, particularly LGBTQ+ and racial/ethnic minorities, as well as scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL) that integrates applied and/or online learning.

Dr. Kevin R. McClure
Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Kevin McClure is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education. He earned both his M.A. and in International Education Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park. He earned his B.A. in History and Spanish from the University of Richmond. Prior to joining the department, Dr. McClure held various professional positions in academic affairs and international programs at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is an active in several professional organizations, including the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), and American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Dr. Andrew Ryder

Ph.D., Iowa State University

Dr. Andrew Ryder is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education. Dr Ryder earned both his Ph.D. and M.S. in higher education at Iowa State University and his B.A. in History, with a second major in Government, from the College of William & Mary. He has 12 years of professional experience in academic and student affairs, having previously worked at Iowa State University, Northeastern University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is active in several professional associations, including ACPA-College Student Educators International, which has recognized him as an Emerging Scholar in higher education and student affairs, NASPA-Association for higher education administrators, where he is a member of the Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge community, and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE).

Dr. Ryder is an expert in assessment in higher education, campus climates, professional practice in student affairs, and community college completion and transfer. His research in these areas and other topics can be found in the College Student Affairs Journal, Journal of College Student Development, Journal of College and University Student Housing, Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of Research and Practice in Assessment, Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, Journal of Student Financial Aid, New Directions for Higher Education, and New Directions for Institutional Research. His research directly informs the courses he teaches most frequently, including Assessment in Higher Education, Foundations of Higher Education, and Introduction to Professional Practice.

Dr. Symphony Oxendine

Ph.D., University of North Carolina Greensboro

Dr. Symphony Oxendine, Cherokee/Choctaw, is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education. Dr. Oxendine worked in student affairs 6 years prior to pursuing her doctorate. She received her Ph.D. in Educational Studies with a concentration in Higher Education and a doctoral minor Educational Research Methodology at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, where she also received her M.Ed in Higher Education Administration. She received her B.A. from Oklahoma State University in Applied Sociology.

Her research interests include critical awareness of the social and institutional issues that affect the educational performance and institutional support of American Indians and other underrepresented groups, graduate preparation programs, cultural identity development, Historically Native American Fraternities and Sororities, student involvement and its impact on student retention, leadership development, policy, and political processes within post-secondary education institutions. Her concentration on these research areas will help shape the direction and development of higher education professionals by assisting in the understanding of various institutional, psychological, and political processes as a means to support development for underrepresented students.
Appendix

Higher Education Concentration, M.Ed. in Education
Program of Study

Student Name: ________________________________ UNCW ID#: 850 _________

Required Core Courses: All students must complete the following required 30 hours of core courses; All core courses are offered in Fall and Spring semesters, but not Summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
<th>Recommended Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDL 523</td>
<td>Research in Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>First semester or first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 550</td>
<td>Foundations of Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>First semester or first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 551</td>
<td>Student Development Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>First semester or first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 552</td>
<td>Critical Issues in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final year of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 553</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evaluation in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>First year of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 555</td>
<td>Legal Issues in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>When possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 558</td>
<td>Social Justice Topics in Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>When possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 560</td>
<td>Introduction to Professional Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>First semester or first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 596</td>
<td>Culminating Project I – counts as full time enrollment status course</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of program; first in sequence with 597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 597</td>
<td>Culminating Project II – counts as full time enrollment status course</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final semester; Cannot be in same semester as 596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Electives: 6 hours of electives at 500-level or higher required for all students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Supervised Professional Practice Requirement: complete 2 of the 3 experiences listed below; at least 1 must also include successful completion of the CIP certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>CIP Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GA, FT, PT experience or other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International internship in Ireland (Maynooth)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The M.Ed. in Higher Education Graduate Student Handbook is managed by the Higher Education Graduate Student Ambassador and the Program Coordinator. If you have any questions, please contact them via email, or visit our website at uncw.edu/ed/el/highered/