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I. Program Title, Objectives and Impacts

The Cultural Competence Community Needs Assessment was conducted to better understand the training and development needs of North Carolina non-profit organizations, including faith-based organizations (FBO) and community-based organizations (CBO). The objectives of this study were to (1) conduct a needs assessment of cultural training and development in the North Carolina nonprofit sector; (2) create a market justification to develop a graduate certificate program in cultural competence; (3) improve diversity training for current students and others working in nonprofit and public sectors; and (4) impact the way that nonprofit organizations serve hard to reach and underserved populations. The needs assessment data was primarily used to develop a graduate certificate program that focuses on “enhancing the teaching and learning about diversity,” specifically for employees and students who plan to serve in the public and nonprofit areas.

In an effort to improve diversity training, the community needs assessment data will be also used to develop a curriculum for the graduate certificate program that serves current NSCU students as well as others who work in North Carolina nonprofit and public sectors. While it is strikingly clear that the field of public administration has adopted a cultural competence framework to ensure the effective delivery of public goods and services (as evident by the National Association of Schools in Public Affairs and Administration standards), many other professional fields also embrace cultural competence to improve the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and awareness (KSA\(^3\)) of employees. To that end, a graduate certificate in cultural competence significantly contributes to the academic mission of the university as well as contributes significantly to the land-grant ethos of North Carolina State University.

The pursuit of cultural competency represents a window of opportunity which expands traditional knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) into more effective KSAs\(^3\) which promote a workforce who possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, awareness and attitudes to eliminate the existing gaps or divide between cultural and social groups in North Carolina. Several professional organizations who are also targeted audiences have adopted culturally competent education and essential practices into their professional ethos. In response to the changing workplace, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) include faculty diversity, student diversity as well as managing for diversity and cultural competence among its standards for accreditation. Like NASPAA, several professional organizations have also adopted culturally competent practices into their professional ethos. For example, the National Association of Social Workers has adopted Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice to ensure that social workers understand how to work with underserved populations.\(^1\) Nonprofit organizations which provide managed care services have also adopted

\(^1\)National Association of Social Workers, Cultural Competence Standards. Available online at www.socialworkers.org/.../standards/NASWCulturalStandards.pdf.
cultural competence standards as part of their accreditation efforts to ensure that volunteers understand the needs and desires of their targeted audience. In policing, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention has adopted cultural competence training to improve outcomes in the criminal and justice systems and manage dynamic differences that emerge when trying to recruit a culturally diverse workforce. Likewise, in college and university education programs, cultural competence has been adopted as a basic skill area when preparing teachers for careers in public schools. Adopting cultural competence as a training standard makes practical sense.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health is almost always credited with developing national guidelines of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards (CLAS). While our nation’s efforts to reduce disparities in health began with the efforts of the Office of Minority Health, the action plans that have developed to reduce health outcomes and health care disparities have morphed throughout the field of public service. Many guides and resources as well as training tools have been used by professional programs whose mission supports public service values. In addition, the knowledge-base for cultural competence can be found in national and state policies, recent initiatives and laws which serve as the foundation for promoting cultural competence in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Many for-profit international organizations like IBM, Mercedes-Benz, and Hewlett-Packard make the case for cultural competence to improve decision making and reduce organizational conflict. These for-profit companies rely on cultural competence to improve cross-cultural communications and increase productivity.8

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2010), there are more than 42,000 nonprofit organizations in the State of North Carolina. Currently, nonprofit management is one of the fastest growing sectors that serve the interest of the public. Like all businesses, nonprofit organizations must routinely invest in the training and development of human resources to assure that their knowledge, skills and abilities remain market-ready to address

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4Cultural Competency Standards for Programs Serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Other Crimes in Oregon. Available online at www.doj.state.or.us/crimev/doc/cultural_competency_standards.doc.
the audience that they serve. Many nonprofit organizations need to reassess their niche, particularly since their eventual success is tied to their ability address the needs of their service area. Recent data on the health and wellbeing of North Carolina communities shows that gaps continue to widen between racial/ethnic demographic groups. The North Carolina Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Report Card explains the greatest health disparities and growing health disparities in key areas supported by nonprofit and public organizations in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{10} For example, in 2008, more than 30\% of black and Hispanic children under 18 years of age are living below the Federal poverty level and 20\% of black, Hispanic and American Indian families are living below the Federal poverty level. In 2008, more than half of black families are single-parent and one-third of Hispanic families are single-parent. In 2008, the median family income for blacks and Hispanics was slightly half that of white families. In 2007-2008, high school dropout rates of blacks and Hispanics almost double that of white students. These indicators of social and economic well-being for minorities and their families seem to suggest that more work needs to be done in these hard to serve communities. Regarding maternal and infant health, the infant mortality rate for blacks reported from 2004 – 2008 more than doubled that of whites during the same period. While the public sector experiences significant cutbacks due to downsizing and privatization, the nonprofit sector has experienced continued growth. Yet, we continue to see growing disparities in many areas served by nonprofit organizations, especially in those service areas that are disproportionately black and Hispanic.

The richness of America’s diversity requires public and nonprofit professionals to broaden their awareness of cultural and social differences as well as promote positive attitudes toward developing cultural competency. The pursuit of cultural competency represents a window of opportunity which expands traditional knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) into more effective KSAs\textsuperscript{3} to promote a public sector workforce that possesses the knowledge, skills, abilities, awareness and attitudes to eliminate the existing gaps or divide that exists between cultural and social groups in North Carolina. To not focus our efforts on the widening “cultural divide” will undoubtedly create more profound disparities in education, employment, housing, justice, physical, mental and emotional health, citizen engagement and overall quality of life for North Carolina residents.

II. Project Evaluation

The project was funded to assess whether nonprofit organizations would benefit from a graduate certificate in cultural competence and to identify unmet training and development needs. Funding was used to develop and administer a survey and create a market justification for developing a new graduate certificate. More than 300 executive directors and solicited nonprofit professionals responded to the needs assessment survey administered in Spring 2012. Preliminary results were presented at the Social Equity Leadership conference in Savannah, GA in June 2012. The proposed cultural competence graduate certificate will be shared with faculty in the Department of Public Administration at the September 2012 meeting. The proposal will be submitted to the CHASS Dean’s Office and the Graduate School early fall 2012 for consideration. In addition, two internal grants were submitted to the DELTA program for technical development of a diversity learning lab and an online graduate course. In this section, the methods used to collect survey results and the analysis of each survey question is presented.

To better understand the cultural training and development needs of North Carolina nonprofit organizations, a survey was initially administered to a random sample of 1,000 nonprofit organizations listed on the registry of the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2010). The survey, which was funded by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED) at North Carolina State University and conducted by Dr. RaJade M. Berry-James. To increase response rates, the Institute for Nonprofit Research, Education and Engagement invited journal subscribers to participate in the survey as well. Several other nonprofit entities in the Wake County area were also invited to participate in the survey. To date, the survey yielded responses from 322 non-profit organizations in the state of North Carolina. Examples of survey items represent respondents’ interest in the university developing a graduate certificate program in cultural competence, the likelihood of respondents’ enrolling in the graduate certificate program if developed and their interest in specific coursework offered to fulfill the graduate certificate in cultural competence.

Initially, nonprofit organizations were mailed a solicitation letter describing the purpose of the needs assessment along with a paper copy of the actual survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the paper survey when preferred. In the solicitation letter, respondents were asked to fill out the “Cultural Competence Training and Development Needs” survey via SurveyMonkey, an online survey software and questionnaire tool. Respondents were instructed to complete the survey online or return the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope that was provided. When returned, all paper surveys were immediately entered into the SurveyMonkey web-based software system. Other targeted nonprofits were emailed a solicitation letter and were invited to respond to the online survey. When requested, additional paper copies were also mailed to invited respondents.

The survey results were analyzed and used as a market-justification to create a graduate certificate in cultural competence at North Carolina State University. Several internal Delta grants were applied for and if received, will be used for two distinct purposes: (1) to develop a
second life virtual learning lab so students can socialize, connect and work though diversity challenges and (2) to create an online graduate course in cultural competence that will serve as the foundation of the graduate certificate.

Research has shown that culturally competent programs and practices have reduced disparities between demographic groups and has improved overall program performance and societal outcomes. The summary results of this needs assessment support the development of a graduate program in cultural competence and indicate strong community interest in attending the program.

Background

More than three hundred people responded to the needs assessment survey (n=322); however, some additional questions were added to the survey after data collection had begun to accommodate the special interests of organizations willing to sponsor the survey, and/or to improve the flow and comprehension of the survey. In most surveys, item nonresponse occurs primarily because respondents were not required to answer every survey item, did not readily have access to the information needed to answer a particular item or opted out of completing the survey after responding to a few initial questions. In this survey, 78% of those (n=252) who began the survey answered all of the survey questions. Contributing to the nonresponse rate, some respondents completed the survey before the new questions were added. As such, the total number of respondents answering each survey question differs. The summary results reported below represent an item analysis among those responding to each question and are based on the count and percent response for each survey question.

Survey Item Analysis

The following questions describe the organizations responding to the survey and also describe the service areas of responding nonprofit organizations.

Is your organization a 501(c)(3)? Of the 239 respondents, 92% indicated that the organization was a registered nonprofit.

What North Carolina counties does your organization serve? Of the 229 respondents, almost one-third (31%) serve Wake County and at least 10% serve NC residents living in counties adjacent to Wake (23% serve Chatham, 23% serve Durham, 10% serve Nash, and 14% serve Johnston).

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Is your service area primarily urban, suburban or rural? Of the 224 respondents, 45% primarily serve urban areas, 31% serve rural areas and 24% serve suburban areas.

Which of the following best describes the type of organization in which you are employed? Of those responding to this question (n=222), 83% indicated that they represented a ‘nonprofit’ organization, 4% represented a ‘government’ organization, 7% represented a ‘private for-profit business’ organization and 6% indicated that they were ‘not employed’, even though they were listed as the primary contact for the nonprofit organization solicited.

Which of the following best describes your organization? Of those responding to this question (n=203), 36% were from ‘religious’ nonprofits, 27% from ‘educational’ organizations, 30% from ‘charitable’ organizations, 5% from organizations that ‘prevented cruelty to children or animals’ and 0.5% were from ‘testing for public safety’ organizations.

Does your organization provide any of the following services to NC residents (check all that apply)? Many of the organizations responding to this question (n=263) indicated that they provided a variety of services among each of the categories. Each of the services listed require culturally and linguistically appropriate services as part of a professional standard and/or federal mandates. For example, 24% of the organizations provided ‘health services,’ 20% provided ‘mental health services,’ 28% provided ‘public education services,’ 20% provided family and child welfare services,’ 2% provided ‘Native American Affairs,’ 5% provided ‘police and criminal justice services,’ and 42% provided ‘services for members of a vulnerable population.’

Do you receive Federal funding to support programs and services offered by your organization? Of the 272 individuals responding to this question, 65% do not receive federal funding compared to 35% who indicated ‘yes’ to this question.

Collectively, the following questions assess whether there is a market for a graduate certificate program in cultural competence and identify which courses are likely to appeal to those interested in a cultural competence training program offered at NCSU. Additional survey items offer insight on the preferred learning conditions for prospective graduate students.

Are you familiar with the term ‘cultural competence’? More than two-thirds of those responding (n=315) were familiar with the term ‘cultural competence.’ Specifically 69% indicated ‘yes’ and 31% indicated ‘no.’

Do you think your organization would benefit from a graduate level cultural competence certificate training program offered at North Carolina State University? Of the 305 individuals responding on behalf of their organization, 55% indicated ‘yes’ and 45% indicated ‘no.’

Which of the following courses would you or your staff take, if NCSU offered a graduate level cultural competence certificate program? Of the 212 individuals responding to this question,
more than one-half of the respondents preferred courses in program evaluation (61%), grant writing (59%), cross-cultural communication (55%), cultural sensitivity and awareness (54%) as part of the curriculum in cultural competence. More than one-third of those responding noted other courses often linked to public affairs training and development programs such as needs assessment (46%), cultural and linguistic competence (46%), budgeting (44%), fundraising (42%), and marketing (39%).

**Which type of class delivery method would you prefer if NCSU offered a graduate level cultural competence certificate program (select all that apply)?** Of the 229 individuals responding, 70% indicated that they preferred a hybrid online/face-to-face course, 36% indicated that they preferred an online courses and relatively few (13%) indicated that they preferred face-to-face courses.

**Which of the following course meeting times would you prefer (select all that apply)?** Of the 185 individual responding, 42% prefer an ‘online’ meeting time. However, 38% of survey respondents also prefer day classes that meet between 8am and 5pm; 42% prefer evening classes that meet between 6pm and 9pm; and almost one-third (28%) prefer the non-traditional weekend format, Friday evenings and Saturdays.

Cultural competence mandates grew out of the Federal initiative to institute culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for health care organizations. As noted earlier, many of the professional fields and professional associations require training, development and certification in cultural competence – especially in those fields where cultural disparities continue to exist. Based on the needs assessment data presented above, developing a graduate certificate in cultural competence makes good business sense for North Carolina State University and the market analysis demonstrates a strong interest in a graduate certificate in this area.
III. Sustainability

Plans are underway to officially propose the graduate certificate in cultural competence as well as identify and/or develop an online course that can be used as part of the core or elective criteria. Additional grant funding is being pursued to develop a virtual learning lab so that graduate students can practice using culturally competent skills and decision making in a learning environment. This section of the report details the PI's attempts to sustain the research objectives supported by the mini-grant funding.

In spring 2012, the PI on this project developed and offered an 8-week special topics graduate course in cultural competence for students who were enrolled in the masters of public administration program. Course resources included an annotated bibliography of online resources in cultural competence and adopted Norman-Major and Gooden's, Cultural Competence in Public Administration (2012), as a required text. This seminal text focuses on developing cultural competent public agencies, assessing culturally competent public policies, building cultural competent public servants and developing cultural competent organizations. In addition, the text prescribes the role of cultural competency in program accreditation and educational instruction. To further develop this course for inclusion in the certificate program, the PI applied for a distance education course grant. The primary objective of the course grant is to develop a 3-credit distance education course that relies on a technology-driven approach to learning about diversity and is marketed for those who work in or are preparing to work in the public and nonprofit areas. The course on Cultural Competence aligns with the university's strategic planning initiative to create a "high-impact educational experience in [inclusive] diversity/global learning." In the real-world and as a matter of practice, cultural competence has emerged as a key KSA behavior among public administrators, public health workers, public educators, social entrepreneurs and among those who work in corporations (Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Kaiser Permanente) operating in the global market place. In this course, graduate students were introduced to the cultural competency continuum as organizations and individuals move toward cultural proficiency when developing publicly-supported programs and consumer-based services. Students were exposed to cultural competencies reflected by administrative policies and practices. By the end of this course, students were be able to: (1) identify the language, philosophy and conceptualization of cultural competence as it relates to public service values; (2) identify factors that contribute to disparities for fields like health services, public education, family and child welfare, police and criminal justice, vulnerable individuals and Native American affairs; (3) explain how cultural competence affects the seven domains of organizations (i.e., organizational values, governance, planning and monitoring, communication, staff development, organizational infrastructure, and services/interventions); (4) distinguish between culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services and others; and (5) assess one’s own self-awareness as well as an organization's awareness to enhance interaction with others and improved effectiveness.

In the IDEA grant proposal, the PI plans to develop the online course by creating video lectures that support the 5 learning objectives of this course described above. More importantly, the online course will include content of video case studies that can be used as a virtual historical
marker of cities or organizations that have struggled with a cultural crisis. These virtual case studies will introduce students to administrative policies and practices that support cultural awareness, understanding and decision making through group learning activities. As part of the request for anIDEA grant, this online course will serve as the foundation course for the new graduate certificate in cultural competence.

The graduate certificate program will be housed in the School of Public and International Affairs and will be heavily promoted among graduate programs like the Masters in Public Administration, Masters in International Studies and Masters in Social Work since curricular content in these programs and professional certification require cultural competence training and/or support global awareness. The certificate will also be open to other graduate students in professional training programs in CHASS, College of Management, and other professional fields that embrace cultural competence to improve the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and awareness of employees.

In addition to the IDEA grant to develop an online course in cultural competence, a second IDEA exploratory grant was submitted to DELTA to create a diversity learning lab where problem-based learning tasks or interactive gaming exercises can be explored. The learning lab requires knowledge of relevant policies, procedures and strategies to promote effective decision making within a cultural context and would only be open to students in the graduate certificate program. The exploratory grant will also be used to develop a gaming simulation to provide a practical application of the cultural competency skills needed to interact in an inclusive global community. While the graduate certificate in cultural competence must be approved, the needs assessment has indicated that the public and nonprofit sectors would welcome graduate level training and development in this area. Additionally, the gaming simulation can be used as a training tool or as a screening tool for businesses operating in a global marketplace.

The virtual laboratory will consist of challenges with solutions based on simulations that enable graduate students to showcase essential knowledge, skills, abilities, awareness and attitudes (KSA3) through a variety of diverse exercises. The learning lab, DiverseLab, will create a safe place for students learning about the complexity of diversity to exhibit skills that help to manage an inclusive and diverse workforce and apply those practical skills in a simulation environment, using case studies from a variety of interdisciplinary professional fields such as health and health care, education and higher education, crime and criminal justice, economics and public affairs.

The primary objective of the learning lab, DiverseLab, is to increase the knowledge-base of students by bridging the gap between cultural and social groups and by identifying essential KSAs3; to improve individual decision-making by distinguishing and promoting the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate practices, programs and services; and to assess student growth in their commitment to diversity and contribution to community (organizational) change in a gaming simulation environment.
DiverseLab will consist of a virtual laboratory and interactive game with cultural characters that live, work and interact in a DiverseSpace. This DiverseLab will include human characters that represent primary and secondary dimensions of diverse people. As we develop these diverse characters, students will be exposed to human characters who represent the primary dimensions of diversity (Federally-legislated or locally-supported individual differences that are often used to self-identify or describe people, such as race/ethnicity, age, physical abilities/qualities, sexual orientation, gender, religious beliefs) and secondary dimensions of diversity (situational differences that change overtime based on personal decisions individuals make, such as work background, income, marital status, military experience, communication style, geographic location, family background, and education) (Ivy Planning Group, 2009; Lapid-Bogda, 2004).

The goal of the DiverseLab is to help students engage in crucial and meaningful conversations with others who live, work and interact in DiverseSpace. The gaming challenges will be present realistic cultural interactions for the characters living in the DiverseSpace and will enable students to use skills learned in the foundation course of the cultural competence graduate certificate. In addition, students will apply those practical skills in a simulation environment that represents challenges around language and communications, appearance and dress, time and time-consciousness, sense of space, and other interactions often discovered in a culturally diverse environment (Ivy Planning Group, 2009; Lapid-Bogda, 2004). Some of these CulturalChallenges will be based on dynamic case studies that require students to use essential skills that facilitate/support cultural competency, practice managing cultural diversity and display values consistent with a commitment to diversity. As students respond to the CulturalChallenges, others in the gaming simulation can weigh-in with suggestions on how to develop a better cultural understanding of the synergistic interactions in DiverseSpace. At the end of each gaming session, students will receive immediate feedback in three areas: (1) Mastery of Skill; (2) Appropriateness of Decision Making; and (3) Shift in Cultural Norms.

In working with the Delta team to develop this gaming simulation, DiverseSpace can be used as a deliverable for the development of a diversity gaming training-simulations for mobile devices and can be developed to enhance problem-based learning or interactive exercises to improve decision making within a cultural context. To develop this concept and proposed virtual laboratory, the PI of this project has consulted with a member of the Delta staff that helped to identify how the project can be supported by the team of Delta staff.

Both the IDEA course grant and the exploratory grant are still pending.
IV. Publications

The following papers were accepted for presentation at regional and national conferences:


The following graduate course was created as a special topic in the Department of Public Administration MPA program and offered face-to-face to graduate students attending North Carolina State University in the Spring 2012:

PA 598 Cultural Competence in the Public Sector (Spring 2012)

In an effort to increase the number of nonprofits responding to the survey, the NC Institute for Nonprofit Research, Education and Engagement also sent out a solicitation letter to NC nonprofit organizations who subscribe to the Philanthropy Journal. In addition, several faith-based and community-based organizations in the Wake county service area were solicited to participate in the needs assessment.