SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT HANDBOOK
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
M.S. SPECIAL EDUCATION DEGREE, EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIAN PROGRAM, & LOW-INCIDENCE DISABILITIES TRANSCRIPTED CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023

6300 Ocean Drive Unit 5818
Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5834
COEHD Office: 361-825-2662

This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php and the College of Graduate Studies Handbook http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/current_students/masters_students.html. Last Revised August, 2021.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I. MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM FACULTY ......................................................... 4

SECTION II. FACULTY AND STAFF .................................................................................

SECTION III. LEARNING OUTCOMES ............................................................................ 6
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS
APPLICATION PROGRAM REPLACEMENT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
PROGRAM ADMISSION DEADLINES
ADMISSION REVIEW PROCESS/TIMELINE

SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION ................................................................. 7
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS
PROGRAM ADMISSION

SECTION V. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS .......................................................................... 9
MS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIAN CERTIFICATION
LOW-INCIDENCE DISABILITIES TRANSCRIPTED CERTIFICATE
DEGREE PLAN
COURSE SEQUENCE
EXIT REQUIREMENTS
GENERAL INFORMATION

SECTION VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION .................................................................. 16
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
CAMPUS RESOURCES

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SECTION I. MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM FACULTY

Welcome to the Special Education Program in the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC)!

Our M.S. in Special Education degree provides students with an eclectic program in special education that interfaces theory and pedagogy from both the special education and emergent bilingual education fields. Students receive specialized training that is unique and specific to the needs of students receiving special education services, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Students learn instructional methodology to address the needs of students with high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities across instructional domains including: cognitive, communicative, behavioral, social, and functional. Students also receive training in consultation, collaboration, and family system support areas.

In addition to offering an M.S. in Special Education degree, we also offer programs for those pursuing the Educational Diagnostician Certification and/or a Low-Incidence Disabilities (LID) Transcribed Certificate.

The Educational Diagnostician certificate program can be taken concurrently with the M.S. Special Education degree program or alone by a certified teacher who has a graduate degree. This coursework prepares students to assess, diagnose, and support instructional planning for students referred to special education.

To be certified as an Educational Diagnostician, the student must have a master’s degree from an accredited institution, have three creditable years of teaching experience as a classroom teacher, successfully complete up to 33 semester hours for Educational Diagnostician Certification, and pass the required TExES #253 exam.

The LID Transcribed Certificate is an interdisciplinary program that prepares graduate students to collaboratively serve students with significant support needs through evidence-based practices. This 3-course certificate is offered to educators in the field of special education and other related disciplines, such as: counseling, psychology, general education, and education administration.

We encourage you to engage fully in your learning experience. Collaborate with classmates, connect with your instructors, and intentionally participate in
the many activities and opportunities that you will encounter during your professional journey.

We look forward to working with you to pursue your educational goals!

SECTION II. FACULTY & STAFF

Dr. B. Jeanine Birdwell
Clinical Assistant Professor
Specialization: Educational diagnostician
361-825-3325
barbara.birdwell@tamucc.edu

Dr. Karen N. McCaleb
Professor, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies
Specialization: Extensive and pervasive support needs, inclusive practices
361-825-2449
karen.mccaleb@tamucc.edu

Dr. Phyllis Robertson
Associate Professor, Program Coordinator
Chair of Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Sciences
Specialization: Mild/moderate disabilities, multilingual/multicultural special education
361-825-3331
phyllis.robertson@tamucc.edu

Dr. Ashley P. Voggt
Assistant Professor
Specialization: Extensive and pervasive support needs, transition
361-825-2272
ashley.voggt@tamucc.edu

Ms. Diana Ramirez
Administrative Associate
Department of Teacher Education
361-825-5581
diana.ramirez@tamucc.edu

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SECTION III. LEARNING OUTCOMES

One of the primary goals of the M.S. in Special Education degree is to provide students with an eclectic program in special education that interfaces theory and pedagogy from both the special education and emergent bilingual education fields. Students receive specialized training that is unique and specific to the needs of students receiving special education services, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Students learn instructional methodology to address the needs of students with high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.

After successful completion of the program, our students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of the field of special education;
- plan and develop effective instructional interventions responsive to the unique needs of individual learners;
- plan and implement a behavior intervention plan to provide behavioral supports aligned with individual needs; and
- demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to provide culturally and linguistically sustaining instruction to students with disabilities.
## SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

### Application Requirements

Applicants should adhere to following deadlines:

#### Domestic Students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer I</th>
<th>Summer II</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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</table>

#### International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer I</th>
<th>Summer II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>February 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete Application:
- Apply for Admission via Apply Texas Application
- An applicant may defer admission to an earlier/later semester. Applications are valid for one year. One deferral is allowed per application.

Application Fee:
- $50 for US citizen, $70 for International Students
  - Pay during application process
  - Pay fee online: Pay Online
  - Pay fee on campus to Business Office

Please Note: Applicants who wish to apply for a different program will be required to submit a new application. The application processing fee is required for each application submitted.

### Additional International Applicant Requirements:

- Copy of current Visa (if applicable)
- English Language Proficiency. TAMUCC currently accepts the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) within the last 2 years:
  - Official TOEFL score minimum paper-based score of 550 or internet-based score of 79-80
  - Official IELTS score minimum 6.5
Program Admission

Graduate Admissions
To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. (Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor’s degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.) Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made via the following website: https://www.tamucc.edu/graduate-college/new-students/application-process.php. For complete information, see the Catalog, Graduate Admissions section.

General Requirements:

- Graduate Students in Special Education should have a GPA of 3.0 or above or pursue conditional admittance.
- Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate course work taken at any accredited college or University attended (Foreign College credits/transcripts require an official foreign evaluation.) TAMU-CC transcript is not required.
- Essay (Approximately 300-400 words in length which includes information about their reasons for pursuing graduate study and for choosing this specific graduate program).

*Please allow 3-5 business days to receive Student ID before submitting additional supporting documents.

Submit all supporting documents online.

Admission Review Process/Timeline
Degree and certification program applications are reviewed by program faculty. Admission decisions are typically made within one week of the program’s receipt of application materials.

Enrollment Status
Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran’s benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:
Full-time graduate student:  
Fall or spring term = 9 hours  
Combined summer terms = 6 hours

Three-quarter-time graduate student:  
Fall or spring term = 7 hours  
Combined summer terms = 5 hours

Half-time graduate student:  
Fall or spring term = 5 hours  
Combined summer terms = 3 hours

SECTION V. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

M.S. in Special Education

The M.S. in Special Education prepares educators to gain advanced expertise in culturally and linguistically sustaining special education services to support students with both high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.

In conjunction with the Special Education Master's Degree, opportunities are available to earn additional credentials:

Educational Diagnostician Certification
§239.84. Requirements for the Issuance of the Standard Educational Diagnostician Certificate.

To be eligible to receive the standard Educational Diagnostician Certificate, a candidate must:

(1) successfully complete an educational diagnostician preparation program that meets the requirements of §239.82 of this title (relating to Preparation Program Requirements) and §239.83 of this title (relating to Standards Required for the Educational Diagnostician Certificate);

(2) successfully complete the examination based on the standards identified in §239.83 of this title;

(3) hold, at a minimum, a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education that at the time was accredited or otherwise approved by an accrediting organization recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;

(4) hold a valid classroom teaching certificate; and

(5) have three creditable years of experience as a classroom teacher, as defined in Chapter 153, Subchapter CC, of this title (relating to Commissioner's Rules on Creditable Years of Service) and the Texas Education Code, §5.001(2).

Source: The provisions of this §239.84 adopted to be effective April 28, 2002, 27 TexReg 3351; amended to be effective December 23, 2009, 34 TexReg 9201; amended to be effective December 21, 2017, 42 TexReg

In addition to successful completion of all courses required for graduation, all students are required to successfully complete a 160 clock-hour practicum experience. Prior to the school field experience, students will need to submit to a criminal background check as required by each school district.

Prior to taking the state #253 Educational Diagnostician Certification exam, students are required to work with faculty and the COEHD Certification Office in preparation for the exam.

Low-Incidence Disabilities Transcripted Certificate

The LID Transcripted Certificate is an interdisciplinary program which prepares graduate students to address and support students with significant support needs through evidence-based practices. This 3-course certificate is offered to educators
in the field of special education and other related disciplines, such as: counseling, psychology, general education, and education administration.

To receive a LID transcripted certificate, the student must complete 9 semester hours of sequential coursework consisting of the following 3 courses in sequence:

- SPED 5319 - Introduction to Low-Incidence Disabilities
- SPED 5320 – Application of Learning Principles
- SPED 5321 – Supporting Access for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities
**Degree Plan**

All M.S. Special Education students must successfully complete no less than 36 semester credit hours to include: 9 semester credit hours of Foundation Courses, 15-21 (depending on past course work) semester credit hours of Core Courses including a field-based experience, and 6-12 semester credit hours of Elective Courses which can include the educational diagnostician certification option (if eligible) and/or the low-incidence disabilities transcripted certificate option.

Students must meet with a faculty advisor to develop degree plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foundation Courses</th>
<th>SCH 9</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDFN 5301</td>
<td>Introduction to Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIEM 5345 or BIEM 5346</td>
<td>Developmental Linguistics Pedagogic Implications of Bilingual-ESL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5385</td>
<td>English Learners and Special Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Core Courses</th>
<th>SCH 15-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5315*</td>
<td>Individuals with Exceptionalities in the Schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5320**</td>
<td>Application of Learning Principles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5340</td>
<td>Individuals with Multiple Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5380</td>
<td>Behavior Supports and Interventions for Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5386</td>
<td>Strategic Reading and Language Instruction for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5387</td>
<td>Strategic Math and Content Area Instruction for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5397 (for non-ed diag students)</td>
<td>Special Education Field Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5199/5399 (for ed diag students)</td>
<td>Individualized Programs for Students with Disabilities: Practicum</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Electives</th>
<th>SCH 6-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students may choose the educational diagnostician coursework, the low-incidence disabilities certificate, and/or other relevant electives.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ed Diag. Cert. Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5310</td>
<td>Psychoeducational Testing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 5311</td>
<td>Advanced Assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNEP 5371</td>
<td>Psychometrics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNEP 5374</td>
<td>Individual Intelligence Testing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LID Tran. Cert. Courses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 5319</td>
<td>Introduction to Low-Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5321</td>
<td>Supporting Access for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Educational Diagnostician Certificate Only:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>SCH 12-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIEM 5345 or BIEM 5346</td>
<td>Developmental Linguistics Pedagogic Implications of Bilingual-ESL</td>
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<td>SPED 5315*</td>
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<td>Application of Learning Principles</td>
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<td>Behavior Supports and Interventions for Students with Disabilities</td>
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**Educational Diagnostician Courses**

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5310</td>
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<td>Psychometrics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEP 5374</td>
<td>Individual Intelligence Testing</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*All students need to take SPED 5315 Individuals with Exceptionalities in Schools (3 sch); this requirement may be waived for currently certified teachers and those with a previously earned degree in special education if deemed appropriate after consultation with the faculty advisor.

**If not pursuing the LID transcripted certificate option, SPED 5320 may be waived if student took SPED 4335 or SPED 3335 as an undergraduate.

**Electives.** Elective courses are to be selected in consultation with faculty advisor.
Ed. Diag. Cert. SPED 5310 requires the following prerequisites: CNEP 5371 & CNEP 5374; SPED 5399 requires the following prerequisites: CNEP 5371, CNEP 5374, SPED 5310, SPED 5311, SPED 5315, SPED 5387.

LID Cert. SPED 5319, SPED 5320, and SPED 5321 (in sequence) are required for the LID Transcribed Certificate.

COURSEWORK MUST BE NO MORE THAN SEVEN (7) YEARS OLD.

Course Sequence

The M.S. in Special Education program consists of a minimum of 36 semester credit hours. Students may pursue the Educational Diagnostician certificate (must meet TEA requirements), the Low-Incidence Disabilities (LID) transcribed certificate, or choose other relevant electives – in consultation with their advisor - as part of their specially designed degree plan. Students must work with their faculty advisor to develop the degree plan scope and sequence.

The following course schedule is tentative. Course offerings may vary by semester. Check the catalog each semester for course offerings and additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Courses</th>
<th>SCH</th>
<th>FA</th>
<th>SPR</th>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>BIEM 5345 or BIEM 5346</td>
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<td>BIEM 5345</td>
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<td>SPED 5385</td>
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Core Courses

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<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Program Electives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LID Cert. Courses</strong></td>
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<td>Introduction to Low-Incidence Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 5321</td>
<td>Supporting Access for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities</td>
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**Exit Requirements**

Students pursuing the M.S. in Special Education must be successful in completing the Benchmark Assessments as specified in each course syllabus.

Students are also required to complete a field-based course and pass a comprehensive written examination taken during their final semester of enrollment.

Any student seeking state certification, must complete a test preparation process under the supervision of program faculty in collaboration with the Certification Office.
**General Information**

**Continuation of Enrollment**
The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, students should be aware of their own program’s requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master’s students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

**Leave of Absence**
Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a Leave of Absence in writing from the College of Graduate Studies using the Request for Leave of Absence form. A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the faculty advisor, Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of time of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

**Maximum Course Load**
Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester, 6 hours in a single session of summer school, or 12 hours in the combined summer session (not including Maymester) without the approval of the appropriate college dean. See the Maximum Course Load section in the catalog.

**Repetition of a Course**
There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information can be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog.

**Time Limit to Degree**
The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of
the college offering the degree, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

**Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit**
In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend to information in the catalog (see Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog). Revalidation requests should be made using the Revalidation Request Form. The request form must be accompanied by a written justification, updated degree plan, and documentation to be used for revalidation. All revalidation requests and plans must be approved by the student’s advisor, department chair, academic college Dean, Graduate Dean, and Provost.

If your program has shorter time-to-degree limits, it may impact recency of credit and other timelines. See program information in this handbook or seek information from your Program Coordinator.

**Academic Requirements for Graduate Work**

**Good Standing.** Graduate Students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students are considered in “good academic standing” if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal can be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. For information regarding the financial impact of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the Financial Assistance Suspension Policy in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

**Academic Integrity**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, or collusion in any of these behaviors. All students should familiarize themselves with the full Academic Integrity Policy as well as the processes and procedures used to address violations thereof. You can find additional information in the Academic Integrity section of the catalog. Students can also access University Rules and Procedures 13.02.99.C0.04: Student Academic Misconduct Cases.

SECTION VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Student Development**

**Student Organizations.** Students are encouraged to fully participate in our University organizations and professional field. Our University hosts Chapter #328 of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. The Graduate Resource and
**Opportunity Workspace (GROW),** through the College of Graduate Studies, provides professional development activities, resources, and events for graduate students.

Students are also encouraged to participate in **Best Buddies** an international organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

**Program/College Awards.** The College of Graduate Studies sponsors annual awards including the Outstanding Master’s Student Award.

**Conferences to Attend.** Students are encouraged to attend and present at local, state and national conferences. Conference attendance and proposal submissions are discussed and supported throughout the program courses. Funding support may be available.

**Campus Resources.** Students are encouraged to take advantage of Student Health Services and Counseling Services available on campus.

*We are looking forward to our journey together!*