A History of The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CBSS) was created in the summer of 2006. Dr. Elwood L. Robinson, Professor of Psychology, was appointed Interim Dean, and Dr. LaVerne Reid, Associate Professor of Public Health, was named as Interim Associate Dean. Dr. Elwood L. Robinson was appointed permanently to the position as Dean at the beginning of the 2007-08 academic year. Under the leadership of Dean Robinson, the College has begun to fulfill the very special purpose for which it was created.

The creation of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences represents a transformation in how we think about education and training at NCCU. Increasingly, the most pressing and emergent population health challenges necessitate collaboration between the biomedical and social and behavioral sciences. The solution to our biggest health challenges may depend on whether scientists from the biomedical and behavioral and social sciences are able to learn each other’s language, listen across gulfs that separate their sciences, and forge a new conceptual synthesis across their disciplinary boundaries. “Behavioral and social sciences stand at a crossroads, bridging biology and the environment, linking basic and applied science, and informing national policy,” said OBSSR Director David Abrams, Ph.D. “Critical challenges face our national health agenda, including aging baby boomers, chronic diseases, and health disparities. About 70 percent of our health outcomes involve behavior at individual, group, and societal levels. Investments in socio-behavioral research have already paid off and can yield enormous future benefits, not only in economic terms but also in preventing death and suffering.”

The purpose of CBSS is to be responsive to the rapidly changing world of science, technology, societal needs, and our ever changing political and economic structures that provide the very foundation of our existence. The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences positions NCCU to become a major player in this ever-changing and dynamic landscape.

Departments

The departments in the CBSS represent a broad spectrum of behavioral and social science disciplines. The college is home to over one-third of the University’s students, with a population of almost 2800. The Departments are Criminal Justice, Human Sciences, Physical Education and Recreation, Political Science, Psychology, Public Administration, Public Health Education, Social Work, and Sociology.

College Priorities

The priorities of the CBSS are consistent with those of the University: to increase and improve retention, graduation, and placement rates; to achieve accreditation; to give quality customer service; to foster internationalization of the curriculum and University; and to establish appropriate and adequate use of technology and other innovative pedagogy. Therefore, the University has the following goals:

- To sustain excellent, innovative teaching, learning and research in an environment grounded in intellectual discovery and community service;
- To enhance the rigor and relevance of existing degree programs while developing new programs to meet the evolving needs of society;
- To build upon NCCU’s history of addressing the needs of underserved groups through innovative outreach efforts and effective retention strategies;
- To systematically increase public and private financial support and expand collaborative partnerships;
- To increase NCCU’s participation and presence locally, nationally and internationally to enhance the University’s image;
- To promote the use of integrated information technology in academic and administrative functions;
- To ensure that appropriate facilities are available in requisite quality and quantity;
- To implement a University-wide Continuous Improvement Process to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

Major Strengths and Accomplishments

Academic Programs

One of the major strengths of the CBSS academic programs is the progress we have made in achieving major accreditation or reaffirmations and first time accreditations. The College now has the following accredited programs: Athletic Trainer – Department of Physical Education (Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs; Joint Review Committee on Educational Athletic Training); Criminal Justice (North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission); Dietetics – Department of Human Sciences (Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education); Health Education (Society of Public Health Education; American Association for Health Education; Parks and Recreation –
Scientific Productivity

- The CBSS faculty were very productive this academic year with publications of 31 articles in major scientific journals, 7 books, and 89 scientific presentations. Researchers secured $1,350,000 in sponsored research funding. Sociology Department’s Professor Vickie Lamb is believed to be the first NCCU faculty member to have an article published in the Journal of the National Academy of Science with her co-authored paper “Long-Term Trends in Life Expectancy and Active Life Expectancy in the United States.” Kenneth G. Manton1, XiLiang Gu2, & Vicki L. Lamb.
- One third of the NCCU faculty receiving research and scholarly awards this year was from the CBSS.
- The most gratifying outcome in this area was that 161 students attended and presented at scientific conferences this year.

Major Research Areas

- Health Disparities
- Juvenile Justice
- Homeland Security
- College Drinking Initiative Research
- AIDS
- Cardiovascular Research
- Cancer Research
- Diet and Nutrition

Departmental Changes

The name of the Department of Health Education was changed to The Department of Public Health Education. The field of public health is rapidly changing, however, as are the educational and scientific environments that shape academic health institutions. NCCU’s Department of Health Education has been highly responsive to these changes and the growing trends in our profession. To build on this tradition of responsiveness to emerging trends and opportunities, the name was changed to reflect the “public” nature of the profession.

This fresh emphasis on “public” health is influenced by many factors: greater public awareness of health issues and the importance of prevention, greater access to information through technological innovations, greater perceived health threats (i.e. flu pandemic) from regions outside our own communities, greater concerns about the global health consequences of environmental degradation (i.e. water and air pollution), and greater shifts and immigrations of populations from one region of the world to another. The addition of “public” to our name is more inclusive and reflects the name of our national professional standards and credentialing organization, the Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE). The name also reflects the platform used in many departments and programs in schools of public health around the country including Indiana University, The Center for Public Health Education at Stony Brook University, Central Michigan University, the Center for Public Health Education and Outreach at the University of Minnesota, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The Social Work program was elevated to departmental status and a new MSW program was approved by UNC General Administration. The mission of the Master of Social Work program at North Carolina Central University will affirm the social work tradition of promoting social and economic justice. The MSW program at North Carolina Central University will differ significantly from those of other MSW programs in North Carolina. Existing programs in North Carolina generally have a clinical focus where the emphasis is upon creating therapists who will work within a controlled environment offering treatment to clients defined as being dysfunctional according to conventional or mainstream American values. Our program at North Carolina Central University will embrace an empowerment model that values diversity and seeks to understand those environmental systems which either facilitate or impede healthy relationships among individuals, groups and society.

International Activities

- Dr. Harvey McMurray (Criminal Justice) led a delegation to Uganda and Kenya.
- The Public Administration Department has entered into preliminary discussions to form a partnership with the government of Liberia. This partnership will provide MPA students with practical experience in the leadership of an agency at the central government level and at the local government level.
- Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) students were part of a delegation to China and South Africa.
- Faculty and students in Public Health Education are currently in Ghana.
Agatha Carroo (Psychology) participated in the Oxford Roundtable summer 2006.

One Major Accomplishment per Department

There were several noteworthy accomplishments in each department this academic and fiscal year. For a complete listing, you are referred to the CBSS 2006-2007 annual report.

Criminal Justice - established Institute for Homeland Security and Workforce Development

Human Sciences - prepared seven (7) accreditation reports this academic year

Physical Education and Recreation – had four books and five articles published by six faculty members

Political Science - organized a Summer Pre-Law Institute and implemented a university archive (the James David Barber Collection)

Psychology - established an Institutional Review Board; State-wide undergraduate research conference (host for fourth consecutive year)

Public Administration – established an Executive Masters Program in Public Administration; International Masters in Public Administration with Liberia.

Public Health Education – realized the Eagle Pride Blood Drives’ ascent to its highest level of donations ever, 1,202 pints of blood. In addition, 733 students added their names to the blood marrow registry, and 900 students were tested for sickle cell trait.

Social Work - Achieved departmental status and gained approval for MSW.

Sociology - Developed a proposal to start a Survey Research Center.

Student Achievements

The CBSS is proud to have produced some of the University’s most outstanding scholars and leaders. Erica Purkett, social work major, received this year’s Chancellor’s award for academic excellence. Latoya K. Tate, physical education and recreation major, was voted Miss NCCU. Tomasi Larry, political science major, was voted SGA president.

Major Initiatives

Administrative Internship Program

The Academic Administrative Internship Program is a program designed to encourage and prepare faculty in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences to become involved in administration. A proposed outcome will be that interns will develop fresh perspectives and resources that will ultimately benefit their respective departments.

Survey Research Center

The Survey Research Center will provide the structure and leadership for much of the research that is conducted throughout the college and the University. The interdisciplinary social science research center will involve the collection or analysis of data from scientific sample surveys. First, this involves conducting basic and applied empirical survey-based research that is theoretically informed. The Center will seek to bring empiricism to bear on problems that are of both social and scientific importance. Second, but no less important, the Center’s leadership will involve the development, refinement, and propagation of the scientific method of survey research through teaching and training.

Major Challenges

While I would assess the health of the College as very good, there are still some challenges that we face in elevating it to excellent status. These areas are listed below.

• Space – Sociology, Social Work, and Political Science share a building with limited space for teaching, faculty offices, and research. Criminal Justice and Public Administration have similar problems;
• Improving and increasing faculty development and productivity;
• Increasing sponsored research dollars;
• Increasing and retaining students;
• Professional development for students and faculty;
• Recruiting national student scholars;
• Increasing the quantity and quality of graduate education;
• Improving the quality of support staff;
• Staff development and training.

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September 29, 2008