



A GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

GROWING PEOPLE, JOBS, & COMMUNITIES

UW-Eau Claire: Improving the Lives of Families Living with Autism and Other Disabilities

Brief summary: This initiative funds an expansion of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program. Applied behavior analysts give hope and support to families living with autism and other developmental disabilities and help improve the quality of their lives.

Why is it needed?

Diagnoses of autism in Wisconsin children have increased at an alarming rate over the last several years. Studies have shown that early intervention can reduce the levels and amount of intervention needed, offering substantial cost savings to the public. Most importantly, this treatment can significantly increase the quality of life of autistic children and their families. Currently, there is a two-year waiting list for children with autism to receive early intervention services, largely due to the short supply of qualified ABA practitioners in the state. Wisconsin lags behind other states in the size and quality of the ABA training programs offered as well as the number of analysts working in the field.

How does this proposal meet the need?

Individuals can be certified at both the undergraduate level (BCABA) and the Masters level (BCBA). UW-Eau Claire currently offers training in behavior analysis at the BCABA level and intends to expand its program to allow for certification at the BCBA level as well. UW-Eau Claire must augment its staffing and infrastructure to achieve this end. Given the requested level of funding, UW-Eau Claire will be able to continue to produce BCABAs and begin to produce BCBA's.

What are the outcomes/benefits?

This program will begin to fill the growing gap in intervention services for people with autism and other disabilities. As more and more ABA students graduate, the waiting lists for desperately needed services will be shortened, and perhaps someday eliminated. It will also allow the UW System to attract and retain skilled graduate students who will enter this high-demand employment field in Wisconsin once graduated. Upon full program implementation, there will be a substantial increase in undergraduate students eligible to sit for the BCABA national examination in addition to newly admitted students in the BCBA program. This expansion will make UW-Eau Claire highly competitive for funding from multiple external sources, including the National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Education, and a variety of foundation grants and private donations.

- Upon full implementation, enroll 14 graduate students in the BCBA program and graduate 20 undergraduates in Applied Behavior Analysis each year;
- Supporting Funds: It is anticipated that this expanded ABA program will make UW-Eau Claire highly competitive for federal, foundation, and private dollars.

Estimated ongoing cost: \$941,800 (\$612,200 GPR/\$329,600 Fees)

For more information: Contact Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich, 715-836-2327