

Description

Please provide a description of the Effective Practice.

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS), College of Health Sciences, offers post professional practicing clinicians the opportunity to further their careers through an online graduate program leading to an academic terminal degree in education, the Doctor of Education (EdD). The program focuses on “foundational health sciences and concepts, sound decision-making, and strong clinical/educational skill development” (USAHS Academics, 2019). This program is unique in that it is designed for practitioners, educators, and administrators who want to assume or advance their careers in healthcare education, administration, or leadership” (Doctor of Education Program, 2019).

At USAHS, the typical dissertation process for doctoral students has been transformed into a unique and successful effective practice through the development of a Concierge Support Model. This effective practice promotes Doctoral Student Efficacy, Persistence, and Matriculation in an Online Program by offering an individualized, student-focused process to support students in their preparation, progress, and achievement. The shift to the Concierge Support Model commenced in 2016 with implementation of a personalized advising focus, expanded with the personalized residency experience in 2017, and reached full implementation as an effective practice with the first cohort entering doctoral candidate status during the Summer Trimester 2018.

The effective practice combines one on one continuous advising, a mentoring process threaded through the program, and unique interactions with faculty and staff through online courses, Interprofessional Education, optional immersions, and two required residencies, occurring at the beginning of the program (within the first year) and then prior to taking the final course, Dissertation Research Preparation (DRP), a class designed to prepare students for the dissertation sequencing as well as finish out competency completion including the comprehensive exams.

This practice offers the best educational value as it not only supports enrollment but also builds relationships with learners that create a support system in which barriers are reduced and learners graduate in less time than in a traditional model. Furthermore, faculty serving on committees supporting learners to stay on the right path to successful completion, leading to goal attainment in their careers. A learner begins with a student advisor who stays with him or her throughout the time as a doctoral student. Once a learner transitions to a candidate, he or she then transitions to a doctoral advisor, who walks the path with the student until graduation. Both the student advisor and the doctoral advisor serve as a student representative, mentor, and guide, adapting services to individual student needs. It is important to note that the effective practice begins day one of the program. The core foundation is solidified during their first residency and continuously built on through individual interactions provided by all members of the doctoral team.

The model includes: 1) A Unique Advising Model of Mentoring and Coaching; 2) Specialized Residency Experiences; 3) A Guided Dissertation Process; and 4) Committee Members Trained in the Concierge Model. With use of this effective model, students, who may otherwise feel disconnected or at risk of not completing the program, are offered a pathway to success.

Learning Effectiveness

Please describe how the practice demonstrates effectiveness in producing learning outcomes, which are consistent with learner needs and representative of the distinctive quality of the institution. 500 word limit.

The Concierge Support Model is aligned with each of the seven Learning Outcomes stated for the Doctor of Education (EdD) program at USAHS (see additional support).

The two on-campus residencies allow faculty, community, and students to connect and engage in a face- to-face setting during an immersive and focused time frame. During the several days, students are exposed to presentations and open panel discussions from faculty, advisors, and administrators allowing for sharing of strategies, promotion of models for success, and guided practice in a personalized environment. With Q&A sessions, students may gain additional knowledge through direct response as well as follow up from faculty and a building of trust and feeling of support in care and consideration for each learner. Each residency includes specific time allotted for individual attention provided to each student in attendance and focus on initial consideration for research study.

Dr. David Edwards, now a successful graduate of the USAHS Doctor of Education program and a faculty member at another university, communicates in his Letter of Support how he believes that “this is a unique model for delivering graduate level education and believe that more programs should consider this educational format.” He shares, similar to other students, how the objectives of the program and the components of the effective practice model were clear, and he did not feel there was wasted learning or time in his study. Dr. Edwards shares that though completing a doctoral level degree is a difficult task, he found the model and program made it so “students could thrive in the program” and that this model “created an opportunity that I may have never had with a more traditional format.”

From her video testimonial, Brieanne Sequin, a faculty member teaching athletic training at another university, describes how what she is learning in the Doctor of Education program ties in with sharing effective clinical practices with her own students. Also, she shares how she is able to work full time while earning her doctorate and continue to contribute to the field and the success of her own learners. She further shares how the program is student orientated.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgfvvUmBuE&list=PLHHzCU7Xd510Cc3S9r_Eq9AJRH620yFjQ&index=7

From the results of the 2018 Post Professional Student Satisfaction Results, 38 students in the Ed.D. program at USAHS offered the following responses at the Very Satisfied or Satisfied level (combined): Level of Satisfaction for Course and Faculty by Program:
Courses I took were taught well 84%

There is good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions 84%

Faculty in my program are interested in the professional development of graduate students 93%

Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students 93%

Faculty provide timely feedback about my progress 93%
My program has high academic standards 96%
My program integrates current developments in my field 90%
My program is preparing me well for the profession 93%
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with experiences as a student at USAHS? 92%
Reference
Doctor of education. (2019). USAHS. Retrieved from <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/doctor-of-education-edd/>

Scale

Please describe how the practice offers the best possible educational value to learners and supports achieving capacity enrollment. 500 word limit.

As demonstrated in the literature (see supporting documentation), doctoral students need to be engaged and connected to the community as well as feel supported emotionally in their learning and work to have a greater chance of success. Through the Concierge Support Model, students receive individualized and personalized attention and guidance which then promotes retention in the program. Such a model also encourages continued persistence. This model focuses on building individual relationships among students, staff, faculty and administration with focused guidance on student goals, resulting in persistence and retention and overall success for students. Throughout the programs, students are able to maintain focus on achieving goals while reducing monies lost to time off or remediation in classes or withdrawal from the program.

Additionally, retention of learners in the doctoral program produces revenue for the institution and increases success rates thus promoting the learning effectiveness goals of professional growth, leadership development, contribution to the literature, and practicing effective teaching and/or leadership skills all with the connection to USAHS.

If students achieve and are satisfied with their experience, then they will continue on in the program as well as provide testimonials to others in support of the program. Dissertation research allows students to address a real-world problem or make an original contribution to a body of knowledge in their field promoting the further engagement into the learning content as well as finding purpose and personal connection to the academic work and its relationship beyond the degree. Faculty who have engaged with the Concierge Support Model can clearly see the results of the individualized and personalized work with students through the increased rapport and communication with learners and in the deeper learning and commitment to the work, rather than just checking off boxes. This leads to requests for further engagement with faculty. As such, faculty are more satisfied with their role and see meaning and value that, in turn, further promotes the model to increase value to the learners.

Connection of electives to specialty areas, such as Nursing Education, Athletic Training, Teaching and Learning, and Executive Leadership, result in additional value in professional and industry related areas. Utilizing the Concierge Support Model, not only do students attain excellence in education, but they also achieve additional value in the relationships created, the support provided, and the depth of learning provided.

With an ultimate focus on student success and the opportunity to achieve the dissertation completion a semester early with waived tuition, the monetary commitment is decreased while the value of the education is increased through the content and model of instruction.

Access

Please describe how the practice has improved access to education by expanding opportunities and/or reducing barriers. 500 word limit.

The Doctor of Education program at USAHS offers an expansion of opportunities to those who are current health care practitioners to then obtain a doctoral degree in Education. Such a degree will afford those who are subject matter experts in Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Physical Therapy, and other areas of great shortage of faculty in higher education the education and credentials to then teach at colleges and universities. However, just offering the degree is not enough. Successful completion of the degree, as supported by the effective practice at USAHS of the Concierge Support Model: Promoting Doctoral Student Efficacy, Persistence, and Matriculation in an Online Program, is what opens the door and gives access to those who wish to serve future learners.

As evident in the Letters of Support, doctoral candidate Kate Grevelding describes without such an online program as the one at USAHS she would not have had access to working on and soon completing her doctorate. Dr. Grevelding (a practicing Doctor of Physical Therapy) describes her need for the health care-focused program and the need to not move her family. Also, she shares how without the effective practice model, and due to the online nature of the program and the intensity of the doctoral level work, she may not have persisted let alone achieved.

Dr. David Edwards discloses how if not for the support and flexibility of the program and due to his full- time position and family obligations, he would not be able to have completed the program successfully. Dr. Edwards offers how the non-traditional format of professors and staff accommodating “busy professionals” led to his achievement.

From the Letters of Support, doctoral candidate and full-time professor at another institution, Dr. Jamie Greco, offers evidence of access similar to Dr. Grevelding. She shares how there is a shortage of “physical therapy faculty who hold a terminal academic doctoral degree in the United States” and how the program opens access to those with the goal of such degree attainment as well as access to learners in programs in great need of credentialed and experienced faculty. The effective practice model, through support and guidance and meaningful structure for students, not only offers access to those in the USAHS program but learners across the nation.

The EdD Program at USAHS is offered as an online program with the requirement of two on-campus residencies. The University has five campus located across California, Texas, and Florida, allowing students more flexibility to attend the residencies. Along with access to physical participation in residencies and online participation in higher education, the effective practice promotes an environment where students, faculty, staff, and administration collaborate in a student-focused environment to ensure that students are able to focus on and achieve their goals.

Faculty Satisfaction

Please describe how the practice activities has maintained a high level of faculty satisfaction. 500 word limit.

Faculty who are asked to serve in the role of Committee Chair and Committee Member are also included in the Concierge Support Model. While a requirement to serve in these roles is the completion of a training webinar, this webinar is unique as it not only focuses on the role as part of the Dissertation Committee, it is framed in the Concierge Support Model to ensure that the transition for students from advising and doctoral student status to doctoral candidate status is seamless and is continuously supported with one to one interaction and communication.

Reference the letter of support from Dr. Michelle McCraney to which she notes that she sees the effective practice as an opportunity for faculty as facilitators to integrate the Community of Inquiry framework into the online class learning environment. Also, she references how the collaborative effort of the model creates student success which, in turn, fosters faculty satisfaction.

Faculty who participate as Committee Chairs and Members within the Concierge Support Model reflect that the support they receive is unparalleled in their other experiences. The addition of the Dissertation Advisor who not only serves in a support and mentoring role for students but also in a support and collegial role with faculty is one that many have commented they have not experienced before. The feedback from faculty has been excellent.

Amy C. Hammock, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Stony Brook University

“Working as a faculty member on Jamie’s dissertation committee has been a wonderful experience. Each time I met with Jamie during the dissertation process – from proposal development, to data collection, to data analysis -- she was fully prepared, engaged, and ready to move forward to the next stage. I credit much of her strong progression to the Concierge Support Model, in which she met weekly with her dissertation advisor to discuss tasks completed and next steps. This individualized, intensive support helped Jamie to avoid the lulls that sometimes happen in doctoral studies, especially those with an online component. I would serve on another dissertation committee at the University of St. Augustine for the Health Sciences.”

Bill Ganza, Ed.D.
University of St Augustine for Health Sciences

One of the biggest challenges for students in a doctoral program is completing the dissertation. Many doctoral candidates leave their programs ABD but never finish the dissertation. The Concierge Support Model at USAHS reduces the non-completion rate by keeping students in contact with the program. Students stay focused on their research, thus making them more successful. More institutions should look at support models like the one at USAHS.

Karen Snyder, PhD, OTR/L
University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences

The Concierge Support Model offered at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences provides a student the opportunity to receive support and feedback to foster growth as health science

educators. This individualized support focuses on the student's learning style and feedback preference to ensure movement through the dissertation process. The eliminates the fear of the student maintaining the status "all but dissertation".

Student Satisfaction

Please describe how learners who are impacted by the practice express satisfaction with their learning experience. 500 word limit.

From the Letters of Support provided, USAHS doctoral student, Dr. Kate Grevelding, who has achieved much in her educational journey thus far with her multiple health practitioner degrees, shares the great satisfaction she has had with the effective practice of the Concierge Support Model. In her letter, Dr. Grevelding describes how she feels there is great support provided by faculty, especially now as a candidate with weekly check-ins with her dissertation advisor. Additionally, she shares how the Model has been developed in a way where faculty go beyond the traditional timelines of and forms of communication typical to other doctoral programs. Dr. Grevelding sites the numerous ways she connects with her dissertation committee members utilizing several communication tools and at various points of the day – even late at night. Additionally, Dr. Grevelding shares how the previous opportunities to connect with fellow learners, especially through Residencies, created a network she utilizes for support and to continue her professional connections and learning.

Also from the Letters of Support, Dr. Jamie Greco, who is a full-time faculty member at Stony Brook University serving students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, imparts how she chose to continue her own education and, after research into various programs, chose the Doctor of Education program at USAHS. In her final semester with intentions to graduate summer 2019, Dr. Greco offers that she was greatly satisfied with the effective practice of the Concierge Support Model at USAHS and found the Residency in her first year of study key as it was the foundation for setting upon her dissertation topic work and to motivate her continued progression. Also, she offers how the connection with other students, though in a fully online program, has formed close relationships. Further, Dr. Greco states that the effective practice with individualized and personalized interactions and check-ins with faculty and dissertation committee members, as well as the chair, gave her the "tools to keep me on schedule".

A USAHS faculty member in the Occupational Therapy Program, Kayla Collins, decided to pursue her doctoral degree in the Doctor of Education. She based her decision on the connections with those at the institution and because of her satisfaction with the quality of education at the university. Her testimonial is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTb9-bvCW-M&index=4&list=PLHHzCU7Xd510Cc3S9r_Eq9AJRH620yFjQ

In addition, faculty report that beyond graduation, students are initiating continued conversations with faculty and expanding relationships as colleagues. In Virtual Information Sessions, it is common to hear a prospective student to mention the name of a current or recently graduated student as the one who suggested he or she attend.

Estimated Costs

Please describe any estimated costs, including equipment needed, associated with implementing and maintaining the practice.

The concierge support model utilizes e-mail communication among faculty, staff and students along with a foundational framework presented and implemented within a LMS. Faculty use free communication tools, as well, such as Zoom, Voxer, Facetime, Skype, and text to ensure open communication with students and colleagues.

Other programs who wish to replicate this model would need the time and resources for administration, dissertation chairs and faculty as well as support staff such as advisors to adapt the models to fit their unique needs. The residency component can also be replicated, employing the standards and objectives for other institutions' programs based on the residency framework at USAHS.

While implementation of this model may predominantly be a shift in resources rather than the addition of new resources, it could include the addition of the position of Dissertation Advisor dedicated to individual work with students, which may be an additional expense. It would also include the addition of resources to redesign the dissertation process, the residency process and committee member training. Continuance of the model once implemented would not require additional resources beyond those required for initial implementation.