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For immediate release

Ouachita to offer Master of Arts degree in applied behavior analysis

By Felley Lawson

November 8, 2022

For more information, contact Ouachita's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University is preparing to offer Arkansas' first Master of Arts degree program in applied behavior analysis – an additional option to the university's existing Master of Science degree. The M.A. program will launch in Fall 2023, pending Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Verified Course Sequence (VCS) approvals.

The HLC is Ouachita's accrediting agency; additionally, VCS status is conferred by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI).

Approved by Ouachita faculty Oct. 11., the M.A. degree program replaces the graduate certificate in ABA previously offered by the university. Ouachita's M.A. and M.S. degrees are the first full graduate programs in ABA to be offered in Arkansas. The low-residency programs include one on-campus intensive; the rest of the coursework is completed online. Applications are open Jan. 1-May 1, 2023, for enrollment beginning in August 2023.

“As one of few faith-based institutions to offer master's degrees in ABA, and the first in the state of Arkansas, Ouachita is proud to provide a high-quality, comprehensive degree program in an effort to address the shortage of BCBA®s in the state and around the country,” said Dr. Julyse Migan-Gandonou

Horr, director of Ouachita's ABA program. "We're training the next generation of compassionate, quality-driven scientist-practitioners who will be committed to the field and to serving their communities."

Students can complete the 36-hour M.A. degree pathway in 22 months. There's no requirement or commitment to accrue fieldwork hours; no thesis or capstone project is required, although M.A. students must complete an applied research project during their final two semesters.

The M.A. in ABA degree program is an ideal option for those who work in settings that use ABA outside of autism/intellectual and developmental disabilities (AU/IDD) such as schools, nursing homes, psychiatric units, foster care, group homes or substance abuse treatment facilities, as well as for students who plan to stay in professional practice once they become BCBA[®]s but do not wish to pursue a Ph.D. or conduct research.

"Our program offers these professionals a pathway to earning a Master of Arts degree in ABA while working in their existing preferred setting and to accruing supervised fieldwork experience at their own pace, independent of Ouachita," Horr said.

In contrast, the M.S. program does require supervised fieldwork experience through one of Ouachita's clinical partners as well as a thesis or capstone project. It is ideal for students seeking to take the BCBA[®] exam right after graduation.

Courses offered include Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Behavioral Assessment, Ethical & Professional Issues in ABA, Subspecialties of ABA and Behavior-Change Procedures. Horr said that all are taught by highly skilled, qualified, caring and engaged faculty members with more than 40 years' combined ABA experience.

To learn more about Ouachita's new M.A. degree program in applied behavior analysis, visit obu.edu/aba or contact Horr at horrij@obu.edu or at (870) 245-4893.