March 2, 2012

Dr. Melinda Ault
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling
University of Kentucky
229 Taylor Education Building
Lexington, KY  40506-0001

Dear Dr. Ault:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the proposed Graduate Certificate Program in Autism Spectrum Disorders that will be presented for approval by the faculty in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling next month. The proposed program will help address an increasing need for individuals with knowledge and expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorders.

As proposed, the majority of the certificate will be delivered in an online, synchronous format using Adobe Connect software during the summer months. This delivery model will be extremely helpful in recruiting prospective students who have an interest in autism spectrum disorders. I also applaud the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed program. Having faculty in the Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology in the College of Education and faculty in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences in the College of Health Sciences involved with course development and instruction can only strengthen the curriculum and experiences available to students in the program. These partnerships also model the importance of collaboration in course development and co-teaching for both P-12 and higher education faculty.

The development of this new certificate program is especially timely. Currently, no program in the college has a specific focus on autism spectrum disorders. Given the growing numbers of individuals currently diagnosed with these disorders, it is critically important that the College of Education provide opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge and expertise in this area. The audience for this certificate program could be practicing teachers and education professionals, pre-service teacher candidates, parents, and others who need specific training for working with this complex population of students.

In summary, I am extremely supportive of this proposed certificate program and would like to commit the resources of my office to facilitate approval and successful implementation of the program.

Sincerely,

Mary John O’Hair
Professor and Dean
March 5, 2012

Dr. Melinda Ault
University of Kentucky
Dept. of Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling
229 Taylor Education Bldg.
Lexington, KY 40506-0001

Dear Dr. Ault,

This letter is to state my support for the new Graduate Certification in Autism to be offered through our department. The department has the faculty with the expertise to support this graduate certificate. In addition, I am pleased that this will be a collaborative effort between our department and the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling as well as the Department of Communication Disorders. I believe that this certificate will meet a regional and state need to prepare teachers to work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and has the capacity to attract a large number of students in the summer when there is a paucity of coursework offered for teachers wishing to advance in rank. Thank you so much for your work on this certificate.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dolva C. Collins, Ed.D.
Chair and Professor
February 27, 2012

Courses and Curriculum Committee  
College of Education

Dr. Lisa Ruble (EDP) and Dr.s Spriggs, Knight, and Ault (EDSRC) are developing a new Graduate Certificate Program with a specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). One course that will be a part of this proposed certificate is a consultation course “designed to provide advanced/specialized training in consultation with teachers, parents, administrators, and other school and community personnel for the purpose of preventing / alleviating learning and adjustment difficulties as well as facilitating learning outcomes of individuals with ASD.”

EDP already has a course (EDP 671) Seminar in Psychoeducational Consultation in the Schools which our School Psychology students typically take to help them gain experience in how to prevent and alleviate learning and adjustment difficulties for school-age children. The specific focus of EDP 671 is subject to change and therefore, with proper labeling and advising, can easily be adapted to support the proposed ASD Graduate Certificate. As chair of EDP, I am in favor of using EDP 671 (see attached syllabus) as part of the certificate. Please let me know if there is anything else that I can do to help get this certificate approved.

Sincerely,

Fred Danner  
Professor and Chair  
Dept. of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology
February 22, 2012

Melinda Ault, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education

Dear Dr. Ault:

I am writing in support of your proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Autism. With the growing population of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and the unique challenges faced by the individuals and their families, I believe such a program is both timely and necessary. I am proud that UK will be taking a leading role in preparing graduates to provide person-centered, potentially life-changing education and interventions.

The interdisciplinary nature of the Certificate is also quite timely. The College of Health Sciences is an integral part of the UK Center for Interprofessional Healthcare Education, Research and Practice. We clearly understand that education and communication are essential components of health, even if not often traditionally considered “healthcare,” and we are very pleased that faculty from our Communication Sciences and Disorders Division plan to play a role in the Certificate by teaching in the Communication, AAC, and Technology for Students with ASDs course. We are committed to working with you to address the financial arrangements that can make this happen.

In summary, I enthusiastically support your Graduate Certificate and look forward to our Department’s role in its success.

Sincerely,

Janice Kuperstein, PhD, PT
Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences
February 22, 2012

Mellinda Ault, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education
CAMPUS

Dear Dr. Ault:

On behalf of the College of Health Sciences, I offer enthusiastic support for the proposed Graduate Certificate Program in the area of Autism. As you know, our College has had a close relationship with the Department of Special Education that spans many years, resulting in a variety of educational and research opportunities for our faculty and students. This Program represents yet another collaborative effort. The interprofessional approach to developing and offering this program is consistent with our present understanding about best practices in the assessment and intervention for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), a highly complex disability.

Faculty in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program were involved in developing an interprofessional 600-level course entitled “Communication, AAC, and Technology for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.” It is clear that language and communication disabilities are hallmarks of individuals with ASD, so it is appropriate speech-language pathologists would share their expertise with special educators to develop this course. It is proposed that faculty in our College will co-teach this course with special education faculty. Although the particulars of this plan have not yet been specified, I am confident that a mutually satisfactory arrangement can be made between the two colleges.

This Certificate Program will benefit students and faculty in our college. College graduate and professional students pursuing careers as physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and physician assistants are likely to encounter patients or clients with autism spectrum disorders, particularly in light of the increasing numbers of individuals diagnosed with ASD. Taking one or more courses in this program will allow our graduates to provide more effective assessment and intervention for these individuals. Students in our Rehabilitation Sciences Ph.D. program are likely to find this Certificate Program attractive as part of their course of study. Not only will they learn more about the assessment and treatment of individuals with ASD, but the course content, clinical experience, and opportunity to interact with faculty experts from a variety of disciplines who study and conduct research in the area of autism may lead to rich opportunities for advanced study and scholarly activity for both students and faculty.
I am excited and pleased that our faculty members are participating in the proposed Program, and I endorse it wholeheartedly. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist in any way.

Warm regards,

[Signature]

Sharon R. Stewart, Ed.D.
Interim Dean and Professor