SACS COC™

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

May 17, 2018

Dr. T. Rhett Brown
President
Wingate University
220 North Camden Street
Campus Box 3055
Wingate, NC 28174

Dear Dr. Brown:

Thank you for your letter of December 13, 2017, transmitting the prospectus for offering the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree program in Educational Leadership via distance learning methodology, effective fall 2018.

Wingate University plans to offer an online version of the existing Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for the first time in August 2018. The intended audience is licensed, practicing educators who want to improve their skills as leaders, master teachers, and researchers. The University conducted a needs assessment for the region and in fall 2017, the Thayer School of Education Teacher Education Committee approved offering the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership using distance learning methodology. The anticipated enrollment is 15-20 students per annual cohort. A comprehensive list of all degrees offered by Wingate University was provided, along with a list of approved off-campus instructional sites.

The University has infrastructure in place to support online program administration, and has implemented the Canvas learning management system. The recently hired Chief Learning Officer is responsible for overseeing the software implementation and ensuring that faculty receive appropriate training. The Information Technology Department supports online education by assisting with Canvas user accounts, monitoring network security, and providing periodic troubleshooting. As per the University contract, Canvas Support also provides a 24/7 help desk that offers technical assistance with all aspects of the learning management system.

Wingate University appears to comply with Federal Requirements regarding distance learning. All courses are accessed through the Canvas learning management system, which requires a unique user name and password to verify the identity of each student enrolled in the course. The University has written policies for protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in online courses. The policies are based on the guidelines outlined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and are published on the University website, and in the Faculty Guide. There are no additional student charges associated with the online courses or the verification of student identity. The institution is reminded of the following from the *Distance and Correspondence Education Policy*: At the time of review by the Commission, the institution must demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2)

proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

The online version of the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership will differ from the existing, on-campus program only in instructional delivery format. Admissions and graduation requirements are identical for all Ed.D. students at the University. The curriculum, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes were provided along with a definition of credit hours. Students who choose the online option will be expected to meet the same learning outcomes as students in face-to-face settings. Multiple tools will be used to assess the program's effectiveness, including student surveys and faculty/staff feedback. The program will also be included in the University-wide institutional effectiveness process, which was described in detail. Assessment data for the online cohort will be analyzed in comparison to the data collected on students enrolled in the traditional face-to-face version of the Ed.D. program.

The Faculty Roster describes the qualifications of the three full-time and 8 part-time faculty members who will teach courses within the online Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program. All faculty members have doctoral degrees in the discipline of their assigned courses plus applicable professional experience, and appear qualified to teach in these areas. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review teams who will assess the faculty as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate for the program. The University's Ethel K. Smith Library has an extensive collection of online resources such as electronic databases, journals, books, and periodicals that support the Educational Leadership curriculum. The Library also has inter-library loan agreements with fellow members of the Charlotte Area Educational Consortia (CAEC) and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU). Distance learning students can access these resources through the Library website, and also through a dedicated Library link in the Canvas learning management system. Additional assistance is available to students and faculty through online instructional videos, and via virtual or phone communication with librarians.

Student support services appear to be adequate and are available to all on-campus and distance learning students. Along with standard academic support services such as financial aid, student records, and admissions, additional support is provided to students through the Academic Resource Center. The Center provides disability services, resources for success, and a writing center. Students admitted to the Ed.D. program are each assigned an academic advisor, who also serves as the chairperson for their capstone project. Graduate students have access to all Health Center services, the bookstore, and Information Technology support. They are also eligible to participate in the full range of student activities available on campus including student organizations and intramural sports. Orientation sessions are conducted at the beginning of each year to inform students of all the available services.

Graduate Education programs are housed at the Ballantyne Campus of Wingate University. Located in the Ballantyne Corporate Park, the facility has 10 classrooms available for instructional use. Each classroom is equipped with a LenovaThinkCenter computer, DVD player, Smart Board, and an LCD projector. Two of the classrooms also have Polycom equipment, and there is a computer lab with eight computers. Each instructor has assigned office space equipped with a University-purchased computer. While the courses in the Ed.D. program will be completely online, there may be occasions for face-to-face meetings with students. Such occasions could be interviews with potential students, meet-and-greet marketing activities, and a program introduction meeting. The physical resources appear to be adequate to support the educational goals of the new online program.

Financial support for the program appears to be adequate. Since the proposed online doctoral program mirrors the existing Ed.D. in Education Leadership, the only added expense will be six adjunct faculty to teach additional sections of existing courses. Projected annual revenues from student tuition and fees are $156,600, with estimated expenses of $39,700. Given that the revenues will surpass the expenses, the program is expected to be self-supporting during its first year of operation.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership delivered via distance learning methodology. It was the decision of the Board to approve the institution for distance learning and include it in the scope of the current accreditation. Once an institution is approved to offer 50% or more of the credit in a program via distance learning, no notification or approval is necessary when any percentage of an additional approved program is offered by distance learning.

Enclosed is an invoice for $500 to help defray the cost of review of the prospectus.

Sincerely,

Belle S. Wheelan

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/SKO:iy

Enclosure

Cc: Mr. Mitchell Cottenoir, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Dr. Crystal A. Barid

SACSCOC™

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges, Inc.
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

INVOICE

Date	Invoice #
5/17/2018	4685

Bill To
Wingate University **~~Heather Miller~~ - SACSCOC Liaison** Mitchel Cottenoir **220 North Camden Road** **P. O. Box 159** **Wingate, NC 28174**

Due Date	Account #
Due upon receipt	81920

Description	Amount
REVIEW OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROSPECTUS FEE	
Substantive Change Fee for transmitting the prospectus for offering the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree program in Educational Leadership via distance learning methodology, effective fall 2018.	**500.00**

Please make checks payable to SACSCOC. Attn:Business Office and/or Sharon Wilks

Questions, please contact Sharon Wilks @ 404-679-4501 ext 4507 or 404-994-6540

Total	**$500.00**
Payments/Credits	**$0.00**
Balance Due	**$500.00**

Phone #	Fax #	E-mail	Web Site
404-679-4501 ext 4507	**404-994-6590**	**swilks@sacscoc.org**	**www.sacscoc.org**