Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Texas A&M University

and

Michael R. Benz, Ph.D.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between Texas A&M University and Michael R. Benz, Ph.D.

Background

The Higher Education Collaborative (HEC) project provides an opportunity to close gaps for individuals with intellectual disabilities having access to and succeeding in postsecondary education settings traditionally attended by students without disabilities. Through the HEC project, ten additional higher education programs and fields of study will be accessible to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD). The HEC project goal is to support ten replications of the Texas Post-Secondary Education (TPSE) models within the Texas A&M University and University of Texas systems as well as two additional institutions. Program replication and evaluation requires a specific skill set. Dr. Benz will be able to provide that level of expertise (See below).

Dr. Benz has many years of experience at the collegiate level and with the replication of programs statewide and nationally. He has served for 32 years in faculty and administrative positions prior to his retirement in 2015. He was a faculty member and administrator at two AAU Research I universities: the University of Oregon and Texas A&M University. He also served for several years as a high school special education teacher and as a social studies teacher. While at the University of Oregon, Dr. Benz served as Director of the Secondary Special Education and Transition Research Institute (1996-2004) and as Head of the Department of Special Education, School Psychology, and Early Intervention (2000-2004). At Texas A&M University, Dr. Benz was the founding Director of the Center on Disability and Development, a federally designated Center for Excellence in Disabilities. He served as CDD Director from 2005-2015. He also served as Head of the Department of Educational Psychology from 2004-2008. Dr. Benz served as Project Director/Principal Investigator on 30 research and training projects during his years as a faculty member at the University of Oregon and Texas A&M University. These grant-funded projects, which were obtained through various federal, state, and local agencies, totaled slightly more than $16.5 million dollars. Several of his projects were collaborative efforts with state and local agencies, garnering additional direct funding of his training, research, and demonstration activities. One such project -- the Oregon Youth Transition Program (YTP) -- received $44 million in direct funding during the years he served as Director (1990-2004).
The Oregon Youth Transition Program (YTP) is a nationally and internationally recognized school-to-work transition model that involves an administrative, programmatic, and financial collaboration between education and rehabilitation at both state and local levels. Dr. Benz developed the YTP in 1989 with colleagues from the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Division, and he served as YTP Director from 1990 to 2004. At the local level, school transition personnel and vocational rehabilitation counselors collaborate to provide a specific pattern of direct services to youth with disabilities beginning when they are still in high school and continuing into the early transition years, including: (a) individualized planning focused on post-school goals and self-determination; (b) instruction, mentoring, and other supports necessary to achieve academic and transition goals; (c) individualized supports and connections to relevant community agencies to help students stay in and complete high school; (c) career development services, paid job training, and onsite follow-up and support; and (e) follow-up support for one year after leaving the program to assist in maintaining positive outcomes in employment or postsecondary settings. The YTP has been replicated and implemented in 85% of all high schools in Oregon since 1990. In addition, the model was replicated in schools and communities in Arizona and Alabama.

Purpose

This MOU defines the partnership and roles. The purpose of the partnership is to define and develop a replication process for the replication of three higher education models as well as define and develop a standard evaluative process. Below are the outlined activities.

The above goals will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

"In collaboration with the Project Co-directors, or their designees,"

1. Revise and finalize Project Evaluation Plan, using the 9/12/16 draft plan as the framework. NOTE: The Evaluation Plan will be formally re-examined annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the project.
2. Participate in planning meetings with Project partners, and meetings with HEC TAC staff, when meeting agenda items relate to the Evaluation Plan and activities that Dr. Benz will conduct.
3. Assist in the design of TA materials and training procedures to ensure they: (a) utilize best-practice approaches for supporting the replication and sustainability of transition innovations, and (b) are directly connected to project outcomes and evaluation strategies.
4. Review and provide feedback as needed on TA materials and procedures related to accomplishment and evaluation of project outcomes.
5. Lead the development of evaluation materials and methods.
6. Participate in meetings to design a quantitative data collection strategy and database that would complement the overall project evaluation plan.
7. Conduct site visits and collect evaluation data with and through HEC TAC staff whenever possible.
8. Provide verbal and written evaluation information to project staff to: (a) support the implementation of project activities and (b) document project accomplishments.
Reporting

Cheryl Grenwelge will evaluate progress quarterly.

Funding

Payment will be made on a monthly basis. Payment will be made at a daily rate of $1500.00 per day for a total of 20 days. The $1500.00 daily rate will include in-state travel for the state of Texas. If out of state travel is required, travel reimbursement will be provided.

Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from Texas A&M University and Michael R. Benz, Ph.D. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from the (list partners) and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from Texas A&M University and Michael R. Benz, Ph.D. this MOU shall end on 5/1/2017.

Contact Information:

Texas A&M University
Cheryl Grenwelge
Associate Professor
4225 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4225
Telephone: (979) 458-1593
E-mail: cgrenwelge@tamu.edu

Michael R. Benz, Ph.D.
Consultant
5155 Stonewater Loop, College Station, TX 77845
Telephone: (979) 595-6552
E-mail: michaelrbenz@gmail.com

\[ \text{Date: 16/18/16} \]
\[ \text{(Partner signature)} \]