Stephen F. Austin State University

The Department of Human Services

A Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) Accredited Program

Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program

Revised January 2016
The Department of Human Services

Stephen F. Austin State University, located in historic Nacogdoches, Texas, was established by the state legislature in 1921. Originally founded as a teachers college, it is now a regional university with an average enrollment of more than 13,000 students each regular semester and more than 5,000 students each summer semester. The University grants baccalaureate degrees and emphasizes master's level study in Arts, Business, Education, Forestry, Humanities and Sciences.

The Department of Human Services offers multifaceted programming. The Department of Human Services was established as a separate department in the College of Education in 1968. The Department offers undergraduate majors in Rehabilitation Services, Orientation and Mobility, Special Education and Communication Disorders. Teaching specialties are offered in Deaf Education and Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Graduate majors include Counseling, School Psychology, Speech and Language Pathology, and Special Education. The Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation degree program was implemented in 1977 and has graduated approximately 50 undergraduate students annually.

REHABILITATION COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mission Statement

The mission of the Rehabilitation Counseling Education Program is to provide rehabilitation education, research, and community services that are in the forefront of the rehabilitation field and that foster practical leadership in our students. We prepare qualified rehabilitation professionals at both the bachelors and masters degree level.

Rehabilitation Counseling Program (RCP) strives to achieve the following objectives:

- To train students in the effective delivery of professional rehabilitation counseling services for individuals with physical, mental, and social impairments.
- To emphasize the acquisition of competencies in the broad field of rehabilitation counseling.
- To train students to be rehabilitation counseling practitioners who will be equipped with skills to ameliorate the conditions of persons with disabilities.
- To provide continuing education to state rehabilitation services and other rehabilitation personnel for further skill development and/or completion of a degree. (CORE A-1)

The Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program (RCEP) at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) strives to provide rehabilitation counselors who can help to meet the growing demand for rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. The program was designed upon criteria established by and is fully accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (C.O.R.E.). The curriculum combines academic theory and technique courses with hands-on practicum and field-site internship experiences. The faculty of the Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program place very high value on the exposure of students to a broad spectrum of rehabilitation services, professional organizations, interdisciplinary professional activities, as well as advocacy and consumer groups in the field of rehabilitation.

The RCEP at Stephen F. Austin State University endorses the philosophy that rehabilitation is an empowering process in which persons exercise control over their own lives. The program adheres to concepts of the holistic nature of people, self-responsibility for health promotion and wellness, the uniqueness of each individual, equal opportunity for health care and social and economic involvement for all persons with disabilities. These concepts form the philosophical basis for coursework which prepares students to provide vocational guidance, psychological counseling, rehabilitation case management, and job development and placement services for persons with any type of physical, mental, emotional or social disability. The following nine statements represent beliefs of the faculty that guide program development and delivery with the Department of Human Services.
Philosophy:

1. We believe every person with a disability has the civil and moral right to live as independently as possible.

2. We believe every program graduate, at whatever level of training, has the responsibility to advocate for the civil and moral rights of persons with disabilities.

3. We believe that every program graduate should possess the competencies necessary for effecting independent functioning of people with disabilities.

4. We believe that every program graduate should possess the ability to critique and modify performance relative to the needs of the field and the current state of the art in the field.

5. We believe that the knowledge from the Department of Human Services should be shared with other programs, departments and constituents that deal with people with disabilities.

6. We believe that we should have a leadership role at the regional and national level in terms of advocacy, training and research for the advancement of the field of counseling and rehabilitation.

7. We believe in the removal of all barriers (attitudinal, educational, vocational, social, architectural, etc.) affecting individuals with disabilities.

8. We believe in the affirmative action and multicultural recruitment emphasis in our program.

9. We believe in the equitable admission of all qualified minority students with the assumption that the program quality for all students will be maintained or enhanced from this effort.

This philosophy undergirds the training and education of the RCEP. The program coursework provides a theoretical framework in the area of vocational rehabilitation counseling and an experiential sequence of supervised practica and internship courses that allow graduating students to step immediately into service in the field of rehabilitation. The master's program is aimed at the development of practitioners, not theoreticians or researchers. Although the program emphasizes the evaluation of rehabilitation research, the program's aim is to produce practitioners who can provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with severe disabilities.

The faculty of the Department of Human Services place great value on exposing students to a variety of theories and techniques of counseling, appropriate professional counseling organizations, and interdisciplinary professional activities.
Nature of the Work

Every year more and more people overcome mental, physical or emotional disabilities and become self-sufficient and productive citizens. Some find employment in occupations previously thought too complex or physically demanding. Others enroll in colleges and technical schools. One member of the team of professionals that helps individuals with disabilities achieve their maximum personal and vocational potential is the rehabilitation counselor.

Rehabilitation counselors begin the counseling process by learning about their counselees. Not only do they interview the client, they may read school reports, confer with medical personnel, and talk with family members to determine the exact nature of the disability. If the disability occurred after the person had begun his or her work life, the counselor may discuss the counselee’s previous work experience with former employers. The counselor also confers with physicians, psychologists, and occupational therapists about the types of tasks the client can perform. The counselor, in addition, engages in counseling sessions with the counselee to explore and evaluate training and career options, and uses this information to develop an Individually Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP).

A rehabilitation program generally includes training for a specific job. Job training is often one of several steps in the rehabilitation process, and occurs only after a sufficient amount of evaluation, research and counseling has been done to find the most suitable job for a counselee.

Because a counselee’s employment success is an important goal of rehabilitation counseling, the counselor must keep in touch with the business community to learn the types of workers needed by industry and the training required for each job. Counselors in vocational rehabilitation agencies spend some of their time publicizing the program and informing businesses and community leaders about the services they offer. Rehabilitation counselors in private industry keep up to date on vacancies that might be filled by persons with physical or emotional disabilities.

In addition to exploring job possibilities with clients, rehabilitation counselors often make follow-up contacts to ensure that placement has been successful. If the new employee has a specific problem on the job, the counselor may suggest adaptations to the employer.

An increasing number of counselors specialize in a particular area of rehabilitation; some work almost exclusively with individuals who are blind, deaf, mentally ill, mentally retarded, or have alcohol or drug addictions.

The amount of time spent counseling each client varies with the severity of the problems as well as with the size of the counselor's caseload. Some rehabilitation counselors are responsible for many persons in various stages of rehabilitation; others such as those who work with individuals with severe disabilities may work with relatively few cases at a time. Caseload size and amount of time spent with a client primarily depend on the work setting.

Working Conditions

Rehabilitation counselors generally work a 40-hour week. Some evening work is required for speaking at community or civic meetings. They may spend only part of their time in their offices counseling, coordinating services and performing necessary paperwork. The rest of their time is spent away from the office, working with prospective employers, training agencies and the person's family. Rehabilitation counselors must maintain close contact with counselees and their families over many months or even years. The counselor often has the satisfaction of watching day-by-day progress in the person’s efforts toward independence. At other times, however, the counselor may experience the disappointment of a counselee’s failures.
Employment

Counselors work in state and local rehabilitation agencies financed cooperatively with Federal and State Funds. Several hundred vocational rehabilitation specialists and counseling psychologists work in the Veterans Administration's vocational rehabilitation programs, or in VA hospitals and medical centers, Rehabilitation centers, sheltered workshops, hospitals, mental health centers, special schools, centers for independent living and other public and private agencies with rehabilitation programs and job placement services employ thousands more. Other rehabilitation counselors work in private industry, including insurance companies and other commercial enterprises, manufacturing firms and rehabilitation consulting firms.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field is generally considered the minimum educational requirement for rehabilitation counselors. Vocational rehabilitation agencies in some states may, however, accept applicants with bachelor's degree in rehabilitation services, counseling, psychology or other related fields. Experience in employment counseling, job development, psychology, education and social work may be helpful in securing employment as a rehabilitation counselor. Many state agencies have work-study programs whereby employed counselors can earn graduate degrees in the field.

The Council on Rehabilitation Education (C.O.R.E.) accredits graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling. Usually, two (2) years of study, including a period of supervised work experience is required for the master's degree. Master's degree programs generally offer courses in human services and psychology, principles of rehabilitation counseling, counseling theory and techniques, occupational and educational information and community resources. Also taught are courses in placement and follow-up, assessment and evaluation, psychosocial aspects of disability, medical and legislative aspects of rehabilitation, and research methods.

Employment Future

Employment of rehabilitation counselors is expected to grow 20 percent from 2012-2020, faster than the average of all occupations (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014). Demand for rehabilitation counselors is expected to grow with the increase in the elderly population and with the continued rehabilitation needs of other groups, such as veterans and individuals with disabilities. Because the Federal Government funds most state and many private rehabilitation agencies, employment in these organizations depends largely on the level of government spending. Reductions in Federal funding for rehabilitation services would have an adverse effect on employment in these agencies.

Substantial employment growth is expected in the private sector, particularly in insurance companies that handle worker compensation programs and in private for-profit rehabilitation consulting firms. Demand for qualified rehabilitation counselors in private industry is expected to increase as employers respond to affirmative action legislation and as they become aware of the savings that can be realized by returning people with disabilities to employment. Colleges and universities that employ coordinators of services to students with disabilities are another source of employment opportunities for rehabilitation counselors.

MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN REHABILITATION COUNSELING

The Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling requires a minimum of 48 semester hours of academic preparation. For students who also want to obtain the Licensed Professional Counselor credential, 60 semester hours is required. The degree includes a core curriculum of 27 hours, 12 hours of advanced coursework in rehabilitation counseling and 9 hours of practicum and internship.

The core curriculum for the Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program consists of basic preparatory
studies in disability, educational and occupational information, counseling and case management, and
the vocational rehabilitation process. Students who lack basic preparation in any of the core knowledge
and skill areas may be required to complete prerequisite coursework or complete individual studies
prior to entry into one of the advanced graduate courses.

CURRICULUM PLAN FOR RCEP STUDENTS

BACKGROUND COURSES

General Psychology

FIRST YEAR

COU 505 Introduction to Rehabilitation Counseling*
COU 507 Vocational Evaluation and Job Placement of the Severely Disabled*
COU 531 Theories of Counseling
COU 585 Lifespan Development
COU 535 Multicultural Counseling
COU 525 Vocational and Educational Information
COU 526 Medical Orientation to Counseling
COU 541 Seminar in Counseling Research
COU 592 Rehabilitation of the Severely Disabled*
*If taken as undergraduate (RHB 405, RHB 407, RHB 490), electives will be substituted

SECOND YEAR

COU 542 Psychosocial Aspects of Counseling
COU 521 Seminar: Alcohol and Drug Abuse
COU 533 Counseling Skills and Techniques
COU 559 Assessment in Counseling
COU 528 Group Counseling
COU 591 Mental Health and Psychopathology
COU 594 Practicum in Rehabilitation Counseling

THIRD YEAR

COU 595 Internship in Rehabilitation Counseling

Some of these courses may be taken during the summer sessions.

Additional required courses for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential:

COU 520 Professional Orientation in Counseling
COU 523 Ethics in Counseling
COU 519 Survey of Abnormalities
COU 522 Family Counseling
or
COU 529 Child and Adolescent Counseling
ADMISSION TO THE MASTER'S PROGRAM
IN REHABILITATION COUNSELING

APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

IMPORTANT! All graduate students in the Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program should take special care to carefully read the guidelines outlined in the Stephen F. Austin State University Graduate Bulletin for the year in which they entered their program. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the regulations for admission, academic policies, application for graduation, and general requirements for the Master's degree--especially the Checkpoints for the Master's Candidate.

Admission to the Master's degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is contingent upon admission to the Graduate School; therefore, students applying to the Graduate Clinical Mental Health Counselor Education Program (www.sfasu.edu/hs) must first apply to the Stephen F. Austin State University Graduate School. Details regarding Graduate School application are contained in the Graduate Bulletin (http://www.sfasu.edu/bulletin/). Criteria for admission to the Graduate School includes a 2.8 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate work and a 2.5 on all undergraduate work.

All admission materials must be received by the Counselor Education Admissions Committee prior to the application deadline for the intended semester of enrollment. The deadlines are as follows:

• Fall admission – June 1
• Spring admission – October 1
• Summer admission – March 1.

All required materials for application to the Graduate School and the Counselor Education program must be received by the deadline in order for an application to be complete. Failure to meet the above deadlines may result in delaying the admission decision until the next semester.

Before your admission to the counselor education program can be considered, we require:

To the Graduate School
(Liberal Arts North, Room 423)

1. Application to the Graduate School with all transcripts. Apply on line at http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/ProspStudents/apply_reg.html
2. A $50.00 application fee.

To the Counselor Education Program Admissions Committee

3. Autobiographical letter of application – Your responses to the following questions should total 2-4 pages typed and double spaced.
   a. Why did you choose counseling as a possible career and what life experiences have led you to your decision to enter the helping profession?
   b. A statement of your professional goals and your understanding of the counseling profession.
4. Three letters of recommendation (using the program recommendation form found at http://www.sfasu.edu/hs/counseling/counsel-recommendation-form.pdf). One letter should be from a professional in the field of counseling if possible. Letters from family members, social acquaintances, or pastors will not be accepted.
5. Current Resume.
6. Completion of the Personal Data Form which can be found on the program website.

Do not submit your application materials in any type of binder, portfolio, or folder. Transcripts are to be sent to the Graduate School, Stephen F. Austin State University, P.O. Box 13024, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962.
Please return your autobiographical letter, three letters of recommendation, resume, and program data form to:

Counselor Education Admissions Committee
Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Human Services
Box 13019, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962-3019

The applicant's file is initially reviewed by the Counseling Program Admissions Committee, which makes recommendations for the interviewing of individual applicants to the program. If the applicant is recommended for an interview, the student will be contacted via email to schedule. After the interview, the Committee makes a final decision regarding admission. Students are notified by email of the committee's recommendation on their application.

The Counselor Education Program has enacted a rolling admission policy. Candidates for admission will be considered in the 30 days following a completed application packet. The packet is not reviewable until all admission criteria are completed. Incomplete applications will be maintained for 60 days. After 60 days, the file will be closed and reapplication will be necessary.

Although the Graduate School allows students to take up to 12 semester hours of coursework under "Post-Baccalaureate Student" status prior to their being formally accepted into one of the school's recognized degree programs the Counselor Education Program only allows six (6) semester hours before formal admission to the program. Attending classes under the Post Baccalaureate student status does not imply admission to the program. Applicants who have not completed the prerequisite background courses will not be permitted to take counseling courses at the Post Baccalaureate status until those courses are completed.

NOTE: Student's who have not met all of the requirements for clear admission into the Master's degree program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling may not apply for financial aid with any of the Federal stipend or local scholarships available through the department.

The Review of all graduate applicants involves consideration of multiple factors. In addition to criteria set by the Graduate School, the Department may consider the following:

- GPA
- Match between professional goals and the Counselor Education Program's mission
- Letters of recommendation
- Professional development, experience and accomplishments
- Bilingual/multilingual proficiency
- Evidence of leadership potential
- Personal interviews

Other factors, including quality of prior educational opportunities (high school and undergraduate), family's educational background, disability, socio-cultural experiences, English language proficiency (for international students, measured by the TOEFL score), and any other factors which may have significantly influenced the applicant's academic and professional record to-date may also be considered. Program areas may use additional factors in the review process, as appropriate (e.g., minimum number of years of teaching or field experience, adequate professional preparation in the chosen area of specialization).

Steps in the graduate admissions review process:

- The completed application file is forwarded to the chosen program area for review;
- The Counselor Education Admissions Committee makes an admission recommendation.
The recommendation by the Counselor Education Admissions Committee is to the Graduate School.

The applicant is notified via email of the final decision by the Director of Counselor Education Programs and by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Applicants are not guaranteed admission even though they meet these minimum requirements, because some graduate programs have limited space and facilities.

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The following professional organizations are of interest to rehabilitation counseling professionals.

The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) is the predominant organization in the field of rehabilitation. It is comprised of several divisions, including the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA)

Further information and applications for NRA or NRCA can be found at [http://nationalrehab.org/website/index.html](http://nationalrehab.org/website/index.html)

Further information and applications for ACA and ARCA can be found at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)

National Association of Rehabilitation Professionals in the Private Sector (NARPPS)

[www.iarp.org](http://www.iarp.org)

**CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE**

**Certified Rehabilitation Counselor**

National certification in the specialty area of Rehabilitation Counseling is available to interested graduates of the RCEP. Graduates are eligible to sit for the certification examination in their specialization given by the Commission on Certification of Rehabilitation Counselors upon completion of two years of work experience with at least one year under the supervision of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Students enrolled in a CORE accredited program may test with they have completed 75% of their required curriculum.

Additional information on the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor exam and the certification process can be obtained from

Board of Certification of Rehabilitation Counselors
1835 Rowhling Dr., Suite 305
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

**Licensed Professional Counselor**

The Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors (TSBEPC) has been designated by the Texas Legislature as the licensing body for counselors in Texas who want to pursue a career as a Licensed Professional Counselor. Licensing as a generic counselor in the specialty as a rehabilitation counselor is available.

Any person practicing counseling activities and claiming the credentials of a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) is required by law to submit appropriate credentials for evaluation and take an examination before recognition is granted. Graduates of the SFASU Master's degree program with the Rehabilitation Counseling Emphasis are prepared with the educational requisites for application for the State of Texas licensing as a rehabilitation counselor. The Board may initiate requirements over and
beyond those one might satisfy in any given degree program. It is wise to contact the Board to gain specific information on requirements that may be applicable at the time one applies for licensure.

Applicants with a criminal history may be denied licensure by the TSBEPIC. An individual with a criminal history is encouraged to contact the Board for a determination of licensure consideration before beginning a graduate program.

Applications and additional information on the LPC may be obtained by contacting:
Bobby Alexander, Executive Secretary
Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3138
(512) 459-2900
http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/plc/lpc/lpc_def.htm
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is the cost of attendance?**

   The average cost for full time attendance (9 hours) is approximately $3000 per semester for tuition and fees. The cost of books for each semester is approximately $500-750.

2. **Is there financial aid available?**

   Financial aid is available to all students through the Financial Aid office. The majority of the aid is in the form of student loans. There are no counseling specific scholarships. Depending upon personal income, grants may be available. Students are encouraged to research outside scholarships through employers, private foundations, or service groups.

3. **How long does it take to complete the program?**

   The RCEP program is a 48 hour degree and students can enroll as a full-time or part-time student. Full time enrollment would entail a minimum of 9 hours per semester and a maximum of 12 hours. Part time enrollment would be 3-6 hours per semester. Full time students can typically complete the program within 6 semesters. Part time students typically complete the program within 8 semesters. Summer enrollment is available.

4. **Is the program online?**

   The SFASU Counselor Education faculty feels strongly that highly qualified professional counselors cannot be trained in a fully online environment. We pride ourselves in the relationships we develop with students and the quality of face-to-face supervision provided. We have identified courses that are appropriate for online instruction. Approximately 40% of the courses are offered online.

5. **Can I work and go to school?**

   Approximately half of our students are employed full time while completing the program. Classes are offered once a week at 4:30 and 7:15 in order to meet the needs of working students. Half-time enrollment is recommended for students who are enrolled full time.

6. **Where are internships completed?**

   Internships for RCEP students can be completed in any setting that provides rehabilitation counseling services and has an appropriately credentialed site supervisor. Most RCEP interns complete the internship in Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) offices around the state.

7. **Can I work during internship?**

   If your current place of employment provides counseling services and agrees to allow you to complete your internship on site, it is possible to continue to work full time. Internship requires 6 credit hours from completion. The internship requires 600 hours with a minimum of 240 direct hours. It is possible for students to complete the internship in one long semester (6 hours/40 working hours per week). It can also be taken over two long semesters (3 hours each semester/20 working hours per week). Most CMHC internships are unpaid unless it is done at your place of employment.
Stephen F. Austin State University
Counselor Education Program Recommendation Form

Applicant Name ___________________________________________ Date: __________________

To the Applicant: It is suggested this form should be given to: (a) a professor, outside the SFA Counselor Education program, with whom you have studied; (b) an employee supervisor under whom you have taught or worked; and/or (c) a practicing counselor (if possible). If those categories are not available to you, the recommender should be able to comment on your qualifications for graduate study and as a participant in the counseling profession. Recommendations from personal friends, social acquaintances, and pastors will not be considered. A letter of recommendation should accompany the form. Letters of recommendation will not be accepted without this fully completed form, including the applicant information and signature.

Desired program? (Check one)

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<th>School</th>
<th>Clinical Mental Health</th>
<th>Rehabilitation</th>
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Applicant

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<th>Your Name:</th>
<th>Your Name:</th>
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<th>Social Security #</th>
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<td>Your Address</td>
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<tr>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
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<th>Email</th>
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You may wish to retain your right to review information provided by the recommender you choose. Some persons prefer not to complete recommendation forms unless they can be assured of the confidentiality of their comments. It is our opinion that comments provided on a confidential basis are likely to be of more help to us in judging important characteristics such as creativity, originality, independence and research capability. Therefore, the Stephen F. Austin State University Counselor Education Faculty are affording you the opportunity to waive your right of subsequent access to this reference statement. In any event, your application for admission and/or financial support will be given full consideration based on all the information accumulated in your application file, including this form, regardless of your decision on waiving your right of future review. It is our policy to shred recommendation forms and letters following the admission decision.

I do waive my right to subsequent access to this recommendation form

I retain my right of subsequent access to this recommendation form.

SIGNATURE ___________________________________________ DATE ___________________________________________
**To the Recommender:** the above named individual has applied for admission to our Masters degree program in either school, community or rehabilitation counseling. We are asking you to provide information and evaluation concerning this applicant’s ability to complete graduate study in counseling and/or their potential for success in the counseling profession.

1. **How long and under what circumstances have you known the applicant?**

2. **Please rate the applicant with others with whom you have worked in a similar capacity by placing a check ( ) in the appropriate box.**

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<th>Upper Third</th>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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3. **On a separate letterhead, please attach a letter which includes a description of the applicant’s particularly relevant strengths, limitations, and other pertinent information that might help in making our decision.**

4. **At what level of overall confidence would you recommend the applicant?**

   - Not Recommend
   - Recommend with Reservations (Please specify below)
   - Recommend
   - Strongly Recommend

**Recommender Signatures and Information**

Name (PRINT) ___________________________ Date __________

Signature of recommender ___________________________ Email address ___________________________

*Stephen F. Austin State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national or ethnic group, religious preference, disability, or sex in any aspects of its operations.*