

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
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20 March 2017

Dr. Michael Kiphart  
Director of Academic Affairs  
Maryland Higher Education Commission  
6 North Liberty Street, 10th Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Kiphart:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the objection letter submitted by Morgan State University regarding Stevenson University's proposal for a new Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community-Based Education and Leadership. We wish to respond to Morgan's concerns that some course content in our Post-Baccalaureate Certificate may be duplicative of some content within Morgan's signature doctoral programs in Community College Leadership and Urban Education Leadership.

Specifically, we would like to address how Stevenson's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community-Based Education and Leadership differs significantly in target audience, purpose, and scope from Morgan's doctoral programs.

*Target Audience*

Based on robust market research outlined in Stevenson's proposal for the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community-Based Education and Leadership, the target population for the Certificate is early career professionals who teach or manage in informal education settings and who do not yet have a graduate degree. This target audience includes non-formal or informal educators, such as after-school and out-of-school-time educators, community school coordinators, librarians, museum coordinators, environmental educators, and summer camp coordinators; and those who work in the myriad non-profit community-based organizations that provide these services. Further, while many of these organizations are in urban settings, there is a dynamic informal education network in rural settings. Stevenson's program is intended for practitioners in both urban and rural settings. Hence, the audience for the Certificate has little to no overlap with the audience for Morgan's two doctoral programs, which target seasoned professionals desiring top leadership positions within community colleges and urban school systems and who would have necessarily already completed a master's degree.

*Purpose*

The purpose of Stevenson's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, which is well-aligned with its career focused mission, is significantly different from that of a doctoral degree received from a research-

based university such as Morgan. As stated in the proposal, the purpose of the Certificate is to meet the growing need for professional development and training that will help community-based non-profit organizations incentivize employees to remain in the field, envision career pathways, and grow leadership capacity. This certificate is consistent with Stevenson's mission of offering graduate degrees that enhance professional knowledge and skills, not degrees that lead to academic research and policy positions or doctoral-required leadership positions in formal educational systems, which is the stated focus of Morgan's doctoral programs.

### *Scope*

While Morgan points to similarities in the titles of some courses in Stevenson's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate with course titles in their Doctorates in Community College Leadership and Urban Education Leadership, the similarities end there. The breadth and depth of examination would necessarily differ between the programs due to the difference in the level of the degree. As one would expect in a program at the post-baccalaureate level, courses would not be as in depth or focused as those in a doctoral program. As an example, though Stevenson's program includes an action research course, it is geared toward helping practitioners be more effective evidenced-based decision makers in their organizations, as opposed to the rigorous research one would expect to undertake for a doctoral dissertation. Further, the focus of Stevenson's program is on how these topics influence teaching and leading in non-profit community-based organizations that are grant funded and primarily staffed with volunteers. Though some issues and concerns related to leading and managing in the non-formal sector may be similar to some of the concerns of community colleges and urban educational settings, the scope, breadth, and depth of courses would differ dramatically between a post-baccalaureate certificate and a doctoral degree.

We assert that Stevenson's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community-Based Education and Leadership, while sharing key words in their titles, is significantly different in its target audience, purpose, and scope from Morgan's Doctorate in Community College Leadership and Doctorate in Urban Education Leadership as to not be duplicative or impactful to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Morgan's doctorate programs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the concerns raised by Morgan State University. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information to MHEC in support of Stevenson University's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community-Based Education and Leadership.

Sincerely,



Susan Thompson Gorman, Ph.D.  
EVPAA and Provost  
TEL: 443-334-2331

cc: Tina Bjarekull, President, MICUA  
Claire Moore, Interim President, Stevenson University