Project: Unique Model Curriculum/Program for Addiction Counseling

Brief description: Montana State University Northern (MSUN) requests $400,000 for the development, promotion, and enrollment of students into a 2-year Associate of Science Degree in Addiction Counseling. MSUN would seek a partnership with the Nexus Treatment Center in Lewistown, Montana. The Nexus Treatment Center is a one-of-a-kind facility for eighty incarcerated males with felony convictions for methamphetamine use and where treatment is offered for all aspects of a person's life: body, mind, and spirit.

Executive Summary: The future of corrections in this country is transforming from an incarceration model to a habilitation model in order to transition habilitated offenders back into society as responsible, pro-social community members. The mission and essence behind the Nexus program conforms to the habilitation model, and it only increases the need for up and coming addiction professionals to be afforded the opportunity to train at a facility that already adheres to the philosophy of community and habilitation. The Nexus Treatment Center and MSUN in Lewistown have an existing positive working relationship with MSUN's Registered Nursing Program and in view of the overall need for addictions professionals, it makes sense to enhance this partnership and provide a unique opportunity for the future in this field.

Project description: MSUN's campus in Lewistown, MT would develop, market and recruit students, and offer the coursework for the Associate of Science Degree in Addiction Counseling. MSUN's partnership with the Nexus Treatment Center would offer a clinical training experience for these students that cannot be found anywhere else in the country by way of hands-on experience working with individuals who have a wide variety of addiction and co-occurring mental health issues. There is no research evidence to support that this type of model/approach of habilitation model exists in the country.

Congressional Action Needed: An appropriation of $400,000 is requested.

Importance to Montana: In 2007 there were more than 1.8 million drug-related arrests carried out in the United States. This includes federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. During that year, an estimated 35 million individuals used illicit drugs or abused prescription medication (National Drug Threat Summary, 2009).

The federal government has allocated more than $14 billion for drug treatment and prevention, counterdrug law enforcement, drug interdiction, and international counterdrug assistance for 2009 (National Drug Threat Summary, 2009).

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