**A Bold New Vision for St Cloud State University- It’s Time**

As with many industries, higher education is on the cusp of profound change. Changes in demographics, technology, public support, future workforce needs, globalization and regional and national socio-economic factors are all coming together in a way that is disrupting higher education. This is creating the environment that will result in substantial and sweeping changes in public higher education.

The It’s Time framework, a bold and innovative strategy that was developed by St. Cloud State University over the last 3 years, is meant to face these challenges head on and calls for the creation of a new university that will not only survive these challenges but thrive in the new landscape of higher education. It directs the campus to redefine five key aspects of a Regional Comprehensive University:

1. Expand the definition of “regional” to extend our reach beyond central Minnesota in order to reach new student markets and demographics, increase our visibility, strengthen our diversity and expand our partnerships,
2. Be a distinctive university by establishing four academic areas of distinction in engineering and applied science, holistic health and wellness, leadership, and education,
3. Develop a university of teacher-scholars and create new centers and institutes for the advancement of academic scholarship,
4. Provide individualized student support and learning;
5. Prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion as a central component to our operations and culture.

As we continue to build into the It’s Time framework, we are creating a new university that will not only survive, but thrive, in the new landscape of higher education. A vital aspect of our It’s Time framework is for the School of Health and Human Services to be recognized as one of the premier university schools of its kind in the Midwest.

**About the School of Health and Human Services**

The School of Health and Human Services (SHHS), with more than 1,500 students currently enrolled, is the largest professional school at St. Cloud State University. It offers thirteen undergraduate and twelve graduate degree programs in the St. Cloud and Twin Cities metro areas. The rigor and relevance of SHHS programs coupled with our holistic approach of developing our students for successful careers provides a powerful model for student success as well as workforce development.
In the School of Health and Human Services, we firmly believe the university has a role and responsibility in building a healthy community and region. From graduating students with the skills needed for the 21st Century workforce to forging innovative community and educational partnerships, we enrich the socio-economic prospective of our region and fulfill our commitment and responsibility to “stewardship of place.”

As part of the It’s Time initiative, School of Health and Human Services will be renamed as the College of Health and Wellness Professions in fall 2021. This name change reflects a strategy to elevate the status of the strong academic history of its departments and leverage the clinical and scholarly prowess of its faculty, staff and students.

About the Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Program
The Applied Behavior Analysis graduate program at St. Cloud State University has the distinction of being ranked #3 among regionally and nationally accredited colleges and universities that offer such programs (https://www.abadegreeprograms.net/rankings/aba-masters/) and is the only master’s program in Minnesota accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (https://accreditation.abainternational.org/accredited-programs.aspx).

St. Cloud State University’s Applied Behavior Analysis program is an internationally-recognized leader in training students to become frontline service providers to families with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The program supports approximately 20 masters students each year and teaches coursework to over 150 undergraduate students annually in their applied behavior analysis courses. The upcoming launch of the PsyD program in Fall 2022 will further help in continuing the program’s work with graduate students who are ready to lead the effort to expand services across Minnesota and the United States, including those areas most desperate for help.

The expansion into a unique doctoral program is clearly aligned with the It’s Time vision for St. Cloud State University to be a leader in holistic health and wellness. The Autism Clinic (hereafter referred to as the Autism Discovery Center) will be distinctive in its own right, as no other university in the Minnesota State system has this type of training clinic for students. Establishing this Center will provide the School of Health and Human Services with an important competitive advantage that will help enhance the reputation of the Applied Behavior Analysis program, advance the vision of high-quality, inter-professional education and engage with the community to provide much needed services to families.

The Autism Discovery Center would solidify SHHS and St. Cloud State as one of the leading clinical education programs in the USA. That’s good for students, our region, for Minnesota and good for the communities in which our graduates live and work in the United States and around the globe.
The Autism Discovery Center – Vision
Establishing the Autism Discovery Center will create a distinctive inter-professional education and clinical space within the School of Health and Human Services. In accordance with the university’s *It's Time* initiative, this endeavor will establish the School of Health and Human Services as a nationally recognized leader in education surrounding a service provision for the autistic community.

The Autism Discovery Center will provide students cutting edge education and training, aligning with the university’s initiatives for experiences that provide longevity and sustainability for our community’s needs for an expert autism provider to the workforce.

As we establish and grow the Autism Discovery Center, SCSU and the School of Health and Human Service’s reputation as a leader among universities in Minnesota will be strengthened. Current and future students, families, and community partners will regard SCSU and the School of Health and Human Services as one of the top innovators in behavior-analytic training and education in the United States. Consequently, the School of Health and Human Services expects the establishment of the Autism Discovery Center would significantly contribute to increased enrollment across our undergraduate and graduate programs which provide educational and experiential learning opportunities in the field of autism.

The Autism Discovery Center – Operations
The Autism Discovery Center will be an opportunity for programs in the School of Health and Human Services to build collaborative relationships, benefitting students, clients, and their families. This clinical space will serve as an incubator for innovative, inter-professional collaboration among faculty and students across several programs, most notably Applied Behavior Analysis and Communication Sciences and Disorders. There is a growing emphasis on high quality clinical training and workforce development. The Autism Discovery Center will complement the work of the Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic, as well as the evolving graduate practicum lab within the Center for Health and Wellness Innovation located in Eastman Hall.

Students will gain first-hand experiences navigating inter-professional relationships under the direction of collaborative faculty which, in turn, provides clients and their families with the necessary range of services needed to grow and transition to a life without services. The Autism Discovery Center will be a place where students learn how and when to seek out expert consultation with other professionals to ensure they are mutually supporting our clients and their families.

Community and Regional Need
The Autism Discovery Center will help to meet a community and state-wide need for services to support children with autism and their families. Current waitlists with community partners number in the 100’s. With time, the Autism Discovery Center will build though its graduates more service opportunities for autistic children in the region and the state, extending its reach well beyond its walls.

Students
The Autism Discovery Center, aligning with the *It’s Time* initiative and *Our Husky Compact*, will offer students an ample variety of training experiences to become professionals and leaders in a growing field. This is attractive not only to current students, as we work toward a sense of belongingness and improvements in student retention, but also to potential students looking for programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that offer lucrative and value-oriented work after graduation.

When providing services for the autistic community, knowing *about* and knowing *how* are two different things; what is learned in the classroom (knowing about) must be connected to real world training where students work hands on with real clients and their families (knowing how).

The Autism Discovery Center will provide students with hands-on, evidence-based clinical experiences necessary for career advancement as part of their educational degree program. Through direct supervision from highly qualified faculty, students will earn nationally-recognized certifications that help them compete for financially lucrative jobs. In addition, students will graduate from St. Cloud State University knowing they have received excellent instruction, training, and mentorship that will help them thrive in future endeavors when working in the autistic community.

Graduate students gain valuable leadership and staff training skills, while also enhancing their interpersonal and professional skills related to helping parents and care providers achieve their family goals. All students leave their educational and training journey at the Autism Discovery Center ready to hit the ground running in serving their community.

The Autism Discovery Center will give students a complete educational experience through working with clients and families where 100% of their direct contact is supervised by experts in autistic service delivery.

**Faculty and Staff**

The *It’s Time* framework has outlined the essential characteristics needed to build a sustainable and thriving “new regional comprehensive” university.

One of the key characteristics designed to support our vision is the creation of new centers and institutes that allow faculty to become true “teacher-scholars” who bring innovation and insight into their classrooms, and transform the learning experience for their students. The Autism Discovery Center will allow our faculty and students to go one step further. Students enrolled in the new Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program in Applied Behavior Analysis will have an unprecedented opportunity to not only learn and apply state-of-the-art, evidence-based treatment for autism, but will also gain knowledge related to the operational management of an autism clinic. The faculty affiliated with the Autism Discovery Center will not only be “teacher-scholars” but some will also have been clinical management practitioners, creating an even higher level of faculty distinction as “teacher-scholar-practitioner.”
A new staff position, the Director of Clinical Operations, will directly support the Autism Discovery Center, the Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic, as well as future community-facing clinical endeavors within the new College.

This means that our faculty will be able to focus on the educational and clinical aspects of working with students and families, while the business operations are expertly handled.

This will position our clinics and centers to have a revenue-generating model that will allow for sustainability and scaling of services to families in the Central Minnesota region for years to come.

**The Autism Discovery Center – Physical Space**

The Autism Discover Center will be located on the first floor of Brown Hall on the St. Cloud State University campus. It will be directly down the hall from the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic.

Brown Hall was originally constructed in 1960 and underwent a full remodel in 2008.

**Space Configuration**

An area totaling 3,250 SF will be renovated for the Autism Discovery Center. The majority of the space is currently used for offices. The departments currently occupying the spaces will be relocated elsewhere on campus. It is anticipated that the room layouts within the office suite will, for the most part, remain in their current configuration. The existing offices will be repurposed to be clinical and observation rooms. The existing testing room will be repurposed to be an activity space.

Additionally, an office across the hall from the office suite would be remodeled into a single-user restroom to be used only by the clinic. This restroom will be oversized to allow for staff to assist clients and for teaching self-care skills.

*The Autism Discovery Center will feature the following spaces:*

- Reception and waiting area to help welcome and entertain guests during sessions and team meetings
- A large clinical room and four small clinical rooms provide unique spaces for children to learn and grow while getting the constant support and education they need. The spaces are designed to be rearranged quickly to meet each client’s needs
- Observation rooms between clinic rooms to provide in-the-moment coaching to staff and care providers through bug-in-the ear technologies
- Resource room to create and store materials used for services, such as tests, toys, tools, and training systems
- Activity room to help extend services to occupational therapists, provide gross-motor development, encourage social development, and simply let their hair down and have some crazy fun!
• Control workroom will house private servers, store client files, and provide a private working area for students to collaborate on client success
• Kitchen area designed to help with independent living skills
• Bathroom specially equipped to help with toilet training and healthy living skills like handwashing and brushing teeth
• Tele-health center to extend the reach of services to rural and remote areas
• Director’s office to provide a private space for personnel meetings and 1:1 supervision for students
• Conference room with state-of-the-art video connection software to bring teams together remotely, invite international experts in autism treatment for remote trainings, and to give a private and professional space for client families to celebrate their successes

Building Modifications
See the attached preliminary drawings that identify the particular building modifications. The highlights include:

• One-way glass windows are being considered for observation into the clinical rooms. In addition, there would be a technology-based observation system involving cameras and microphones in each of the clinical rooms and in some of the specialty rooms.
• Access control via card readers would be added at 2 doors.
• Floor coverings would be changed throughout the space.
• Ceilings are anticipated to remain.
• Walls would be repainted and wall protection panels may be added for durability.
• Lighting would be replaced with LED fixtures.
• Currently, some of the ventilation is provided through louvers in doors. Consultants shall evaluate feasibility of modifying duct system to reduce sound transmission.
• The creation of the restroom would require full renovation of that room, as well as modifications to M & E systems. The design shall include storage for personal-care items. Entry to this room will be changed from within the suite to being off from the main corridor.

Technology
State of the art technologies will allow faculty and advanced students to observe and provide instruction and feedback to staff (graduate and undergraduate students) in real time, ensuring they are providing high-quality services while also giving students the highly-structured training they need to be successful in their careers. The same technologies permit families to join sessions either by observing what therapists are doing or by interacting with their child, receiving direction from staff on how to manage difficult behaviors or encourage new academic skills. These closed-circuit systems will offer supervisors, faculty, family, and consultants access to what is happening in the rooms in real-time without disrupting any work or invading any privacies.