

NORTH CAROLINA STUDENTS

Apply FCAB Knowledge

When Melody Brackett, associate professor and director of the social work program at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), attended the inaugural FCAB curriculum training class at the Brown School, she immediately recognized its potential impact.

“None of our textbooks addresses those issues. So once we got a chance to learn about the FCAB content and see how important it was, we decided to infuse it into our curriculum,” Brackett explains.

Brackett’s department, which grants bachelor of social work degrees to students who often work directly with clients after graduating from the program, has instituted the FCAB curriculum in three courses — “Introduction to Social Work,” “Social Work Practice” and “Social Work Field Education and Seminar.”

“The students have really enjoyed learning the FCAB curriculum because it both applies to their own personal lives and helps prepare them to work with their clients when they get in the field,” Brackett says. “It was a learning experience for us as instructors as well. I didn’t know a lot about economics and finance before I attended the training.”

Although only in its second year augmenting social work education at ECSU, the FCAB curriculum is already having a profound impact on students, faculty and the

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surrounding northeastern North Carolina community, according to Brackett.

This semester ECSU is extending FCAB training to field supervisors in the agencies where Brackett’s undergraduate social work students are placed. To further extend FCAB’s impact at ECSU, Brackett and her team have established a campus FCAB center where students from all disciplines can dig into the curriculum. “Any student can come by and get information and learn about — say, budgeting — and look at some of the modules

without having to enroll in the classes,” she explains.

Brackett is sharing FCAB with the faith community. “That’s another sector we’re trying to reach,” she explains, “because a lot of the people we serve in the community contact churches for assistance with financial issues. Eventually, I want to have FCAB workshops to train pastors in the community so they can work with their congregations.”

Another critical component of this curriculum for ECSU and its community is how to deal with financial institutions, products and services, Brackett says. “That’s a major piece for us because our rural community doesn’t really understand the implications of using predatory lenders” — payday-loan outlets, check-cashing services, pawn shops and other “alternative” financial institutions. “Our students are sharing what they have learned about making informed financial decisions with their families.”



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