



## **2023 HECSE Short Course on Education Policy and Politics in the Nation's Capital: Description**

Having a voice in public policy that affects students with disabilities is essential for special education leaders. Leaders understand what it takes to implement policy and provide critical feedback and guidance to policy makers. This HECSE Short Course is intended as an introduction to equipping doctoral students with the knowledge, desire and skill to be an effective advocate and resource in the policy making process.

The HECSE Short Course provides a foundation for up to 10 doctoral students prior to the HECSE Winter Summit to better prepare them to engage fully in the summit. The HECSE Short Course exposes participants to the HECSE mission and activities that develop their capacity to engage in policy advocacy moving forward in their careers. Only doctoral students participating in the HECSE Short Course may attend the Winter Summit.

**2023 HECSE Short Course Theme:** *Education in Crisis: The Federal role and Other Levers for Advocacy*

### **Objectives of the Course Include:**

- Expose students to the organizational structure and key players in special education-related policy making in the nation's capital, including governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and coalitions
- Provide a working knowledge of the legislative process
- Empower students with the skills and knowledge to be effective advocates for policies and practices that promote effective preparation of special education teachers and leaders, and positive outcomes for students with disabilities
- Provide students with an understanding of the history, purpose and impact of HECSE

### **Key Features:**

- Opportunity to “part the curtains” and engage directly with national leaders in education and disability policy making, including individuals from the White House, the Department of Education, Congress, and national education and disability organizations
- Access to new policy-relevant resources, including websites, reports, social media accounts and more
- Learn the “4 P framework” for analyzing the policy making process and planning advocacy activities
- Develop advocacy mindset and skillset to continue engaging in the policy process moving forward in your career

- Engage directly with HECSE leaders and members to further understand opportunities in higher education and special education

### **Course Agenda Overview:**

- A detailed agenda will be sent with the notification letter. In general, each session will include discussions with key figures from all sides of the iron triangle. Each day starts with an optional networking breakfast at 7:30am. We then move into sessions hosted at the hotel with instructors and field visits, when available, at various locations around D.C. We conclude with whole-group discussions and dinner. This is a fast paced, high impact, immersive learning experience.

### **Eligibility and Selection:**

- Up to ten (10) doctoral students are selected for participation. Each member institution may put forward only one application.
- Applicants must be sponsored by a faculty member from a HECSE institution. The sponsor must attend the Winter Summit. We also encourage the sponsor to help their student navigate attending this virtual short course by advocating for the student to be released from on-campus obligations during the week of the Short Course. This is critical because students are expected to attend all short course and winter summit events.
- Applications will be scored on the following criteria:
  - Required statement of intent (5 Points)
  - Career plans align with policy/advocacy (1 Point)
  - Member university has not had a Short Course participant (1 bonus point)

### **Budget and Student Costs:**

- The registration for the HECSE Short Course and Winter Summit is \$400 per student. Students are encouraged to seek funding support from their institution. Additional costs to be covered by student or sponsoring HECSE institution:
  - Travel: to and from D.C. are the student's responsibility.
  - Lodging: Short Course students are strongly encouraged to stay onsite and in the past some have chosen to share rooms. Lodging arrangements are the responsibility of the student. Please ask your sponsoring faculty advisor about the HECSE hotel block.
  - Most Meals: The welcome dinner on Monday evening and wrap-up reflections pizza party will be hosted by HECSE. Breakfast is included in the cost of the room for those staying onsite. Most meals are eaten as a group, but are at the student's own expense.
  - Ground Transportation: taxi/uber to and from airport, hotel, and field visits are the student's responsibility. We strongly encourage students to pair up with other Short Course attendees to split transportation costs.

**Application Process:**

- General information about the HECSE Short Course will be posted on the HECSE website, but the application will go out only in emails to member institutions
- Each member institution can submit one application
- Selection will no longer be “first come, first serve”
- Applications will be scored by HECSE Short Course Alumni through a blind review process
- The presidential line and course instructors will make the final selection
- **Applications are due no later than November 21<sup>st</sup> to [snagro@gmu.edu](mailto:snagro@gmu.edu). Notification of acceptance will be made the week of November 31<sup>st</sup>. The application form is provided below.**

**Course Instructors:**

**Dr. Kaitlyn Brennan**, HECSE Senior Political Advisor and 2015 Short Course Alumna

A personnel preparation grant recipient, Dr. Brennan earned her PhD in Special Education from the University of Pittsburgh in 2017. She currently serves as the Policy Advisor for the Higher Education Consortium for Special Education and the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Additionally, Dr. Brennan serves as a consultant with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and provides policy advising services to a number of local non-profit education organizations. Dr. Brennan is the co-chair for the Coalition for Teacher quality and her policy work focuses primarily on rebuilding and diversifying the special educator and specialized instructional support personnel pipeline.

**Dr. Sarah Nagro**, HECSE Board Member and 2015 Short Course Alumna

Dr. Nagro serves as Member-at-Large on the HECSE Board and chair of the Doctoral Student Involvement Committee. Dr. Nagro, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, is an Associate Professor at George Mason University in the Division of Special Education and Disability Research. She is the Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Research and Development in Teacher Education (RITE) and Professor in Charge of the Special Education PhD Specialization at Mason where she teaches both education policy and special education doctorate courses. Her research focuses on determining best practices for teacher education in special education. Specifically, she focuses on understanding effective approaches to preparing profession-ready teachers through experiential learning that emphasizes reflective practice often using video analysis. During her time at Mason, Dr. Nagro has secured over 10 million dollars in funding as either principal or co-principal investigator including a 2019 Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership grant, a 2020 National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) Professional Development for Educators and School-Based Service Providers Grant funded through the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), and a 2021 Stepping-up Technology Implementation grant through OSEP. Dr. Nagro has co-instructed the Short Course since 2016.