

# CEHS Helps USU Expand Disability Services in the Dominican Republic | CEHS

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Utah State University and the Dominican Republic entered into an agreement to provide research, training, conferences, and cultural programs for children and families at the Dominican Republic's Center for Comprehensive Attention for Disability (CAID). USU's nationally ranked Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) will administer the agreement and provide its expertise.

"Our staff and students are greatly committed and giving, ensuring our programs are the best not only in Utah, but throughout the United States," said Noelle E. Cockett, president of Utah State University. "We are excited to collaborate with the Dominican Republic to further advance their existing infrastructure in special education and in turn provide our faculty and staff opportunities to learn from the people in the Dominican Republic."

Cockett emphasized the university's strengths in providing not only training and research, but rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and their families. Beth Foley, dean of the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human services, attended the meeting and signing; she highlighted the university's programs that focus on providing support for persons with disabilities and families across the lifespan, from infancy to elderly stages.

"It's an honor for us to be working with the Office of the First Lady of the Dominican Republic and to be recognized for the impact of our outstanding programs," said Foley. "The quality and status of our college has long attracted international attention, and I am proud every day of the

important work being done by our superb faculty, staff, and students."

The agreement was signed during a meeting with USU President Cockett and the Dominican Republic's First Lady Cándida Montilla de Medina. It aligns the first lady's initiatives with some of USU's largest and most respected programs. CEHS is recognized as a pioneer in research, training, and services for people with disabilities and their families. The office of the first lady approached USU with a proposal for agreement after a search for qualified universities found USU to be among the highest ranked special education programs in the nation.

Montilla de Medina has emphasized initiatives around developing programs for social protection of children in areas of health, education, nutrition, and disability. CAID is Montilla de Medina's chief project as the first lady. She works to make it a model of care with standards of excellence for children with different abilities and their families.

The first lady thanked the university for its support on behalf of the Dominican people and its government, headed by President Danilo Medina. She highlighted CAID's contribution to benefiting families with children diagnosed with autism, cerebral palsy, and Down's Syndrome.

"We are very satisfied with this agreement because it will be beneficial and will allow us to draw on the results of your scientific research and that vast experience you have," said Montilla de Medina. USU and the Dominican Republic have a long-standing relationship, entering into an agreement in 2000 with Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology to accept students to USU through the Dominican Republic Presidential Scholarship for Superior Students.

From 2000 to 2017, nearly 400 students from the Dominican Republic received degrees from USU through the country's Presidential Scholarship for Superior Students. Additionally, over 400 students have studied on campus in non-degree programs.

One of the chief strengths of CEHS is the broad range of disciplines in the college, including eight departments and three research centers, one of which is the Center for Persons with Disabilities.

The Special Education and Rehabilitation department in CEHS includes nationally recognized programs; its rehabilitation counseling program is currently ranked 10th in the nation. CEHS is committed to providing exceptional

real-world research and service opportunities to students and faculty in human service disciplines. They offer clinical services in multiple arenas including autism and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, speech-language-hearing, and health education.