To: Jean Pratt, Chair  
Academic Policies Committee

From: Jill Prushiek, Interim Associate Dean  
College of Education and Human Sciences

Subject: Proposals Requiring Consideration of the Academic Policies Committee

Date: November 11, 2013

The Department of Special Education Curriculum Committee approved the following motions at their meeting on October 1, 2013 by a vote of 5-0-0:

1. Establish and approve a new emphasis called Unified Early Childhood in the Department of Special Education.
2. Establish a new prefix called UEC in the Department of Special Education.
3. Suspend emphasis in Early Childhood (Code 950-096) in the Department of Special Education.

The College of Education and Human Sciences Curriculum Committee approved the motions to establish and approve a new emphasis called Unified Early Childhood, establish a new prefix called UEC, and suspend the emphasis in Early Childhood (Code 950-096) in the Department of Special Education by a vote of 5-0-0 at their meetings on October 18 and 25, 2013.

The College of Education and Human Sciences faculty approved the above-mentioned motions at their meeting on November 1, 2013.

Rationale for Establishing New Emphasis

The proposed Unified Early Childhood: Special/General Education emphasis would replace a collaboration agreement between UW-Eau Claire and UW-River Falls which leads to dual licensure in Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood Regular Education. The current model includes the 122-135 credits in the Comprehensive Special Education Major, Early Childhood plus an additional 20 credits to complete the early childhood collaborative program courses to earn dual licensure. The number of credits to complete this current program is 142-155 but the average credits for completing the program is 170 credits and five years, including summers and winterim.
The proposed unified model of preparing dually licensed early childhood professionals in a single program is the recommended practice by the national professional disciplinary organizations. Further, the proposed model will decrease time to degree to 4 ½ years and reduce credits to degree to 128-137 compared to the current collaborative program. The unified format and focus is modeled after the well-respected and highly successful programs at UW-Whitewater and the University of Minnesota-Duluth. This program would be the only Unified Early Childhood major in this region, and the second within the UW-System. Finally, this program would fill a gap in programming to allow students to earn licensure that covers kindergarten within the early childhood general education content.

Rationale for Establishing New Prefix

The rationale for creating the UEC prefix is to distinguish courses that are inclusive early childhood content courses from courses that focus strictly on special education content. The Department of Special Education is developing a new emphasis within the comprehensive special education major: Unified Early Childhood. Through this emphasis candidates will complete licensure requirements for two teaching areas: Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood Education: Regular Education. A unique prefix that identifies the courses that focus on inclusive early childhood content will benefit candidates as they look for jobs, licensing officers as they process entitlement forms, and institutions of higher education considering transfer or graduate program admission. Courses within the UEC program that are unique to inclusive early childhood education will have the UEC prefix. Those unique to special education content will maintain the SPED prefix so that those reviewing transcripts will quickly understand the specific content focus of each of the courses.

Rationale for Suspending Current Early Childhood Emphasis

The new emphasis allowing students to be certified in both early childhood special education and regular education would be the only option for those students wishing to major in Early Childhood, Special Education. If the time should arise when UW-Eau Claire would find it necessary to again offer a stand-alone Early Childhood Special Education emphasis, it is a much quicker and streamlined process to reinstate rather than develop a new emphasis. Until the proposed Unified Early Childhood emphasis is approved at all levels, it is also better to leave the current emphasis on the books.

Implementation Date: 2014-2015 University Catalog

We would appreciate it if you could place these proposals on the earliest possible APC agenda. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.