Brief History of Issue—why the issue is being considered:

Teacher education programs must meet standards set by the Department of Instruction in order for graduates to be licensed teachers. The standards are specific to age group (e.g., Birth – Grade 3, PK – Grade 3, PK – Grade 12, Grades 1-8, etc.) and focus (regular education or special education). Students pursuing a specific licensure complete specific courses approved for a given license. The Department of Public Instruction and Preschool Options have shifted towards “inclusive” classrooms—those in which students with special or regular education needs are taught together. This shift resulted in a high demand for teachers with dual certification in both special education and regular education. UWEC currently does not offer an area of licensure (approved through the Department of Instruction) for early childhood regular education. Rather, our students have to take courses through UW-River Falls in order to get the dual certification. Our students end up taking about 170 credits and spend about five years (including summers and Winterim) to complete their degree. Having a Unified Early Childhood emphasis in Special Education would enable UWEC to provide the much-needed dual licensure required for our students to meet the public-school demand for teachers within this age-group and focus area.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Establishing an emphasis in Unified Early Childhood would end the collaborative agreement with UW-River Falls, which is acceptable to UW-River Falls and has been a long-standing discussion item between the UWEC and UW-River Falls. UW-River Falls currently receives pro-rated tuition for our students, who join the UW-River Falls students by ITV from the UWEC campus. UW-River Falls handles all the logistics, which require many resources—this change will lighten the load on their resources.

2. About 95% of our students earn a dual certification through the collaborative agreement with UW-River Falls. They earn the Wisconsin license 777, early childhood-regular education, through UW-River Falls and the Wisconsin license 809, early childhood special education, through UWEC. No other majors at UWEC may participate in the collaborative program: it was developed to satisfy the need for dual certification and to fill a gap in UWEC programming because early childhood regular education is not currently offered here. The collaborative program with UW-River Falls will continue through 2016 to enable the current cohort of students to complete their program.

3. Most of the other dual certification programs are parallel—not unified. UW-Whitewater and UM-Duluth are the only other parallel programs; our program would not present competition for other UW System schools. This program would be the only Unified Early Childhood major in this region, and the second within the UW-System.

4. UW-Eau Claire will be able to recruit high school students for both certifications, reduce overall credits, and expand programming. Students will be able to meet market expectations for the combination of early childhood special education/early childhood regular education certification.

5. Right now our students can’t get certified for teaching kindergarten—this emphasis will allow that. Our current special education program is currently producing as many teachers as possible. Teacher shortages are significant. Schools want both special education and general education. This emphasis will supply certified teachers for Pre-K through Grade 3.

6. The Department of Special Education received a Blugold Differential Tuition grant to fund the development of courses. All courses in the proposed UEC emphasis have been completely developed and approved by the Department of Special Education, vetted through the Teacher Education Strategic Planning Committee (TESPC) and thoroughly reviewed and approved by the College Academic Curriculum Committee (CACC). Some of the courses that are in the proposed Unified Early Childhood emphasis have been revised from the current Special Education Early Childhood emphasis; other courses
Unified Early Childhood

are brand new courses that reflect the national professional organization standards for initial teacher licensure programs which are much more detailed than DPI content standards for EC-regular education and EC-special education.

7. The funded BGDT grant also included a baseline faculty line. If the legislature or university does not honor the funded grant base-line for the required faculty member, then the College of Education and Human Sciences will provide the needed funding.

8. 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.

9. Suspending, rather than eliminating, the current Early Childhood emphasis is prudent for the following two reasons:
   a. The current emphasis serves as a safety net should anything obstruct passage of the Unified Early Childhood emphasis. UWEC must have some form of Early Childhood emphasis available to students.
   b. The Department of Instruction might choose, at some future date, to move away from inclusion (both regular/special education students in the same classroom) and towards more segregation, thereby decreasing the need for a unified emphasis and increasing the need for a stand-alone Special Education Early Childhood emphasis program. In that case, reinstating a suspended program would be faster and therefore enable students to enroll in the program again more quickly.

Pros of Recommendation.
1. Students will have a reduced number of credits needed for earning dual certification, thereby reducing student time to degree.
2. UWEC students will be more marketable, since schools are seeking the dual certifications.
3. WI schools will see an increase in the number of teachers available to teach both special and general education, thereby helping to fill that gap in availability of qualified teachers.
4. UWEC will be able to recruit high school students interested in obtaining both certificates.
5. The courses have already been developed using Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition funds, demonstrating student support for this unified emphasis.
6. The new emphasis would free up resources for UW-River Falls.

Cons of Recommendation: None

Technology/Human Resource Impact:
This proposal is dependent upon a new faculty line, which is currently funded through a three-year pilot Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition (BCDT) grant. If the BCDT grant is not recommended for base funding, the College of Education and Human Sciences (CoEHS) will have to reallocate resources to continue to provide the Unified Early Childhood emphasis. The Dean of CoEHS has committed to reallocate resources if necessary.

Committee Recommendation:
1. Establish and approve a new emphasis called Unified Early Childhood in the Department of Special Education.
2. Suspend emphasis in Early Childhood (Code 950-096) in the Department of Special Education.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee,

by a vote of __8__ for to __0__ against on November 26, 2013

recommends the following emphases changes within the Department of Special Education:

1. A new emphasis called Unified Early Childhood be established.
2. The current emphasis in Early Childhood (Code 950-096) be suspended.

Implementation Date: 2014-2015 Catalog

Signed: ______Jean A. Pratt_____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office