TO: Dr. Cathy Thorsen  
Department of Special Education and Inclusive Practices

FROM: Dr. Mary Hoffman  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

DATE: December 2, 2021

RE: Academic Program Review of the Department of Special Education and Inclusive Practices

On behalf of the Provost, I am writing to conclude the 2020-2021 academic program review process. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of your staff to continually improve the high quality of the special education and inclusive practices program at UW-Eau Claire. As noted in the memo you received from the Academic Policies Committee (APC), the program review process included many commendations, and identified several key areas of program strength. We highlight the following accomplishments:

- The unit successfully revised the curriculum to adapt to changes required by the Department of Public Instruction. We appreciate the magnitude of this undertaking.
- The department's teaching and advising work demonstrates a strong focus on student success. They have built strong relationships with staff in the Advising, Retention, and Career Center.
- The department expresses a strong commitment to working to diversify the population of students who pursue degrees in special education and inclusive practices.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and collegiality in the department.
- In the conversation with the Provost, the department chair and dean identified a number of innovative possibilities for adapting to future changes. We encourage the department to continue those conversations and bring forward programs as appropriate.

We appreciate the challenging environment of the past several years and congratulate the department on its accomplishments in the face of those challenges.

We concur with APC's recommendation to "continue in present form" with the understanding all departments should be engaging in continuous improvement between instances of program review.

The department should act on the following items that emerged from the program review process:

- In keeping with past efforts, the department should continue to enhance collaboration with other units in the college to think more holistically about teacher education.

Excellence. Our measure, our motto, our goal.

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• Although some reviewers recommended a change to the unit’s workload plan, we note workload is not a department-level decision. We encourage the unit to contribute to college and campus-wide discussions of workload, and to consider whether clearer communication with new faculty, changes to the DEP or development of a mentorship program might help address some workload goals.

Academic Affairs recognizes the important contributions of the Department of Special Education and Inclusive Practices. Since the APC level of this program review, the university-wide position allocation process has resulted in permission for the department to conduct a search. Future staffing requests from the unit will be considered in the context of overall university needs and budgets. Any such requests should be framed in light of the future vision of the department.

Your department will be required to submit a progress report on the recommendations made in the review during Spring 2024.

Thank you for participating in the program review process. We hope it has provided useful feedback for advancing the quality of your program. We extend our sincere appreciation to you and the entire faculty and staff of the Department of Special Education and Inclusive Practices for your collective work and dedication to UW-Eau Claire and our students.

cc: Patricia A. Kleine, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs
   Carmen Manning, Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences
   Marquell Johnson, Chair, Academic Policies Committee