

## MEMORANDUM

TO: GSE Curriculum Committee

FROM: Jeannine Tate, Director  
Field Relations and Undergraduate Studies in Education

RE: Proposal for an Undergraduate Minor in Education Studies

DATE: December 5, 2007

The intent of this memo is to seek approval for an undergraduate minor in Education Studies. The minor is intended as an introduction to the field of education and *may* spark an interest in further study in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at George Mason University. The minor will not lead to a recommendation for state licensure from the College of Education and Human Development.

Currently, Ferrum College is the only approved teacher licensure program in Virginia that offers a minor in education with a purpose similar to that proposed here. All institutions of higher education in Virginia with teacher licensure programs offer a faster track to licensure than does the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Therefore, it is important for CEHD to spark an interest in education at the undergraduate level, serve an interested population's need with a minor in Education Studies, and perhaps, recruit and retain students with an interest in the field of education.

Rationale for the Minor:

There is an expressed need and latent demand for a minor in Education Studies. Between March 5 and September 21, 2007, the CEHD undergraduate advisor advised 210 potential and enrolled students who expressed an interest in a minor in Education. A minor in Education Studies will offer quality undergraduate experiences in the study of education while raising undergraduate enrollment for CEHD. Various topics important for a foundational understanding of the field of education will be integrated into the undergraduate minor. Subject matter will include an overview of the field and issues that affect it as well as school law, the organization and management of schools, technology and society, politics of American education, and the sociology of education.

This minor is designed to serve two groups of students. One group is comprised of those who are considering teaching as a profession. At this time, the CEHD offers licensure for those with a desire to prepare to teach in K-12 classrooms mostly at the graduate level.<sup>1</sup> For these students, an undergraduate minor would serve as a vehicle to explore the field of education and to develop a conceptual and situated understanding of schools and schooling. Students who ultimately seek

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, there is an undergraduate English minor and a Chemistry concentration for undergraduate licensure. There is also a licensure program for dance, music, and PE.

to teach will be well served by an understanding of the legal, sociological, cultural, political, and organizational structures which govern the schools in which they seek to work. A second group of students are those who might not be interested in teaching or working in schools but who are interested in disciplines which interact with and inform education such as the law, public policy, social work, and the like. For these students, an undergraduate minor in education would serve to provide a deep understanding of the ways in which their particular interest finds form and function within an institutional setting like education.

For both of these groups, an undergraduate minor in Education not only meets their learning needs but demonstrates that George Mason University and CEHD is in the business of education with all its cultural, political and professional implications. The minor in Education will complement CEHD programs rather than compete with them.

#### Relationship to CEHD Licensure Programs:

The minor will serve to complement students' degree programs. It will not, however, entitle students to recommendations by CEHD for teacher licensure and will not entitle students to recommendation for teacher licensure by the Virginia Department of Education. It may, however, spark an interest in further study of the field of education.

#### Course Justification

The minor in Education Studies will provide students with a clear understanding of the bigger picture of the field of education and provide a deep understanding of schools and society. The 18 hour minor will consist of the following 18 hours of interdisciplinary coursework:

##### Required (18 hours)

- EDUC 300 - The Teaching Profession: Introduction to educational issues. Examines roles of teacher, nature of American schools, and potential contributions of students. Requires school –based experience during course.
- EDUC 303 - Politics of American Education: Examines American political system, and explores how interactions among various levels and branches of government affect education.
- SOCI 382 - Education in Contemporary Society: Studies education as social institution and its function as socialization agency for social stability and social change. Emphasizes influences of social class elements on educational process, and social organization of the U.S public school system.
- EDLE 4xx - Schools and the Law:
- EDLE 4xx - Organization and Management of Schools: Studies basic issues in leadership, organization, and governance of schools. Explores theories and models of

leadership how leaders conceptualize school organization, with an emphasis on distributed leadership in professional environments, systems thinking, and organizational change.

- EDIT 4xx - Technology, Society, and Culture of Learning: Explores the relationship between technological change and education reform initiatives. Includes examination of the relationship between human inventions and social, political, cultural, and epistemological constructions, the history of technology, the relationship between technology and human behavior, and theories of social change and technology. Emphasis will be placed on the ways in which technological and social changes influence and shape the goals and outcomes of the K-12 educational process.