



Rodney A. Erickson  
Executive Vice President  
and Provost of the University

(814) 865-2505  
FAX: (814) 863-8583  
E-mail: rae@psu.edu

The Pennsylvania State University  
201 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802-1589

**DATE:** August 4, 2010

**FROM:** Rodney A. Erickson

**TO:** David H. Monk

**SUBJECT:** Core Council Recommendations Regarding the College of Education

The Academic Program and Administrative Services Core Council ("the Council") has discussed the recommendations received from Susan Welch on behalf of the University Park Academic Review Coordinating Committee (UPARCC) regarding the review of College of Education programs and the information you have provided regarding prospective changes/mergers/cuts that the College may be considering. The Campus Academic Program Review Coordinating Committee also reviewed curricular proposals that might affect one or more campuses and their comments were taken into consideration in the formulation of the UPARCC recommendations to the Core Council.

The purpose of this memo is to share with you the response of the Core Council to various proposed College of Education organizational and curricular changes and to make recommendations for such changes based on the analysis and deliberations of UPARCC and the Core Council.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The Council strongly endorses the merger of the Department of Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology, and Rehabilitation Services with the Department of Educational Psychology, School Psychology, and Special Education. These two units have complementary missions, and the Council strongly believes that the merger should *not* be an "everything else the same" arrangement. Rather, the College leadership, working with the faculty, should use this as an opportunity to streamline, eliminate, or reinvigorate lower quality degree programs, reduce overall faculty size by attrition, and seek interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty in these departments.

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These two units together, with a total of about 38 faculty, have two bachelor's degrees, seven Master's degrees, and six doctoral degrees. The Council noted high rates of under-enrolled courses in both units during 2008 and 2009 and that several units' graduate degree programs have few students. Two programs stand out with highly qualified students, the M.S. in Educational Psychology and the Ph.D. in School Psychology, but several other programs are characterized by relatively low academic qualifications of entering students. We understand that you have already agreed that one program, the M.S. in Counselor Education, will be dropped. We encourage you to work with a merged department to look hard at the curricula to determine where courses and programs might be combined and eliminated, dropping more of the weakest ones, and commensurately reducing faculty size through attrition. Based on our review of the under-enrollment and program complementarities, the Core Council views a combined department of roughly two-thirds the size of the two present departments as a good target. That size reduction would reduce the combined departmental budget by \$600,000 to \$750,000 on a base budget of \$5,400,000. That constraint would encourage faculty to think creatively about reorganization and set priorities among stronger and weaker programs.

The Council's recommendations were shaped by program data as well as the report of the Design Study Team comprised of a number of faculty in the unit. The Council was not convinced by the Design Team's arguments and evidence supporting a continuation of the present administrative structure. You may want to consider enlisting the aid of some visionary faculty outside the existing units to help with plans, perhaps including someone from the Social Science Research Institute. You will need to give the units a specific charge for what you want the merged department to be when reorganization is complete and consider providing some program improvement reward (e.g., returning some of the savings to the merged unit, for example, to enhance the quality of graduate students) if they meet the goals.

2. The College of Education is well along in developing some targeted Integrated Undergraduate Graduate (IUG) programs, that is, the five-year combined bachelors and Masters degree programs. The Council strongly encourages the College to continue on that path. Currently plans are nearing completion on a program for science and mathematics education. We suggest that this IUG degree become a template, and that you and the deans of other colleges start the ball rolling with the relevant faculties to collaborate on fashioning IUG programs in other disciplinary areas with particular emphasis on fields where there are persistent shortages or emerging needs. These programs would integrate some education courses into the undergraduate program, and at the graduate level the student would complete

certification requirements and take additional disciplinary work. It is the Council's hope and expectation that, over time, the growth of these degrees might attract strong students and improve the quality of subject matter expertise in our graduates who are intending careers as middle school and high school teachers. Moving aggressively toward an IUG model (while still maintaining the traditional bachelor's-only track) would differentiate Penn State's College of Education from other regional institutions and provide us a competitive advantage to recruit the best students.

The Council recommends that interested Commonwealth Campuses be involved in program planning as IUG programs grow in number. Nearly all campuses have some proposed Education majors, although the numbers are small at most of them. Some campuses also have other majors that would lend themselves well to the IUG model.

3. We recommend that the College of Education continue to invest in online degree and certificate programs, always keeping quality in mind. The Council looks forward to seeing the online option in Teacher Leadership in the M.Ed. open for enrollment in 2011. We are pleased that the launch problems have been addressed and hope that the program will be highly successful.

We also understand that there is significant market potential for an online professional doctorate in Education (D. Ed.) offered by the University. At the request of the Dean of the Graduate School, the College of Education led discussions begun over two years ago with Harrisburg and Great Valley campuses on a collaborative online D.Ed., but no proposal has come forward to date from this process. Given the significant market potential and opportunity to define a quality online professional doctorate in the field offered by an institution of Penn State's stature, this effort should be reinvigorated with all partners.

4. As noted above, the College of Education has many graduate programs including some that are small and some with relatively low average academic qualifications of students admitted to the programs. The Council notes that the College has agreed to close the D.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, the M.S. in Educational Leadership, and the M.S. in Counselor Education and encourages the College to redouble its efforts to eliminate or redesign programs that are small or of questionable quality. The large number of small programs surely contributes to the high incidence of under-enrolled graduate courses.

5. UPARCC also discussed several other degree programs with you. Three of these were also noted in Dr. Pell's letter to you in 2004 as being problematic. One is the D.Ed. in Workforce Education; the others are the M.S. and D.Ed. in Instructional Systems. We recommend that you set a near term deadline for a final review of these programs and develop a plan to phase out programs that are not enrolling or graduating appropriately high numbers of students.
6. We are also concerned about the D.Ed. in Counselor Education. Our records show that there are no students in this degree program at this time, but it is our understanding that you are considering this as a candidate program for a professional doctoral degree with a substantial online component. If the degree remains with no or few students, it should be eliminated. With respect to the doctoral program in Adult Education, the Council encourages the College to benchmark with peer institutions to ensure that the degree aligns well emerging needs in the field and to strengthen ties with colleagues in Adult Education at Penn State Harrisburg. The level of variability in the academic qualifications for entering students in the large Curriculum and Instruction graduate program is also of concern to the Council. With the very large number of students in the Master's and doctoral programs, students could be admitted on a more selective basis. The Council encourages the college to target selected areas of potential excellence for investment in Curriculum and Instruction, while pruning its lower quality components.
7. In your communication to UPARCC dated April 30, 2010, you indicated that there was a plan to add an Associate's degree in Workforce Education. The Council strongly questions the rationale for that plan and does not see this as a good place for investment of scarce resources. Degrees such as this should not be added unless there is strong evidence that good students can be attracted from a strong marketplace. Penn State currently enrolls less than 100 associate degree students across ALL majors at University Park, and it is difficult to imagine that an Associate's degree in Workforce Education would attract a sufficient number of academically well qualified students to support such an offering. Indeed, the Council recommends that the college seriously consider whether the baccalaureate degree in Workforce Education should continue, given that the number of majors enrolled at University Park has averaged only about 25 students in recent years and typically grants only 5-6 baccalaureate degrees per year.
8. Given that the College of Education is housed in four nearly adjacent buildings, the Council recommends that you explore the possibility of reorganizing support staff within the College. Options for consideration include building-wide support staff that would support all units in each building; unifying staff into one central support staff; or consolidating functionally, for example, establishing a business service unit such as other colleges have done. These options offer good possibilities of significant cost savings.

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9. Finally, the Council notes that the College of Education operates a small clinic in Cedar Building and wonders whether some collaboration with the Psychology Clinic in the adjoining Moore Building might be useful. We urge you to explore this possibility.

Please report back to the Core Council the actions that have been or will be taken in response to these recommendations by May 1, 2011.

Cc: Core Council  
Graham B. Spanier