

**University Council Recommendations
The University of Georgia**

To: President Michael F. Adams

Re: DOCUMENT NUMBER: 2005.12.01.08

Issue: A proposal to offer an Alternative Teacher Certification Program online (SETWEB).

Discussion: None

Action: The vote was called and the proposal was approved.

Submitted by: Rebecca L. Macon
Rebecca L. Macon, Secretary

12.06.05
Date

- Approved
- Reconsider
- Vetoed (see attached explanation)
- Received

Michael F. Adams
Michael F. Adams, President

12-17-05
Date

Attachment



The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Nancy Felson, Chair
Executive Committee

FROM: Dr. William Vencill, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

DATE: October 31, 2005

SUBJECT: Online Certification Program


The attached proposal to offer an Alternative Teacher Certification Program online (SETWEB) was approved by the University Curriculum Committee at the February 15, 2005 meeting. The proposal was subsequently sent to the Graduate School for consideration. The proposal has been approved by the Graduate School and is submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration.



The University of Georgia

College of Education
Department of Special Education

TO: University Council
University of Georgia

FROM: John Langone, Ph.D.
Head, Special Education 

RE: Addendum for Distance Education Delivery – SETWEB

DATE: February 23, 2005

As a result of a crisis situation in the state of Georgia regarding a lack of certified teachers in the area of special education, the Department of Special Education initiated an experimental program during the Summer of 2000 titled Special Education Training on the Web (SETWEB). This program was offered as a post baccalaureate, non-degree, alternative certification program to an initial group of approximately 80 students. The courses mirrored the on campus course offerings available at that time (i.e. objectives, content, projects, grading systems) with the difference being that the courses were offered at a distance via WebCT as the delivery system. All courses in this program meet the same accreditation requirements as do our on campus degree programs.

Since that time, this program has steadily grown in terms of student enrollment and has been identified by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission as a program making a significant impact in providing certified teachers to work with students with disabilities. In order to make SETWEB a permanent part of our program, we wish to seek Board of Regents approval under their provision for distance education delivery of new programs (See attached form).

Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs

PROCEDURES

The Board of Regents encourages the use of distance education to help meet the instructional needs of the citizens of the State. The guidelines and questions below are not considered to be exhaustive, but rather, are listed to provide an idea of the kind of information being sought in order to judge the merits of the proposal.

Date: November 8, 2004 **Institution:** University of Georgia
College/School/Division: Education **Department:** Special Education
Degree (please indicate whether this is a stand-alone degree): Non-Degree Alternative Certification
Major: Special Education **CIP Code:** 13.1001
Proposed Start Date: Retroactive Approval for an Experimental Program that began June 2000

The President shall forward to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, information that addresses the following issues:

1. Description of the Delivery System

The primary delivery mode (95% +) for the program will be internet-based instruction via UGA's Web Course Tools (WebCT) platform. Course content and activities will be delivered through both synchronous and asynchronous means. Horizon Live and online chats via WebCT will support synchronous interactions. Asynchronous interaction will take place via email and on-line discussion boards within WebCT. Additional face-to-face interactions will occur each semester. We are proposing that this program be offered indefinitely as long as the need for preparing certified special education teachers remains a high priority in Georgia.

This program entitled SETWEB (Special Education Training on the Web) has been preparing provisionally certified special education teachers to be certified special educators since June 2000. All funds necessary to cover development and delivery will come from tuition return. No additional state funds will be requested.

2. Assessment of Societal Need and Demand for Distance Education Delivery

Shortages of special education personnel have been well documented on a national, regional, and state level through a variety of sources. The Council on Exceptional Children (2001) reports that, nationally, institutions of higher education prepare only half as many teachers as are needed in any given year. According to the American Association for Employment in Education (2000), the Southeastern U.S. has a "considerable shortage" of teachers across all areas of special education. Furthermore, the United States Department of Education indicates that, of employed special education teachers in Georgia, approximately one quarter are not fully certified (2002). The Georgia Professional Standards Commission reports that the state will need 12,781 special education teachers by fall 2007 and 15,828 by fall 2012. Meanwhile, Georgia student teacher production has declined 59.8% in recent years from 5,415 in 1998 to 3,388 in 2002 (The Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003). Clearly, current efforts to prepare and retain special education teachers in the state of Georgia and beyond fall terribly short of projected need.

This program is needed throughout the state because the current pool of potential new teachers includes individuals such as paraprofessionals and provisionally certified teachers working full time who require a flexible delivery system in order to obtain their teaching credentials. Further, individuals in Georgia's most impoverished communities lack ready access to the caliber of program that UGA is equipped to offer. During the experimental period that this program is run (2000 to present), we have assisted over 250 teachers in obtaining initial certification in special education. These teachers now work in more than 60 counties throughout the state of Georgia. During its experimental stage this program has been self-sustaining through the tuition return option through the University of Georgia. This program continues to grow. We perceive this program as one that can be offered on a regional or national basis in the long term.

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3. Readiness of the Institution to Offer the Program

a. Institutional Mission and Relevance to Other Programmatic Offerings—

This program **does** duplicate our on-campus program in that we will hold our students to the same expectations with regard to knowledge and skills. However, our current campus-based program is unable to adequately meet the demand and diverse needs of non-traditional students in remote areas of Georgia and this further impacts our ability to prepare a sufficient number of highly qualified teachers.

This program is consistent with our mission and role as defined by the Southern Regional Education Board [SREB]. The proliferation of for profit programs (e.g. The University of Phoenix) compels institutions of higher education like UGA to offer high quality alternatives in order to remain competitive. This program also supports the College of Education's mission to provide the highest level of leadership in furthering education and lifelong learning for all citizens. Additionally, this program supports the strategic plan of the College's initiative of commitment to service and improving the quality of teaching and learning through distance education.

b. Faculty Inventory with Delivery Expertise –

Within the Department of Special Education, 7 full time faculty have experience delivering distance education through on-line instruction. Tenure-line faculty regularly teach SETWEB courses as part of their normal instructional load. The Special Education program has gained extensive experience providing distance education through this experimental period and several faculty are actively engaged in research related to best practices in teacher preparation via distance education.

In regard to technology supports for faculty, SETWEB funds one doctoral-level graduate assistant in the Office of Information Technology whose duties included providing technical assistance to SETWEB faculty. Additionally, the university provides training in WebCT for all faculty members involved in distance education activities as well as technical assistance for faculty and students. Course design is supported by the WebCT template, which guides the faculty member through development of coursework.

c. Facilities –

With the exception of regularly updating computer equipment for faculty, no changes or alterations are required of the existing facilities.

d. Instructional Support --

WebCT will provide a platform for course delivery as well as student support. Students will need access to the Internet. Based on previous experiences, we expect future students to be employed in the school systems where they will have access even if they do not have access at home.

Communication through email, bulletin boards (delayed, asynchronous interaction), and chat rooms, and Horizon Live (real-time synchronous interactions), will be used by students and faculty to interact during the learning process. WebCT provides the security and infrastructure required to guarantee protection of student privacy as well as validate student submission of course assignments. Students will access WebCT using their UGA MyID. Students will also have access to library resources at UGA through GALILEO. On-line tutorials will be available to assist students with procedural issues regarding access and use of GALILEO.

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The majority of students enrolled in this program will be provisionally certified teachers working in special education classrooms. Student teaching seminars will be offered online and intensive supervision will be conducted in the students' classrooms by both SETWEB and school district personnel.

e. *Student Services*

We recognize that the non-traditional students who will be participating in this distance education initiative will likely require a number of supports in order to successfully complete the program. Programmatic, academic, and financial supports are outlined below.

Programmatic Support:

An initial orientation to the program will include an in-person meeting to familiarize students with the academic program and WebCT format. Because our students will be admitted as a cohort, we offer an orientation twice yearly. The group orientation will also allow program advisors to personally assist students in developing their programs of study. Students will be able to register for all course work online and will have the option of ordering books and materials needed for all program courses. An advisor in the SETWEB office will be available to assist students in these tasks as needed. Student advisors will also be available to assist students throughout their program to ensure a successful experience. All of our participants will have completed a bachelor's degree in a related field.

Academic Support:

All students participating in the SETWEB program receive the same support as do the on campus students, e.g. disability services, regents disability center and Galileo.

Financial Support:

Students enrolling in the SETWEB program are eligible for HOPE scholarships set aside for teachers entering a high need field.

Other Supports:

The SETWEB program has established a relationship with the Off-Campus Bookstore. The proprietor has worked to streamline the ordering and delivery process for students that are at a distance.

f. *Cooperative Links with the Community* –

Cooperative links have been made (and will be sought on an ongoing basis) with high need schools systems throughout the state of Georgia. This program will offer certification options to aspiring teachers in geographic regions of the state previously underserved by UGA Special Education programs.

g. *Accreditation and Legal Issues* –

The program does not differ in any substantive way from the on-campus program in admissions, programmatic, or graduation requirements. Therefore, NCATE, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission will review it at the same time as all other programs in the Department of Special Education. As with all programs in the Department, this program will follow all UGA policies and procedures.

4. *Recruitment and Admission of Students* –

No specific technology competencies will be screened; however, students are expected to be able to use web browsers and common office productivity software. No specific residency requirements are associated with the program.

Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs

The application process and admission requirements will mirror what is currently required for on campus students. In addition to identifying and recruiting students into the program, we will provide support for students as they navigate through the application, enrollment, and registration process. SETWEB already employs a dedicated student advisor with extensive experience helping nontraditional students who may be intimidated by the application requirements.

The program will have a direct impact on affirmative action because it will give equal opportunity to any and all students no matter where they are located. To date, the SETWEB program has already increased the diversity of students enrolled in Departmental programs because it is able to cross geographic barriers and allow greater access to individuals in remote areas of the state.

Initially, students will be classified as in-state or out-of-state for tuition purposes based on USG Board of Regents Policy. Ultimately, we plan to apply for inclusion in the Academic Common Market so that we can offer our program at an affordable rate throughout the region and differential tuition so that the program is competitively priced for prospective students in any state.

5. Curriculum –

The academic standards for this program are identical to our current campus based offerings. Faculty members who are experienced teaching and designing courses for on-campus delivery will teach courses. All courses in this program are appropriate for on-line delivery. Courses with labs will have an on-line equivalent that will involve student work in the school systems (where they will be in practicum placements) and the labs will be facilitated by UGA faculty, mirroring what is done for our on campus program. It is estimated the program will take students five semesters to complete.

Required Coursework:

SPED 2000 Survey of Special Education

SPED 3030 Introduction to Assessing Individuals with Disabilities

SPED 3050 Classroom Behavior Management for Individuals with Disabilities

SPED 7110 Mental Retardation

SPED 7120 Learning Disabilities

SPED 7130 Behavioral Disabilities

SPED 7220 Methods for Teaching Academic Skills

SPED 7230 Methods for Teaching Social Skills

SPED 7440 Practicum in Special Education

READ 4010 The Teaching of Reading

EDIT 6150 Introduction to Computer-Based Education

EPSY 2020 Learning and Development in Education

6. Consistency with Principles of Good Practice –

All distance-learning activities offered by the Department of Special Education are in accord with the Principles of Good Practice as outlined at: <http://alt.usg.edu/research/goodpractice.html>. These principles encourage a high level of student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active listening, prompt feedback, emphasis on task, communication of high expectations, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The Department will assess all on-line courses through surveys and questionnaires and faculty and student interviews. The program provides an appropriate balance of core, research, and elective courses and through the sequential scheduling of courses students are better able to plan their program of study. The learning structure provides opportunities for growth and development, faculty support, and the rigor of the program is comparable to traditional programs.

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7. Fiscal Implications of the Program –

All expenses associated with this program are paid and will continue to be paid through the tuition return option provided by the University of Georgia. No additional state funds are needed at this time.

- a. What is the funding stream for this type of delivery as well as upgrades and replacements?**

The SETWEB program is fully supported through the tuition return program. **No additional state funds will be requested to support the program.**

- b. What are the line costs for delivering the program?**

Courses are taught by both full time Faculty members and adjuncts hired specifically for that purpose. In situations where a full time faculty member is assigned a SETWEB course in lieu of one normally taught on campus, the program reimburses the department so that a substitute instructor can be hired. Course development fees, equipment, assessment, and all other operating expenses are paid for through tuition return. It is anticipated that tuition returns will support any additional faculty required to maintain the program.

- c. Does the campus project that any tuition adjustments will need to be requested in support of the delivery of the program?**

The primary audience at this time is Georgia residents who pay in-state tuition. The Department's degree programs are recognized as among the best in the United States. Therefore, future enrollment projections include attracting a regional audience and then a national audience. We will seek participation in the Academic Common Market to support reduced tuition for a regional audience. In order to attract a national audience, we will seek a tuition adjustment to reduce out-of-state tuition.

- d. What are the external sources of funding and support for the program?**

There are no external sources of funding for this program other than the tuition return option.

- e. Will there be any operating budget requests for this program that would exceed normal operating budget guidelines?**

The University already provides site licenses for WebCT and Horizon Live, networks to host the hardware and software, and support services through the Office of Instructional Technology. Faculty members will need laptop computers to stay current with the latest software developments. Investments in hardware and software have been covered to date by the tuition earned through SETWEB. We anticipate that subsequent upgrades will also be underwritten by tuition earned through SETWEB course offerings.

- f. Please demonstrate the cost and benefit of developing this program for a distance education format.**

This program is serving an audience of future educators who could not attend the University of Georgia due to the distance they would have to travel to participate in on-campus coursework or because the demands of their work would prevent them from attending on-campus classes. Use of web-based courses, which are highly flexible in nature and the practice of allowing students to complete practicum requirements in the classrooms where they are teaching on provisional certificates or as paraprofessionals will facilitate the inclusion of individuals who are already highly committed to working in the field of special education but who need to complete academic requirements.

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No state funds will be necessary to support this program

8. Assessment –

a. Evaluation Plan –

Students in the SETWEB program complete anonymous online evaluations of courses and instructors at the end of each semester, consistent with UGA and Department policy. Core evaluation items are identical to those included on the standard evaluation used by the Department. Additional items are included to assess student satisfaction related to the delivery system and technology support provided. Core items will be rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Additional items will include both Likert items and open-ended questions designed to provide the opportunity for in-depth commentary from students. Student evaluations will be reviewed each semester in order to determine appropriate changes.

External reviewers who have content expertise and experience with online course delivery will also evaluate courses.

The SETWEB budget includes funds for personnel. Because the program is able to hire additional personnel and pay summer salaries of current faculty to develop and teach courses for the graduate program, the SETWEB program will not increase the teaching load of any faculty member unless he/she elects to teach summer courses for additional pay. We project that faculty engaged in online learning spend approximately 50% more time engaged in instructional activities than they would in teaching an on-campus course. This additional time commitment is due primarily to the amount of time spent interacting electronically with individual students. The SETWEB program provides funding for teaching assistants to assist faculty of record, thereby making teaching assignments manageable. These teaching assistants will devote approximately 10 hours per week to answering student questions, grading minor assignments under the direction of faculty, and monitoring discussion boards. Faculty will maintain responsibility for addressing content-related student questions, grading major assignments, and interacting directly with students through WebCT mail, chat rooms, and phone conversations.

Student performance is monitored throughout the program in a manner consistent with the graduate assessment plan already in place in the Department of Special Education. The learning outcomes for the program were identified, defined, and updated based on the Council for Exceptional Children's 2000 publication, *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The Standards for Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators*. This publication sets the minimum informational and performance competencies to be mastered by special educators. Through faculty discussion, a set of activities and products was developed to evaluate student achievement of these expected "outcomes". Evidence of student achievement is outcomes are then included in an individual student portfolio. Upon completion of the program, therefore, each student will have developed a portfolio that documents his/her mastery of learning objectives. Live Text, for which UGA holds a site license, will be used as a platform for developing student portfolios.

Consistent with existing Department policy, we will ask our graduates to complete student questionnaires 1 and 3 years after completing the program. These questionnaires assist faculty in determining what changes might be made in the program in order to prepare teachers who are ready to meet the challenges of a special education classroom. Employer evaluations will be solicited from principals and special education directors after program completion in order to determine our graduates' competencies related to classroom responsibilities. Both student and employer evaluations are already in use within the Department and are appropriate for use in the online program.

Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.02

Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs

Data on student progress and retention is maintained in a database specifically designed for this program. The SETWEB program includes a number of quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures, which are part of this database.

M. M. Middleton

Revised on 8/31/00 9:39 AM

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