



The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

March 26, 2007

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2006-2007

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to offer the major in Special Education (M.Ed.) as an External Degree in Gwinnett will be an agenda item for the April 2, 2007, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Dr. William K. Vencill, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Dr. Arnett C. Mace, Jr.
Professor Jere W. Morehead

The University Council: Executive Committee, Committee on Facilities, Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics,
Committee on Student Affairs, Curriculum Committee, Educational Affairs Committee, Faculty Admissions Committee,
Committee on Statutes, Bylaws and Committees, Faculty Affairs Committee,
Faculty Grievance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, University Libraries Committee
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

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: Aug 21, 2006

Institution: The University of Georgia

College/School/Division: College of Education

Department: Communication Sciences and Special Education, Special Education Program

Degree (please indicate whether this is a stand-alone degree): Master of Education (Stand-alone Degree)

Major: Special Education

CIP Code: 13.1001

Proposed Start Date: August 2007

SUMMARY

The proposed program-of-study is a duplicate of our Athens campus master's degree (M.Ed.) in the emphasis area of high-incidence disabilities (e.g., Learning Disabilities). This degree leads to Georgia teacher certification in "Special Education - General Curriculum" at the T-5, or master's, level. Our current master's programs are offered on-campus in Athens, and all courses are delivered traditionally (face-to-face). All courses are offered in the evenings, as most of our students teach during the day. Many of our students drive over one hour to attend classes; some drive two hours or more. This places a burden on them and their families, as well as on our ability to recruit. Thus, by offering the courses in a blended fashion, including some in the Gwinnett area and some virtually, we anticipate that we will be able to better serve Georgia consumers while expanding our student numbers. Most of the students will likely be currently teaching. We will initially require all students to have a fully renewable teaching certificate in some field. Students generally complete their master's degrees in about two years, including summer sessions; this completion time can increase, depending on their teaching positions and family arrangements.

The only difference between the Athens campus master's and proposed distance program in Gwinnett is that the latter program will blend traditional face-to-face instruction with some on-line instruction; Athens is currently 100% traditional delivery. The table in the "Curriculum" section (#5 below) presents the program-of-study indexed to the mode of instruction (face-to-face and/or on-line). Our Athens campus master's program is accredited nationally (NCATE/CEC); this program will utilize the same assessments, rubric and standards.

We anticipate in year one to recruit 10-15 students to begin the program (anticipated fall 2007, perhaps spring 2008 depending on the status of the proposal). We anticipate averaging 15-20 new students each year thereafter. As the market grows, we will use tuition return dollars and/ or request additional funds to cover additional course sections and teaching assistants for on-line offerings.

We have already been assessing the market, and have had many inquiries regarding the curriculum and start date if the program is approved. We will recruit via www.uga.edu, the college and departmental websites, school district offices in the Gwinnett and surrounding areas, and via flyers distribute electronically. We will also target HBCU's in the area that do not have a similar program (e.g., Spellman College).

-end of summary

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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 delivery system will be blended, including traditional, classroom-based courses and internet-based instruction via UGA's Web Course Tools (WebCT) platform. Classroom-based courses will be delivered in the Gwinnett County area at a location (s) to be determined, while internet-based instruction 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.

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.

The proposed program is needed because the current pool of potential new teachers includes individuals who require a flexible delivery system in order to obtain their teaching credentials.

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 the Gwinnett County area with respect to the preparation of a sufficient number of highly qualified teachers.

This proposed 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.

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b. Faculty Inventory with Delivery Expertise –

Within the Special Education program, there will be 11 full-time faculty members available to deliver both classroom-based and/or online instruction courses. In addition, 3 to 5 part-time faculty members from the SETWEB (i.e., Special Education Training on the Web) program will be available to deliver courses each semester.

In regard to technology supports for faculty, 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 –

Currently, the University of Georgia has plans to create a graduate center in the Gwinnett County area and anticipates the center will allocate classroom space and computer labs for faculty and students to provide and support instructional activities in various programs of study.

d. Instructional Support --

WebCT will provide a platform for online course delivery as well as student support. Students will need access to the Internet. Based on experience with the SETWEB program, we expect that the majority of students will be employed in the Gwinnett County public school system and surrounding systems. It is anticipated that internet access will be readily available in the areas noted.

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.

e. Student Services -

The University of Georgia and the College of Education have extensive resources to support faculty and students enrolled in distance learning activities. Through Student E-Services, students have access to information about the bookstore, email accounts, and access to technology support services. Students registered for courses at the university may gain access to the library system by following the instructions at <http://libs.uga.edu/galileo.html>.

f. Cooperative Links with the Community –

The Special Education program at The University of Georgia has developed a cooperative partnership with Gwinnett County public schools, which have supported this idea of a master's degree program (M.Ed.) in Gwinnett and would be willing to provide classrooms for training and practicum sites for our students.

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 (CEC), and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission will review

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it at the same time as all other Special Education programs. All of the Special Education program's initial and advanced certification programs are nationally accredited and are approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. As with all of the Special Education programs in the department, this program will follow all UGA policies and procedures.

4. Recruitment and Admission of Students –

Students are expected to be minimally competent in the use of web browsers and common office productivity software. No specific residency requirements are associated with the program.

The application process and admission requirements will mirror what is currently required for our 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.

The program will have a direct impact on affirmative action because it will give equal opportunity to any and all students in the Gwinnett County and surroundings regions.

5. Curriculum –

The Master of Education program-of-study is 36 semester hours. The academic standards for this program are identical to our current on-campus based offerings. Courses will be taught by existing faculty and instructors according to their expertise in traditional and virtual course delivery. Additionally, some instruction and supervision will be conducted by qualified external hires on an as-needed basis. We anticipate tuition return funds and those in the budget to cover these expenditures.

Prerequisites (these courses will be offered online for students needing them)
SPED 3030: Introduction to Assessing Individuals with Disabilities
SPED 3050: Classroom and Behavior Management for Individuals with Disabilities

Program-of-Study	Face-to-Face	On-line
SPED 7500 and SPED 7500L: Advanced Technology in Special Education (required)	X	
SPED 7010 and SPED 7010L: Clinical Assessment in Special Education (required)	X	
SPED 7110: Mental Retardation (elective)	X	X
SPED 7120: Learning Disabilities (elective)	X	X
SPED 7130: Behavioral Disorders (elective)	X	X
SPED 7100: Early Childhood Special Education (elective)	X	
SPED 7220: Methods for Teaching Academic Skills (required)	X	X
SPED 7230: Methods for Teaching Social Skills (required)	X	X
SPED 7460: Internship in Special Education (required)	X	
SPED 7650: Applied Project in Special Education (required)	committee	
ERSH 4200/6200: Methods of Research in Education (elective)	X	
ERSH 4300/6300: Applied Statistical Methods in Education (elective)	X	
SPED 8370: Single-Subject Research Methodology in Special Education (elective)	X	

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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 programs of study. The learning structure provides opportunities for growth and development, faculty support, and the rigor of the program is comparable to traditional programs.

7. Fiscal Implications of the Program --

The items below will be supported by existing funds, funds that will be generated by tuition return, and funds requested.

Costs Per Year of Implementation

Item	FY 1	FY 2	FY 3
Hardware Acquisition			
Assistive Technology & Software Acquisition ****	10,000	2000	1000
Personnel (On-Campus Faculty) *	88,000	89,760	91,555
Personnel (Adjuncts & Teaching Assistance) ****	24,000	24,000	24,000
Personnel (Records) **	21,000	21,420	21,848
Personnel (Technical Support)***	25,000	25,500	26,010
Personnel (Secretarial)***	23,000	23,460	23,929
Assessment Tests for Course Support ****	20,000	5000	5000
Operating Expenses and Travel ****	50,000	51,000	52,020
Total:	261,000	242,140	245,362

* Note that these funds are not being requested. They are currently built into the Department budget since the courses will be offered with current state-funded faculty.

** Note that these funds are not being requested. They are currently built into the Department budget since state-funded faculty will do advising and records will be maintained by the staff assigned to the Athens campus.

*** Note that these funds are not being requested. They relate to staff that will provide services to all college of Education Programs and will be controlled by the Dean’s Office.

**** These funds are being requested. They will cover external teaching assistance for courses and supervision of field-experiences, materials for specialized courses, copying, and travel to send faculty back and forth to teach classes and for supervisors in the field.

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

The courses at Gwinnett will be taught by Athens campus instructors and online instructors via the SETWEB infrastructure (note, this is the means to deliver the program, but the SETWEB budget is separate). Additional funds for travel from the Athens to Gwinnett campus will be required, as well as operating expenses for the Gwinnett campus.

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

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Many of the courses in the proposed program are already being offered to a broad audience as part of faculty members' normal instructional assignment. In addition, we are requesting \$12,000 per semester for part time faculty to conduct field-based supervision and occasional course assignments. Upon conclusion of the funding period, it is anticipated that tuition returns (which will be applied for) will support this additional part time faculty request (i.e., \$12,000).

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?

NA

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. Initial investments in hardware and software will be covered by the Transition to Teach grant.

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 traditional, class-based courses offered in Gwinnett, in combination with web-based courses, will facilitate the inclusion of individuals who are already highly committed to working in the field of special education but who need such arrangements to complete academic requirements.

8. Assessment --

Does the institution have a system whereby it can monitor the effectiveness of the program in terms of 6 numbers of students engaged in this mode of delivery for the program and the number of degrees conferred versus traditional delivery methods?

The Special Education Program keeps running data on the number of applicants and those accepted across degree and non-degree programs, as well as the number that graduate each year. We keep this data electronically and in hard copy formats, represented in narratives and by graphic display. We also monitor student gains related to national accreditation, disaggregated by program.

9. Evaluation Plan --

Students will complete anonymous online evaluations of courses and instructors at the end of each semester, consistent with UGA and Department policy and similar to those evaluations currently in place for the SETWEB program. Core evaluation items will be identical to those included on the standard evaluation used by the Department. Additional items will be included to assess student satisfaction related to the delivery system and technology support provided. Core items

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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 program currently uses this external review process with all course offerings and will support external reviews for proposed courses as well.

Student performance will be monitored throughout the program in a manner consistent with the undergraduate 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 of outcomes is 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.

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 proposed online program.

SOUTH GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL
2285 E. MAIN STREET, SNELLVILLE, GEORGIA 30078

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J. ALLEN WILKINS
GEORGIA SUPERINTENDENT

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GEOFFREY P. JARRETT
MICHAEL MCRAE IV
ERIC D. THOMPSON
MICHAEL WATKINS
Assistant Principals
DAVID COUGHLIN
Deputy Superintendent

March 7, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

As an instructional leader in Gwinnett County Public Schools I see a true need for training more Special Educators to work with an ever growing and changing group of students. The field of Special Education is and has been a critical area of need. With the current focus on Students with Disabilities as a target sub group for annual yearly progress it is imperative to have trained and capable teachers in the field. Many schools are now faced with the dilemma of the sub group Students with Disabilities affecting their annual yearly progress.

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Cecil Fore and the University of Georgia starting a Master's program for Special Education Teachers in Gwinnett County. Creating a program that is supported by the University of Georgia and convenient in location will help train teachers to be more competent. Trained teachers will in turn help our schools become more equipped to support the learning needs of students with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention and consideration to this critical concern. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tina Duncan".

Tina Duncan
Assistant Principal

March 7, 2007



J. ALVIN WILBANKS
SUPERINTENDENT

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

437 Old Peachtree Road NW
Suwanee, GA
30024-2076

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to provide my highest support for The University of Georgia Graduate program in Special Education in the Gwinnett County area. Currently, there is a great demand for Special Education teachers and a shortage of highly qualified Special Educators within many local school districts. I believe that a graduate program in Special Education provided by The University of Georgia would be a wonderful asset to Gwinnett County Schools and other surrounding school districts in producing quality Special Educators.

I look forward to a Graduate program starting in the near future.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Chris Martin", is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Christopher Martin
Special Education Support
Department of Special Education & Psychological Services
Instructional Support Building 200
437 Old Peachtree Rd., NW
Suwanee, GA 30024

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J. ALVIN WILBANKS
CRO/SUPERINTENDENT

"All Students Learn at High Levels"

DR. JOHN GREEN
Principal

MS. TERESA SIEGFENBRUNER
Community School Director

MRS. JILL CHALK
MR. CHRIS CULPEPPER
MR. REUDEN GRESHAM
DR. RAY HILL
MR. ERNEST MOORE
DR. LEZ RIEKEN
MR. BRADLEY SIEGFRIED
MR. ANTHONY SMITH
Assistant Administrator

March 9, 2007

To Whom it May Concern:

As an administrator and former special education teacher and department chair, I am in complete support of the University of Georgia at Gwinnett offering a Masters in Education degree in the field of Special Education. This program would offer a great benefit to the teachers in this area and would allow them to further their knowledge base of how to work with students with special needs. A graduate program in this field is highly needed and would be a wonderful professional development opportunity for teachers in Gwinnett County as well as for teachers in surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jill C. Chalk
Assistant Principal for Instructional Services,
North Gwinnett High School