



The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

January 3, 2013

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to rename the Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education to the Department of Educational Theory and Practice will be an agenda item for the January 9, 2013, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

David E. Shipley, Chair
University Curriculum Committee


cc: Provost Jere W. Morehead
Dr. Laura D. Jolly



The University of Georgia

College of Education
Office of the Dean

TO: Fiona Liken

FROM: Dr. James Marshall 

DATE: December 17, 2012

RE: ESSE Name Change Request

Please find attached a name change request from the Department of Elementary & Social Studies Education (ESSE) requesting to change their name to the Department of Educational Theory and Practice (ETAP).

The College of Education's Curriculum Committee approved this proposal on December 11th, 2012.

NAME CHANGE JUSTIFICATION FORM

Department Name Changes:

Current Department Name:

Proposed Department Name:

Elementary and Social Studies Education

Educational Theory and Practice

Prefix Changes:

A prefix change package should be submitted after the name change has been approved.

Current Department

Proposed Department

Prefix

Prefix

ESSE Elementary and Social Studies Education ETAP Educational Theory and Practice

JUSTIFICATION:

Attached.

SIGNATURES:

School/College:



Department:



Justification for changing Elementary and Social Studies Education to Educational Theory and Practice

The name of a department should be as descriptive as possible of the sort of work the department does and the kinds of scholars who populate it. The current department name, Elementary and Social Studies Education, describes two sorts of work and the faculty who do such traditional work. Yet the department embraces at least seven distinct degree programs and areas of academic work: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Middle School Education, Social Studies Education, Teacher Education Pedagogy, the Educational Theory and Practice doctoral program, and the undergraduate Social Foundations of Education courses. The faculty is one of the most interdisciplinary in the College of Education, extending far beyond the work traditionally pursued by faculty in elementary and social studies education. The faculty extends from historians and philosophers through math, science, and literacy educators to national leaders in early childhood, elementary, middle grades, and social studies education. Most situate themselves at intersections between and across fields, pursuing work in minority-group home schooling, psychoanalysis and teacher education, social class-sensitive pedagogy, critical disabilities studies, post-qualitative studies, international dimensions of education, the social construction of classroom order, science and math learning for underserved populations, Hip Hop pedagogy, and other cutting edge areas of research that no longer fit within traditional teacher education boundaries. What unites that work and that group of scholars, beyond their mutual commitments and support for each others' work, is a thorough grounding in theory, its application in practice, and the influence of practice on theory.

Manifestly, such boundary-transgressive work and such a dynamic faculty are not even hinted at under the department's current name, Elementary and Social Studies Education. Not one-tenth of the work currently pursued by the faculty falls within the usual understanding of elementary education and social studies education. On the other hand, to elaborate a traditional departmental name that might capture somewhat more of the department's work and faculty would result in a name that would fill the top quarter of departmental letterhead. Even a name such as the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, Social Studies, and Allied Education Arts and Sciences (ECEMGSSAEAS) would fail to capture the work and the faculty. Its proposed new name, Educational Theory and Practice, speaks directly to the department's one unifying focus: exemplary educational practice grounded in sound theory and the dialectical interplay of the two. It is the faculty's position that the proposed name is fully descriptive of itself and its work.

Beyond the failure of the current name to describe the department's work and faculty, it is a source of continual confusion outside the College of Education. Even within UGA, the faculty

finds itself having to explain that ESSE is not about the teaching of elementary social studies. Interlocutors who understand teacher education are invariably puzzled by what appears to be a bizarre curricular combination, elementary education and social studies education, with the latter generally connected in most people's minds with secondary education. Outsiders looking for early childhood or middle grades education do not expect to find them in a department with an Elementary and Social Studies Education title. The department has learned that potential candidates for faculty positions have failed to apply because of assumptions they made from their impressions of the departmental name.

The current name is a historical aberration inherited from college reorganization. That reorganization resulted, happily, in a highly collaborative faculty that has been extraordinarily generative of excellent research, external funding, and outstanding degree programs, including its most recent innovation, the abandonment of four traditional doctoral programs in favor of an interdisciplinary, inter-programmatic doctoral program, Educational Theory and Practice. The department long ago outgrew its historical name. The faculty decided that the name of its doctoral program was, in fact, the name that most accurately described all of its work, not just its doctoral work. After a month of deliberation and discussion, it voted unanimously at its departmental meeting on 11 October 2012 to change the name officially from the Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education to the Department of Educational Theory and Practice.