

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Education and Student Affairs Committee, Board of Regents, State of Iowa
FROM: Diana Gonzalez
DATE: June 1, 2005 *ASN*
SUBJ: Proposal for a Master of Arts in Education Program and an Undergraduate Minor for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments/Special Education

Recommended Action:

Approve the University of Northern Iowa's proposal to establish a new Master of Arts in Education program and a new undergraduate minor for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments/Special Education.

Executive Summary:

The University of Northern Iowa is requesting approval for a new Master of Arts in Education program and a new undergraduate minor for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments/Special Education. The proposed master's program will require 37-40 credit hours. The proposed undergraduate minor will require 22 credit hours of specialized coursework; students must also complete the requirements for an early childhood, elementary, or secondary education major at the Bachelor of Arts level.

Background:

The Board Office reviewed the University's responses to the Board of Regents' criteria for new program approval and determined that the proposed master's program and undergraduate minor meet the Board's minimum requirements.

Need/Demand Estimates show that more than 1400 teachers of students with visual impairments must be trained to meet the educational needs of students with visual impairments in the United States (Ryles, 1996¹). The proposed program will also allow students in other programs to gain further understanding about characteristics and educational needs of students with visual impairments because the proposed curriculum will offer new elective courses.

Duplication There are no other universities or colleges in Iowa that provide programs for the preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments. No objections were raised when this proposal was submitted to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education (ICCPHSE).

Quality The proposed master's program and undergraduate minor are expected to help resolve the current shortage of teachers of the visually impaired in Iowa and other states. They will allow students to acquire skills and competencies required to teach students with visual impairments and to obtain endorsement as a teacher of students with visual impairments.

Cost The new costs for the proposed master's program and undergraduate minor are expected to be \$80,000 each year for the next three years. The primary cost is for one faculty member (\$48,000); the Provost's Office has reallocated resources to support the new faculty position. Another new cost is \$20,000 each year for equipment for the next three years. UNI has received a two-year \$50,000 grant from the Carver Foundation to provide funding for equipment; additional funding will be provided, as needed, by the College of Education. Current special education faculty will teach some courses in the proposed program.

Link to Strategic Planning The proposed master's program and undergraduate minor address the University's strategic plan objective to "assess and respond to diverse expectations and needs for UNI programs and services." The proposed master's program and undergraduate minor are also consistent with the Board's strategic plan Priority 1.0 to "ensure high-quality educational opportunities for students."

COP Recommendation The Council of Provosts (COP) reviewed this request and recommended approval.

¹ "The impact of braille reading skills on employment, income, education, and reading habits." Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness. 90, 219-226.

Regent Program Review Questions The University's responses to the Regent New Program Review Questions and to the Principles and Standards for Program Duplication are attached (pages 4-8).

Recommendation Approve the University of Northern Iowa's proposal to establish a Master of Arts in Education Program and an undergraduate minor for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments/Special Education.

dg/h/new progs/June05 EDU2e.doc

**MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS OF
STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS/SPECIAL EDUCATION**
University of Northern Iowa

6.05 Academic Review and Program Approval

Contact Person: Susan Koch

1. Need

- a. How will this proposed program further the educational and curriculum needs of the students in this discipline?

Responding to a request from the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa has worked in consultation with the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School and the Iowa Board of Education Examiners to develop teacher education programs for the preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments. These new programs, the only such programs in Iowa, are expected to help resolve the current shortage of teachers of the visually impaired in Iowa and other states.

Students in the MAE – Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments/Special Education program will acquire skills and competencies required to teach students with visual impairments. Students will also gain knowledge and experiences to work with classroom teachers, family, and other IEP team members regarding the issues related to students with visual impairments.

- b. How does it further the educational and curriculum needs of other units in the college or university?

In addition to providing coursework leading to the MAE degree, the proposed curriculum will enable students to take necessary courses for endorsement as a teacher of students with visual impairments. In addition, the proposed coursework will expand course offerings for students who are majoring in other areas (e.g., special education of students with multiple disabilities). Currently, no other university in the state is offering any programs with regard to the endorsement for a teacher of students with visual impairments. The proposed curriculum will enable students to take necessary courses for the endorsement. Consequently, the quality of educational services for students with visual impairments in the state can be ensured.

2. Duplication and collaboration

- a. What programs in this field of study are available in other colleges and universities in Iowa?

As stated above, no other universities or colleges in Iowa provide programs for the preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments.

- b. With what representatives of these programs have you consulted in developing this proposal? Provide a summary of the reactions of each institution consulted.

NA (Not applicable) – there are no other programs.

Note: The Iowa state consultant for students with visual impairments and the superintendent of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School have been consulted during development of this program. As was requested by the Board of Regents, it was discussed that, due to the nonexistence of such a teacher training program in the state, teachers who are under the provisional endorsement, as well as pre-service teachers who wish to teach students with visual impairments, have difficulty pursuing their degree. This presents critical problems for educational services for students with visual impairments currently placed in public schools and the residential school. It was also agreed that the shortage of certified teachers of students with visual impairments is a significant problem for students with visual impairments and it will not be resolved without establishing a program that can provide such coursework.

- c. In what ways is this proposed program similar to those mentioned above? In what ways is it different or does it have a different emphasis?

NA

- d. How does the proposed program supplement the current programs available?

The proposed program will allow students in other programs (severe disabilities major and the early childhood major) to gain further understandings about characteristics and educational needs of students with visual impairments, since the proposed curriculum will offer new elective courses for them. Students of the proposed program will also benefit from taking courses currently available. The proposed program fits well with existing programs at UNI.

- e. Has the possibility of some kind of interinstitutional program or other cooperative effort been explored? What are the results of this study?

By a request of the Iowa Board of Regents, UNI is establishing this teacher training program for students with visual impairments. Consulting with the superintendent of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, it was agreed that the School, the university program, and the state consultant program can jointly work together to support the success of the program and of overall efforts in education of students with visual impairments.

- f. Please list the Iowa institutions in which articulation agreements are being developed for the proposed program. (NOTE: This applies only to community college degree programs which may transfer students to this program.)

Currently existing statewide agreements with all Iowa community colleges support articulation into this program. Additionally, existing agreements with several community colleges qualify equivalent courses to meet several course requirements in the Professional Educational Core of the teacher education program.

- g. Please provide the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code for the proposed program.

13.1009

3. Estimate the enrollment in this program for the next five years.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Graduate					
Majors	5	8	8	8	8

- c. On what basis were these estimates made?

These estimates are based upon the current enrollment for courses offered experimentally. In addition, current teachers who are provisionally certified were included. The national level of research studies illustrating the number of students with visual impairments and the ratio of teachers were also consulted.

- d. What are the anticipated sources of these students?

These students will be currently working, provisionally certified teachers and/or new students who would like to work with students with visual impairments. Current professionals working with severely impaired students may be included.

4. Provide any available data or information on employment opportunities available to graduates of this program in Iowa and nationally.

According to the superintendent of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, there is a critical shortage of professional prepared teachers for students with visual impairments. Current estimates show that more than 1400 teachers for students with visual impairments should be trained to meet the educational needs of students with visual impairments in the U.S. (Ryles, 1996). It is reported that there are currently 3 teaching vacancies available in Iowa.

5. Are there accreditation standards for this program?

No. However, the program has been approved by the Iowa Licensure Board. In Iowa, the requirements for program endorsement approval are changing from a course-based orientation to a competency-based orientation. Two UNI students have already received provisional endorsements in December, 2004 through the provision of experimental coursework and three students are expected to receive provisional endorsement in May, 2005. (While the Board of Educational Examiners normally does not grant provisional endorsements to programs that are not yet approved by the Regents, they agreed to grant provisional endorsements to students who completed necessary coursework in December 2004, with the assurance that UNI would work diligently to complete the endorsement process by May 2005, a year early.)

- a. What is the accreditation organization?

NA

b. What accreditation timetable is established?
NA

6. Does the proposed program meet minimal national standards for the program, e.g., Council of Graduate Schools or other such bodies?

Yes.

7. Report any reactions of the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education.

There were no objections raised by the ICCPHSE.

8. List the Iowa institutions in which articulation agreements are being developed for the proposed program.

See item 2f.

9. Additional Resource Needs

Will the program require new resources? Yes.

If yes, what is the plan to obtain new resources?

UNI received a two-year, \$50,000 grant from the Carver Foundation to partially support the program.

Will the program require reallocated resources?

The Provost's Office worked with the College of Education to reallocate resources to support a new faculty position. In addition, current special education faculty will teach some courses in the proposed program.

At what level of enrollment will additional resources be required for the program?

Since is this a specialized program, additional resources are required from the outset with a relatively small number of students (5-10) initially as indicated below.

For programs planning to use external grants, what would be the effect of the grant termination?

The Carver grant will provide funding for equipment. When that funding expires, the College of Education will support equipment replacement as necessary. As the program develops, additional funding opportunities will be explored.

- a. Estimate the probably marginal increases in expenditures that may be necessary as a result of the adoption of this program for the next three years. [Note; for new space needs (item 6), estimate the amount and cost of new and/or remodeled space.]

	ESTIMATED INCREMENTAL COST (ANNUAL, NOT CUMULATIVE)		
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
(1) Faculty	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000
(2) Graduate Assistants	\$0	\$0	\$0
(3) General Expense	\$0	\$0	\$0
(4) Equipment	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
(5) Library Resources	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
(6) New Space Needs	\$0	\$0	\$0
(7) Computer Use	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
(8) Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000