

Report: College of Education Discussion Group

College of Education

Rationale

The education programs at the University of Mary Washington, in both The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, share similar goals. The conceptual framework for each program focuses on the understanding of the nature of learners, the mastery of rigorous content information, and the development of effective teachers through classroom and field experiences. Other essential components include collaboration, reflection, motivation, and diversity. Although the characteristics of the students may differ, the aims of both programs are the same. Bringing the two programs together as a single College of Education will create a high quality institution that can implement these goals to a higher degree, providing benefits to students, faculty, the university, and the local community.

Students who enroll in the College of Education will participate in a high quality, cohesive entity at both the graduate and undergraduate levels serving traditional and non-traditional students. A transparent curriculum and coordinated procedures will provide them with clear choices and cross-campus interactions through which they can become well-trained, effective teachers and school leaders. Through the pooling of resources and expertise, faculty will collaborate on teaching and scholarship issues, recruit and retain qualified new faculty members, and make coordinated decisions regarding course offerings and program initiatives. The College faculty, sharing expertise, will investigate areas that neither department has been able to fully explore. A College of Education will act as a unit representing the University at the local, state and national level, providing cohesion and status. It will also continue to provide the University with an opportunity for growth, leadership in effective pedagogy, and a draw for students who are seeking an excellent teacher or leadership preparation program. The local community will benefit from the unified program as well, as the College of Education provides even more highly qualified teachers and educational leaders to the local schools through licensure programs and professional learning opportunities for in-service teachers.

A College of Education, based on the goals already established and held by both Departments, will offer many opportunities for the future. The rationale for forming a College of Education is strong: the benefits are numerous and clear. Both current Departments believe this should happen and work is already underway initiating the process of College formation.

Proposed Goals

GOAL 1 - Enhance the high quality of programs at initial and advanced levels that prepare teachers and school leaders for 21st century schools.

Objective 1 Define a conceptual framework to guide direction for educational programs.

Objective 2 Compare course and field experience requirements of different programs to help

faculty understand programs and to ascertain if there are adequate levels of consistency where appropriate.

Objective 3 Compare and contrast content strands of courses in initial licensure programs.

GOAL 2 - Build strong cohesive relationships between the undergraduate and graduate programs

Objective 1 Create seamless transition for students moving from undergraduate programs into graduate programs

Objective 2 Coordinate field placements for all UMW Programs.

Objective 3 Examine the value of and means for unified external reporting (VDOE, Title II, VITAL)

GOAL 3 - Recruit, support and retain highly qualified and diverse faculty.

Objective 1 Resolve the tenure issues for CGPS faculty who are currently not in tenure-track positions.

Objective 2 Support faculty in the development and delivery of courses and programs using technology

Objective 3 Examine issues of equitable treatment and reward of faculty on both campuses including course load, salaries, committee responsibilities, service activities, professional expectations, etc.

Objective 4 Determine appropriate levels of compensation for faculty who are charged with administrative responsibilities.

Objective 5 Write a COE Faculty Handbook.

GOAL 4 - Expand leadership by engaging the educational community at the local, state and national levels.

Objective 1 Expand professional learning opportunities for in-service teachers.

Objective 2 Collaborate closely with the proposed University office for grants and development.

GOAL 5 - Become a resource for teaching and learning pedagogy across the university.

Objective 1 Determine the appropriate means of supporting and utilizing Teach UMW

Objective 2 Establish and maintain a strong liaison with the Convergence Center and Dahlgren campus

Objective 3 Maintain a strong collaboration and liaison with the college of Arts and Sciences.

GOAL 6 - Create an environment that promotes collegiality and mutual respect.

Objective 1 Build a committee structure that provides a voice

Objective 2 Get to know faculty on both campuses.

Issues

The results of our survey show that both Education Departments embrace the concept of a college of education and are well aware of the benefits, to the faculty, the students, and the university, that will derive from such a college. The survey results also described a number of issues and concerns that will face the two departments as they go through the process of forming the college of education. These issues are listed below.

Issue 1 – Faculty status. Among the concerns falling under this issue were tenure (specifically for the current CGPS faculty), salary (nine-month vs. twelve month), rank, and teaching load. Concerns regarding “equal footing” or “equal status” for both campuses were also noted.

Issue 2 – The structure/organization of the new college. Combining two departments that address two different student populations, deciding what programs would stay, what might go, chairs vs. program directors, addressing duplication and redundancy among programs and course offerings were all listed as concerns. The need for a closely integrated college structure was noted several times, along with the wish to avoid “a quickly thrown together group” or “two loosely tied together programs.” Physical issues such as travel time, communication, and the actual location of the college and the Dean were also noted.

Issue 3 – Loss of the “special” character of the two departments. How can the two departments be merged without losing each departments/faculty’s “special” character. This would include the relationships among colleagues and with students as well as individual strengths possessed by each college.

Issue 4 – Leadership. Several responses noted the need for strong, visionary leadership, and the need for new, fresh ideas and a dean who “inspires”.

Issue 5 – Quality. The idea of developing and maintaining high quality programs appeared several times in almost every question on the survey. High standards, not becoming a “diploma mill”, avoid being driven by market demands, and being seen as merely a “training school” were among the concerns listed.

Issue 6 – Consultant. Almost every respondent (13 out of 16) agreed that a consultant would be needed. While some felt that the consultant should be involved from the beginning of the process, others felt that it would be best to bring a consultant in after: we have discussed what we would like to see in the college of education, we get to know each other and our programs a bit better, and we’ve drafted our ideas. Also mentioned was the idea of visiting cognate programs in other universities before engaging a consultant.

Issue 7 – Additional work load resulting from developing the college. Several responses addressed the issue of avoiding “quick” solutions, motivated by expediency rather than quality. If this guiding principle is to be followed throughout the process of college formation, all involved faculty must be provided some release time (or compensation for summer work) in order to participate.

Timeline

Though it might be too early at this point to develop a timeline, information from the survey does indicate some general thoughts about what things need to happen and when they might occur. It seems that most faculty want to have the college formed by August 2012, while a large fraction would like to see the college operating before then.

Date for formation of the College of Education. Of the 14 “Yes” responses to the question about forming a College of Education:

As soon as possible 4

By August 2010 or 2011 6

By August 2012 3

Not sure 1

A possible sequence of events leading up to the formation of the College might be as follows (based on replies to Question 9 in the survey):

- Getting to know each other and getting to know the programs
- Small group meetings (perhaps based on content/specialty area or issues arising from the survey)
- Sharing information from small group meetings to help plan large group meetings
- Large group meetings to address major issues (curriculum, program development, governance)
- Bringing in consultants
- Working groups based on input from consultants
- Designing the College

Unknowns:

At what point will Dean be hired?