

January 2010

Bachelor of Arts in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies Western Washington University

Introduction

Western Washington University (WWU) proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies degree. Housed within the Department of Elementary Education in WWU's Woodring College of Education, the proposed program would serve students preparing to become elementary education teachers. It would initially enroll 10 FTE students in spring 2010 and achieve full enrollment of 30 FTE in its fourth year. Once fully implemented, it would produce 30 graduates per year. Graduates would receive WWU's recommendation for a Residency Teaching Certificate with three endorsements: Elementary Education, Reading, and English Language Learners (ELL) or Bilingual Education (BE).¹

To obtain the degree, students must complete WWU's 106-credit Elementary Education Professional Program (EEPP) plus the 45-56 credit Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies (LLCS) major. WWU does not propose to change the EEPP, which is a well-established professional preparation component that has been in operation for years. WWU seeks Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) approval to offer the LLCS major to complement 19 other majors delivered by various departments across the university in subject areas taught in elementary schools.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington

WWU has offered education programs for elementary educators since 1899. According to its mission statement, WWU is committed to fulfilling its teaching, scholarship, and community service mission "in a student-centered environment, with a liberal arts foundation and

¹ The Residency Teaching Certificate is a first-level certificate awarded to beginning teachers. Endorsements identify the subject matter a teacher is authorized to teach, and teacher candidates cannot obtain a Residency Teaching Certificate unless they have at least one endorsement. Graduates of the proposed program would be recommended for a Residency Teaching Certificate with a qualifying endorsement in Elementary Education and additional endorsements in Reading and ELL or BE. Whether a graduate attains the ELL or BE endorsement would depend on the graduate's academic and oral proficiency in a world language.

opportunities to develop professional skills.”² The Woodring College of Education envisions itself fostering community relationships and a culture of learning that advances knowledge while embracing diversity and promoting social justice. The program uses research and experience-based knowledge to help elementary school teachers reach all students. The proposed major would strengthen WWU’s teacher preparation role in Washington by helping prepare teachers who respond to the growing diversity in the state’s schools. The program also supports Woodring College of Education’s efforts to embrace diversity and promote social justice.

The proposed major also would support the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*. In particular, it would support the policy goal of investing in teacher preparation to close the achievement gap because it would increase teacher candidates’ cultural competency and capacity to teach English language learners. The achievement gap refers to differences in academic achievement and educational outcomes among various groups of students.

Diversity

To ensure diversity within the proposed program, Woodring College will do the following:

- Work with community college partners and the Skagit/Woodring Connector Steering Committee to reach out to diverse students in community colleges;
- Work with Washington Association for Bilingual Education, tribal agencies, guidance counselors, Gear Up, Latinos in Action, MECHA, AVID, and others to get word of the program out to students of color and English language learners in high schools;
- Advertise on a Spanish radio program broadcast in Skagit County;
- Continue diversity committee work to diversify the student body, focusing on admissions;
- Work to expand a small community action program in Burlington Edison schools, which provides stipends for Latino high school students who want to be teachers.

Program Need

The joint report, *A Skilled and Educated Workforce (2009)*,³ did not find a need for additional elementary school teachers in Washington State. This mirrors the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) *Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State* report (2007), which found that district officials responsible for hiring perceived “some surplus” of elementary school teachers and “balanced supply and demand” of reading teachers.⁴ However, district officials perceived “some shortage” of bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL)

² From the mission statement in WWU’s *Engaged Excellence Strategic Action Plan 2006*, available at <http://www.wvu.edu/president/mission.shtml>.

³ A needs assessment report prepared jointly by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Technical and Community Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

⁴ Lashway, Larry; Bryant, BJ; Burton, Chris; and Hett, Arlene (2007). *Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State*. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, WA, pages 12-13.

teachers. At the national level, an American Association for Employment in Education report supports the OSPI finding regarding a shortage of bilingual and ESL teachers. The proposed program would respond to this kind of employer need by providing training for ELL or BE endorsements.⁵

In addition to responding to employer need, the proposed program would respond to student need by providing an efficient way to obtain Reading, ELL, or BE endorsements. For example, a student majoring in LLCS could save up to 34 credits compared to a student majoring in Elementary Education Studies⁶ who is also pursuing these endorsements. Students say they seek the endorsements to be better prepared to provide literacy instruction and teach growing numbers of English language learners. Program planners estimate that most of the enrollment in the LLCS major would result from students shifting to LLCS from Elementary Education Studies.

WWU students are not alone in recognizing the value of additional teacher preparation to meet the needs of the diverse K-8 students; the community also recognizes it. For example, the *Washington Learns* final report (2006) notes the need for skilled teachers in support of its strategy of improving learning opportunities for English language learners. More recently, Second Substitute Senate Bill (SSSB) 5973 established the state's Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee⁷ in response to the community's need to close the achievement gap. Through its course content and diversity plan, the proposed program would respond to the community needs.

Although University of Washington offers a graduate program with an emphasis on language, literacy, and culture, no other public or private institution in the region offers a similar combination as an undergraduate major. Therefore, the proposed program would meet employer, student, and community needs without duplicating existing programs.

Program Description

The proposed program aims to prepare teachers to teach in diverse K-8 classrooms. Its target audience would include lower-division WWU students and transfer students. It would be delivered on site in Bellingham weekdays and evenings, primarily via face-to-face instruction. It also would include field experiences at various partner schools with high-needs and/or culturally diverse student populations.

⁵ In 2008, the ESL endorsement was renamed ELL.

⁶ Elementary Education Studies is one of the 19 majors currently available. The department chair currently receives about 5-8 petitions for course substitutions per week, about 80 percent of which come from Elementary Education Studies majors wanting to replace courses in that major with reading endorsement or Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) courses. The TESOL program offers coursework for the ELL and BE endorsements.

⁷ The committee, which met for the first time in September 2009, will recommend policies and strategies for closing the achievement gap to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the State Board of Education. The committee consists of legislators, a representative of federally recognized tribes in Washington, and members appointed by the Governor representing African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans.

Students would declare a LLCS major after they are admitted to the professional preparation part of the program (i.e. the Elementary Education Professional Program). To be admitted, students must have completed at least 45 credits of college-level coursework including an English composition course with a GPA of at least 2.75 (either overall or for the most recent 45 credits) and a B- or higher for the composition course, achieved a passing score on the Washington Educator Skills Test-Basic (WEST-B), and completed a proctored essay. To facilitate access for transfer students, program planners intend to strengthen articulation with programs at Whatcom Community College and Skagit Valley College. WWU participates in the statewide elementary education Major Related Program (MRP) agreement and plans to encourage transfer students to take advantage of it.

After admission, students would earn 106 credits within the Elementary Education Professional Program, in addition to 45-56 credits within the Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies major. The Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies includes coursework in educational psychology, teaching methods, literacy, and instructional technology as well as an internship. Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies coursework would include 39-47 credits focusing on language and literacy, and 6-9 credits focusing on American Cultural Studies. The cultural studies component of the program is broader than the American Cultural Studies coursework, however, since several EEPP and language and literacy courses include cultural studies emphases.

All courses have been developed, and students would typically take a combination of EEPP and LLCS courses, depending on the quarter.

Students would achieve the following broad learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate their research-based understanding of the interdependent influences of literacy, culture, and language development on academic achievement of all learners;
- Demonstrate their ability to effectively select appropriate culturally responsive research-based instruction for students' reading, writing, and language development and processes;
- Demonstrate their knowledge of the importance of culturally responsive assessment strategies and ability to use appropriate assessment to differentiate instruction;
- Demonstrate their ability to effectively communicate with and engage families from cultural backgrounds different from their own.

Their work toward achieving these learning outcomes would be aligned with state competencies, and students would meet state requirements through more specific performance-based learning outcomes directly linked to state certification and endorsement requirements.

Both formative and summative assessments would be used to measure student learning outcomes in a variety of ways. Formative student assessments would include rubric and narrative feedback from faculty and peers and self-assessments on a variety of program work including in-progress lesson and unit plans and teacher knowledge and skills. Summative assessments would include

documentation of student outcomes in relation to state competencies for Reading and ELL or BE endorsements and formal observations by faculty using rubrics aligned with state competencies for the Elementary Education endorsement.

For program assessment, the Department of Elementary Education plans to use a variety of measures including the following:

- Student progress through the program and on-time program completion;
- Exit interviews with students who withdraw from the program;
- Percentage of students who receive satisfactory scores on the West-E⁸ Elementary, Reading, and ELL endorsement tests at the end of the program;
- Surveys, focus groups, or interviews of graduates upon graduation as well as one year following completion of the program;
- Surveys, focus groups, or interviews of principals;
- Surveys, focus groups, or interviews of parents of students in classrooms with teachers who have completed the proposed major;
- Periodic surveys of and consultations with school district professionals, professional associations, Educational Service Districts, and state agencies (particularly regarding the content of the program as it relates to professional educator and student learning standards).

Results would be used to develop and implement changes in coursework and teaching approaches.

Program Costs

The Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies major would enroll 10 FTE students in the first year, growing to full enrollment of 30 FTE students in its fourth year. It would not require any new courses or faculty, and it would be supported by state funding and tuition through internal reallocation. To implement the program, WWU intends to use 1.02 FTE faculty for instruction and .10 FTE faculty and staff for administration. At full enrollment, the direct cost of instruction would be \$98,932, or \$3,298 per FTE student.

In comparison, the HECB's *2005-06 Education Cost Study* (July 2007) reports the direct cost of instruction per average annual FTE upper division Arts and Letters⁹ undergraduate student ranged from \$4,725 at The Evergreen State College to \$7,278 at University of Washington Seattle and \$5,879 at Western Washington University. The LLCS cost lies well below this range, mainly due to the relatively low number of Elementary Education courses within the major¹⁰ and the difficulty in allocating costs between it and existing majors and endorsements.

⁸ WEST-E stands for Washington Educator Skills Test-Endorsements.

⁹ The category Arts and Letters is used for cost comparison instead of Education because the proposed budget did not cover the professional preparation component of the degree (the Elementary Education Professional Program).

¹⁰ Most of the Elementary Education course content lies within the EEPP rather than the LLCS major.

External Review

Two reviewers evaluated the proposal: Dr. Darcy Bradley, Assistant Professor of Education, Eastern Washington University; and Dr. John Sutterby, Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Texas at Brownsville.

Both reviewers were supportive, noting the coherence of the program's design and the quality of its faculty. Dr. Sutterby called it "a good step forward" for WWU's education program. Dr. Bradley wrote that, overall, the proposal "is brilliantly conceived, thoughtfully crafted, integrates faculty and departments in an authentic manner, and offers an opportunity to attract a truly diverse constituency of teacher candidates." She concluded by commending WWU for "this leading edge idea in our state, and perhaps in the nation."

Both reviewers offered suggestions for improving specific aspects of the program, and program planners responded thoughtfully. For example, Dr. Sutterby suggested including multicultural literature in one of the program's courses involving children's literature, and program planners responded that they would work on a syllabus revision that would ensure that the "Books and Materials for the Elementary School" course would always include a component on multicultural and culturally relevant literature.

Staff Analysis

The proposed major would support WWU's mission and the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* by developing the capacity of teachers to teach all students in increasingly diverse classrooms. It also would employ multiple strategies to enhance diversity within WWU's teacher preparation program.

Program planners submitted sufficient evidence that the proposed major would respond to employer, student, and community need without duplicating other programs. It would respond to employer need by providing the coursework necessary for ELL or Bilingual Education endorsements. It would respond to student need by providing an efficient way for students to complete endorsement coursework, reducing time to graduation. Finally, it would respond to community need by focusing on areas crucial to helping teachers respond to the growing diversity in our schools.

Students would be taught primarily by full-time tenured faculty. They would study a program supported by external reviewers and would be assessed using multiple measures. Program assessment also would employ multiple measures.

Education programs in Woodring College are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which granted its most recent continuing accreditation approval in 2005. Not every education program in Washington is accredited by NCATE, so it is indicative of the quality of WWU education programs that WWU holds NCATE accreditation.

The program would not require any new hires, nor would it require any new course development. It would be funded through internal reallocation and offered at a reasonable cost.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies at Western Washington University. The HECB Education Committee discussed the proposal during its January 4, 2010 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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RESOLUTION NO. 10-02

WHEREAS, Western Washington University proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies degree program; and

WHEREAS, The program would support Western Washington University's mission and the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to student, employer, and community need without duplicating existing programs; and

WHEREAS, The program would enable students to decrease time to graduation required for obtaining Reading, English Language Learners, or Bilingual Education endorsements; and

WHEREAS, The program has support from external reviewers; and

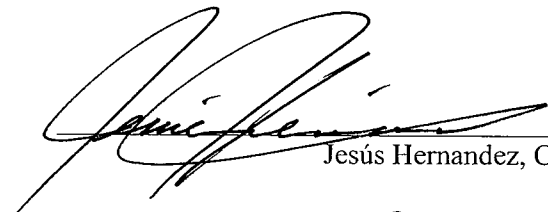
WHEREAS, The program would be offered at a reasonable cost;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Arts in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies at Western Washington University, effective January 29, 2010.

Adopted:

January 29, 2010

Attest:


Jesús Hernández, Chair


Roberta Greene, Secretary