

Montana University System New Academic Program Proposal Summary

Campus: The University of Montana - Western

Item Number: 118-1601-R0103

Program Title: AAS Degree in Education Studies

Date: January 16-17, 2003

1. How does this program advance the campus' academic mission and fit priorities?

As its mission, "The University of Montana - Western provides innovative interdisciplinary education through experiential learning that combines theory and practice". The proposed A.A.S. Degree in Education Studies combines carefully selected general education, professional education, and technology coursework with hands-on field experiences to provide the candidate with the expertise to effectively provide support and assistance in instruction and other direct services to students under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Graduates with this associates degree will be prepared to assist classroom teachers with improving the academic achievement of all students in core academic subjects, as well as providing the personal instruction and remedial education that some students may need.

Western has been dedicated to excellence in teacher education since its founding in 1893. Currently, approximately 60% of its students are education majors; therefore the teacher education program is and has always been a priority to Western. The faculty within the Education Department continually strive to improve Western's teacher education program. Close collaboration with both public school administrators and teachers gives Western's teacher education program valuable insight into current needs and trends in the P-12 school system.

2. How does this program fit the Board of Regents' goals and objectives?

- A. In an effort to provide a stimulating, responsive, and effective environment for student learning, student living, and academic achievement, Western's proposed AAS in Education Studies combines carefully selected general education, professional education, and technology coursework with hands-on field experiences to increase the overall effectiveness of the paraprofessional entering or currently within the classroom.
- B. In an effort to make a high quality, affordable higher education experience available to all qualified citizens who wish to further their education and training, the proposed A.A.S. in Education Studies program will be available using a combination of learning strategies to provide learning opportunities for just about anyone interested in pursuing this program to receive at least some of their coursework off-site.
- C. In an effort to deliver higher education services in a manner that is efficient, coordinated, and highly accessible, the proposed AAS in Education Studies program would offer courses in a variety of ways including day, evening and weekend classes; semester, seminar and workshop formats; and web-based and computer-based courses.
- D. In an effort to be responsive to market, employment, and economic development needs of Montana and the nation, Western's proposed AAS in Education Studies program would provide the necessary education and hands-on experiential experiences for both current paraprofessionals that do not meet the defined qualifications of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and those who are interested in pursuing this area of study.
- E. In an effort to improve the support for and understanding of the Montana University System as a leading contributor to the state's economic success and social and political well-being, Western's proposed AAS in Education Studies Degree offers a needed program for all public schools nationwide in a candidate-friendly delivery format.

3. How does this program support or advance Montana's needs and interests?

Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of paraprofessionals in the education system and an expansion of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, the development of this program serves Montana's needs and interests.

4. How will this program contribute to economic development in Montana? (Note projected annual economic impact both regionally and statewide.)

As state government funding and student enrollment in Montana's P-12 public schools continue to decline, the demand for qualified paraprofessionals will rise as schools turn to lower cost alternatives to education. Currently, Montana's public schools receive approximately \$30,000,000 of Title I-Part A funding¹. Loss or a reduction of these monies by failing to meet the new standards for education of paraprofessionals would have a significant economic impact on the state.

5. What is the Program's planned capacity?

Break-even point? FTE students

Enrollment/year?

Graduates/year?

MT jobs/year?

6. Resource Allocation

Total program budget? \$

Faculty FTE?

During Year 1, all new students will be enrolled in currently existing classes using existing faculty. If additional sections of classes are needed, adjunct faculty will be hired. Potential growth of the program in Year 2 will necessitate the hiring of a .5 faculty member to support the program.

Staff FTE?

As the program grows, staff will be increased to .25 to supervise paraprofessionals.

Does this program require new resources? Faculty release time will be given during Year 2 of the program to post additional coursework online. **Amount?** \$800/credit for 6 credits = \$4800 total

How will the campus fund the program? The AAS in Education Studies program will be self-supporting based on the number of projected new students enrolled in the program.

If internal reallocation is necessary, name the sources? No internal reallocation is necessary.

¹ Source: Office of Public Instruction, Title I Office