

Bachelor of Applied Science in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Education (2020)

Faculty Senate Chair Ken Chestek referred a proposal from the task force on Career and Technical Education (Task Force)¹ for a new Bachelor of Applied Science in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Education to the Academic Planning Committee (APC) for review and recommendation. After UW eliminated a prior CTE teacher education program in 2017 as a result of low student enrollment, the state legislature mandated that UW develop a new program in cooperation with Wyoming Community Colleges. This new online, 3+1 program is the result. Given strong evidence of state need, reasonable evidence of employer demand, and low costs, the APC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed program, despite questionable student demand.²

Evidence of state demand is overwhelming. The legislature felt so strongly about this program that, in 2019, it voted to withhold \$1 million in UW's block grant funding until a CTE teacher education program was reinstated. Moreover, the proposed program provides new pathways from Wyoming community colleges to UW without requiring relocation and creates a new online credential that serves residents throughout the state. The BAS in CTE also targets a future projected state need for CTE teachers. Given the average age of existing CTE teachers in the state (55), anticipated retirement age, and normal attrition rates, projections suggest that the state may be trying to hire 30+ CTE teachers per year in seven years. Such hiring would be difficult without a Wyoming-based CTE teacher education program.

Those same projections also suggest robust employer demand in the relatively close future. Survey data from school administrators and CTE teachers likewise supports near-term employer demand. Gray's data on employer demand is decidedly less optimistic; at 0 to 2, but given how Gray's data is collected, it only captures existing demand and not future demand. So, while evidence of employer demand is somewhat mixed, overall, the Wyoming-specific data on likely retirements and the survey data on anticipated hiring seems sufficiently strong to support employer demand.

The proposed program is also low cost. It will only require one year of classes through UW, and existing faculty have been and will continue to teach those courses. No new faculty or staff lines are anticipated. The only associated costs are marketing, and after the first year, these costs are only \$5000/year. Reasonably anticipated revenues should offset these costs.

¹ The Task Force included representatives from UW's College of Education, UW-Casper, the Wyoming Community College Commission, the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board, the Wyoming Association for Career and Technical Education, the Wyoming Department of Education, K-12 Superintendents, and representatives from business and industry.

² One member abstained from voting to avoid any conflict of interest.

Student demand appears less promising. Gray's data lists average demand at -4 for Wyoming online and has equally bleak estimates on the ground. This dismal forecast is reinforced by UW's recent history of only 2.5 students on average graduating from the CTE program each year. Nonetheless, the hope is that the new programs' flexible 3+1 format, coupled with online delivery, stackable credentials, multiple pathways, and wide geographic offerings will prove more compelling.

In conclusion, because of pressing state demand, reasonable employer demand and very low cost, the APC recommends that faculty senate approve the new Bachelor of Applied Science in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Education program.