

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Kay A. Persichitte, Dean
College of Education
Dept. 3374
1000 E. University Avenue • Laramie, Wyoming 82071
(307) 766-3145 • fax: (307)766-6668 • kpersi@uwyo.edu

TO: Myron Allen

FROM: Kay Persichitte, Dean College of Education
Maggi Murdock, Dean Outreach School

RE: Statewide Elementary Program sunset

COPIES: Andrew Hansen, Associate Provost
Peter Moran, Department Head Elementary & Early Childhood Education
Allen Trent, Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs
Reed Scull, Associate Dean and Director, Outreach Credit Programs

DATE: August 2, 2012

This memo outlines the background of the UW College of Education Statewide Elementary Education Program (SEP), provides notice to Academic Affairs that this program will be discontinued following the teach-out of the final cohort of students to begin the program in fall 2012, and articulates the reasons for this decision to sunset the offering of this program.

Background. On September 14, 2005, with strong support from the Outreach School, the College of Education (led by Alan Buss and Kay Persichitte) convened the first of a series of statewide meetings with Wyoming community college faculty, administrators, and UW Outreach Coordinators to explore the feasibility of delivering our Bachelor's of Arts in Elementary Education degree program in a sustainable structure that would "address the needs of site bound students in Wyoming." 32 non-UW folks representing community colleges in Casper, Cheyenne, Gillette, Powell, Riverton, Rock Springs, and Sheridan participated in this meeting. This statement is part of that meeting agenda, "The focus is on students who are starting at the cc (community college) but are not finishing because they are unable to come to Laramie." At the end of January 2006, we had completed a major needs assessment through a Feasibility Survey that included data from all Wyoming community colleges regarding Wyoming Teacher Education Program (WTEP) curricula that they offered (to avoid any competition from UW), suggestions for delivery modes in a statewide program, timeline suggestions, current and anticipated student enrollments in Elementary Education AA degree programs, and demographic information about traditional and non-traditional students (to judge the "site bound need"). Over the next eighteen months, we continued to meet with statewide representatives to formalize the Statewide Elementary Program (SEP), leverage the resources at Wyoming community colleges

and UW, hire a program coordinator (based in Powell until her retirement in summer 2011), develop budgets, establish a long-term faculty staffing plan, and recruit a first cohort of students.

On November 8, 2007, the Outreach School hosted the first of a series of Statewide Informational Orientation Sessions for prospective students, community college faculty, and others interested in knowing about the initiation of this program.

Program Implementation. Through our discussions with the community colleges, a program outline and timetable were developed for delivery statewide. Specifically, with an AA in Education degree complete, students could complete the SEP in a three-year cycle from their home community. In fall 2008, we started our first cohort with 10 students (see Table 1). The fiscal sustainability of the program was predicated on cohort sizes of 33. Our original commitment was for three cohorts. In 2010, with support and encouragement from the Outreach School, we notified our Wyoming community college partners that we would agree to a Cohort 4 as assurance that our commitment was sincere. Similarly, in 2011 we agreed to Cohort 5 with a formal statement that a decision about any further cohorts would be made in spring 2012. As noted in Table 1, the number of students has never reached the level necessary to sustain this program.

Reasons for the Decision to Discontinue the Statewide Elementary Education Program. The University has shown the community colleges and site bound students a good faith effort to serve their interests. The SEP has an innovative delivery design, a strong advising component, and a broad College of Education faculty commitment with continuous support from UW Outreach. Fall 2012 will be the start of Cohort 5 (17 students are confirmed thus far).

However, even with the strong efforts over the past year and a program delivery history dating back to fall 2008, the SEP has not been able to recruit a sustainable number of students. The presence of alternative programs in many Wyoming community college regions has presented a challenge, and the advising students have received has become muddled through comparisons of numerous program options. Chadron State, Valley City State, Western Governor's, and Regis universities all have enjoyed prominent and visible roles on Wyoming community college campuses and these programs have swayed attentions away from the UW program.

Sunset Plan. *We will not recruit or admit students for a sixth cohort of the SEP. That said, we are committed to seeing Cohort 5 through to the completion of the three-year cycle (spring 2015) to allow the students in Cohort 5 to complete their bachelor's degree.*

As we prepare for the sunset of the SEP, we will extend an invitation to our community college colleagues to join us in a continued conversation about preparing future teachers. There are substantial political, fiscal, and accountability differences in the arena of teacher education (for Wyoming and this nation) as compared to our first conversation in 2005. We will announce this decision in September 2012 at the Academic Deans' Articulation Meeting and seek participants in the conversation from our community college colleagues. A timeline for this conversation will be shared once interested parties are identified.

In addition, the UW College of Education and Outreach School will develop a statewide communications plan to inform Wyoming residents about reasons for and implications of this

decision, as well as the continuing conversation we will have with various constituencies across the state, including but not limited to the Wyoming community colleges, concerning the preparation of future teachers.

Conclusion. While we propose to sunset the SEP program, it is important to note that the UW College of Education continues to provide programs of great value to communities across the state, in addition to the community colleges, for many preservice and inservice teachers. We offer the Elementary Education degree, the Technical Education Secondary degree, and the Science Education (Biology) Secondary degree at UWCC in Casper. Many community college and K-12 faculty and administrators have earned graduate degrees and endorsements in their home communities through College of Education programs delivered through Outreach. These programs include the English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement, the Reading Endorsement, and the Teachers of American Indian Children (TAIC) Endorsement, a graduate certificate in Online Instruction, as well as masters' degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, and Instructional Technology. A doctoral program in Educational Leadership with distance delivery was recently implemented as well. We foresee these programs continuing to benefit the state, our school districts, and the Wyoming education community for years to come.

TABLE 1. SEP Cohort Data

	# Admitted	Communities Represented	# Graduates in Spring of Academic Year (2XXX)
Cohort 1 Fall 2008	10	Sheridan, Meeteetse, Cheyenne, Moorcroft, Cody, Pavillion, Riverton, Rock Springs	(2011) 8
Cohort 2 Fall 2009	16	Douglas (2), Osage, Green River (3), Cheyenne (2), Riverton, Cowley, Sheridan, Dubois, Cody, Wheatland	(2012) 14
Cohort 3 Fall 2010	13	Green River (2), Douglas (2), Gillette, Cheyenne (2), Casper, Laramie, Hartville, Riverton, Cody, Newcastle	(2013)
Cohort 4 Fall 2011	8	Rock Springs (2), Riverton, Farson, Cheyenne, Lander, Powell, Gillette	(2014)
Cohort 5 Fall 2012	17	Casper, Cheyenne, Gillette (2), Guernsey, Lander (2), Powell (2), Riverton (3), Rock Springs (2), Thermopolis, Torrington, Worland	(2015)