

The University of Montana-Western
School of Education, Business, and Technology
Education Department

Proposal for Associate of Applied Science in Education Studies

Program Description

1. Briefly describe the proposed new program. Please indicate if it is an expansion of an existing program; a new program; cooperative effort with another institution, business, or industry; or an on-campus or off-campus program. Attach any formal agreements established for cooperative efforts.

Purpose

The University of Montana-Western (Western) proposes offering an Associate of Applied Science in Education Studies degree. The A.A.S. in Education Studies would be a new degree program on-campus at Western, with some coursework as well as field experiences occurring at off-campus sites or via on-line delivery. President Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (section 1119[a]) increases the required qualifications of teachers' aides so that para-educators (paraprofessionals) hired after January 8, 2002, must have either completed two years of instruction at an institution of higher education, obtained an associates degree or higher, or met a rigorous standard of quality, as reflected by a formal assessment. Section 1119(d) requires paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with funds [Title I-Part A] to meet these new qualifications by January, 2006. A survey conducted by The Montana Paraeducator Development Project indicated there are over 900 paraprofessionals assisting in Montana's schools. Almost 600 of the 900 paraprofessionals (66%) have education levels ranging from a GED to some college coursework with no degree. Currently, the public schools in Montana receive approximately \$30,000,000 in Title I-Part A assistance, so retaining this funding is imperative to the State's school districts. Western's A.A.S. in Education Studies is designed with the purpose of providing candidates with the coursework and hands-on experiences to effectively assist students under the supervision of classroom teachers and meeting the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Rationale: What Makes This Program Unique

The proposed A.A.S. in Education Studies degree 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 A.A.S. 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.

Furthermore, "over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of paraprofessionals the education system and an expansion of their roles and responsibilities. Improved identification of students with disabilities, research on best practice in instruction, increase in the number of high risk students, and inclusionary practices are some of the factors that influence the necessity for additional support staff to assure student success. As a result, there is a need to develop systems that support para[professional]s to guarantee quality instruction and services for all children and youth with disabilities, and their families" (CSPD committee rationale located at http://www.wa.nea.org/PRF_DV/PARA_ED/RCMDTNS.HTM).

The program focuses on enhancing the core academic background of the paraprofessional and providing necessary instruction in areas such as reading, technology, math, and special education. In addition, the proposed A.A.S. in Education Studies curriculum is designed to mesh well with Western's B.S. in

Education degrees for those A.A.S. candidates who choose to continue in the teacher education program curriculum to receive their bachelors degree.

2. Summarize a needs assessment conducted to justify the proposal. Please include how the assessment plan was developed or executed and the data derived from this effort.

Needs Assessment/Evidence in Support of Need

A paraprofessional needs survey of K-12 schools¹ conducted with a small regional sample of Class AA, A, B, C and rural schools (n=16) revealed that 87% of these schools currently employ at least one paraprofessional, and of those paraprofessionals, 59% did not meet the defined requirements of the *Act*.

A survey conducted by The Montana Paraeducator Development Project indicated there are over 900 paraprofessionals assisting in Montana's schools. Almost 600 of the 900 paraprofessionals (66%) have education levels ranging from a GED to some college with no degree.

Currently, the public schools in Montana receive approximately \$30,000,000 in Title I-Part A assistance annually.

According to information from the Northwest Regional Lab, in the northwest states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington there's been a 67% increase in para-educators, with only a 15% increase in teachers.

Paraprofessionals held almost 1.3 million jobs nationwide in 2000.

Impact on the Local, State of Montana and National Economy

Locally, Dillon's K-8 elementary school District #10 is employing 22 Resource and Title I aides during Academic Year 2002-2003. Annually, these aides receive approximately \$267,480 in salaries plus benefits equal to what the certified teachers employed in the District receive. Beaverhead County High School currently employs 4 Resource/Title I aides during this Academic Year at a cost of \$55,440 plus benefits. Rural schools located within Beaverhead County also employ teacher's aides to assist the regular classroom teacher during school hours. A loss or reduction in this revenue would have a negative impact on the area's already weakened economy.

Currently, the public schools in Montana receive approximately \$30,000,000 in Title I-Part A assistance annually. A reduction or loss of Title I funding would have an extremely detrimental effect on all aspects of each of Montana's school systems, but most importantly the teachers and the students that they serve. The loss of these monies would also have a significantly negative effect on the state's economy. According to The Montana Paraeducator Development Project, Montana's public schools employ approximately 900 paraprofessionals annually. Most of these paraprofessionals' wages are obtained through Title I funding.

Nationally, paraprofessionals held almost 1.3 million jobs in 2000.

3. Explain how the program relates to the Role and Scope of the institution as established by the Board of Regents.

UM-Western's Mission and the A.A.S. in Education Studies Degree Program

¹ Western's survey included schools in the Dillon, Anaconda, Butte, Helena, Whitehall, Deer Lodge, Boulder, Lima, Twin Bridges, Sheridan, Willow Creek, Darby, Philipsburg, and several of the area's rural K-12 schools; schools normally serviced by UM-Western. Of the 22 surveys sent, 16 were returned. At least one paraprofessional is employed at 14 of these schools. Of the 107 paraprofessionals employed in these 14 schools, 63 (59%) did not meet the defined requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

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.

Western has been dedicated to excellence in teacher education since its founding in 1893. Currently, approximately 60% of Western's 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. The facilities are well prepared to offer the A.A.S. in Education Studies program.

Western has long offered Associate degrees that provide occupation-specific and related instruction that prepares students for employment. Through successful completion of the proposed A.A.S. in Education Studies degree, graduates will meet immediate and long-term needs of the public schools locally, statewide, and nationally.

4. Please state what effect, if any, the proposed program will have on the administrative structure of the institution. Also indicate the potential involvement of other departments, divisions, colleges, or schools.

Effects on UM-Western's Administrative Structure

There will be no impact on any area of the administrative structure of the institution.

The program will be administered under the auspices of the School of Education, Business and Technology.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature and focus of the program, other departments will provide supporting courses.

5. Describe the extent to which similar programs are offered in Montana, the Pacific Northwest, and the states bordering Montana. How similar are these programs to the one proposed?

MSU-Billings offers an Associate of Arts in Special Education degree. UM-Missoula College of Technology and MSU-Northern are both considering offering an associate degree designed to meet the needs of paraprofessionals assisting in the classroom. Due to the high demand for qualified paraprofessionals created by the *Act*, all programs designed to provide paraprofessional training should be well attended.

The curriculum for Western's A.A.S. degree in Education Studies is designed to meet all of the required qualifications of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and provide candidates with the knowledge and skills in areas of concern within the public schools (reading, technology, math, and special education). Through the selected coursework, hands-on activities, field experiences, and an internship, successful graduates will have received the level of preparation for which Western's Education Program is known.

Associate Degree Programs (existing and considered)

MSU-Billings -- 253 miles
UM College of Technology -- 170 miles
MSU-Northern -- 324 miles

6. Please name any accrediting agency(ies) or learned society(ies) that would be concerned with the particular program herein proposed. How has this program been developed in accordance with criteria developed by said accrediting body(ies) or learned society(ies)?

Accrediting Agencies

UM-Western's teacher education unit received official notice of continuing accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in October 2002. All of Western's programs in Education were fully approved during an accreditation review conducted in April 2002. The A.A.S. in Education Studies Degree program does not need approval from either of these agencies. Successful completers of this A.A.S. program will meet all of the requirements defined in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

UM-Western will work with the Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (NASCU) to assure that the A.A.S. program meets all regional accreditation standards.

7. Prepare an outline of the proposed curriculum showing course titles and credits. Please include any plans for expansion of the program during its first three years.

**A.A.S. Degree in Education Studies
66 Credits Required**

Year One

Semester One

ED 120 Introduction to Education	2	
COMS 101 Introduction to Computers		3
ENG 101 Freshman Composition	3	
ONE of the following:	2	
ART 101 Fundamentals of Art		(2)
MUS 101 Music Fundamentals		(2)
ONE of the following:	3	
PSY 100 General Psychology		(3)
SOC 115 Intro to Sociology		(3)
Electives		3
TOTAL	16	

Year One

Semester Two

ENG 131 Oral Communications		3
ED 250 Child Growth & Develop	3	
ED 201 Intro to Special Education	2	
ED 240 Pos. Child Discipline	2	
ONE of the following:	3	
COMS 135 Microcomputer Appls		(3)
COMS 234 Multimedia		(3)
ED 234 Tech Ed for Elem Teachers	(3)	
ONE of the following:	3-5	
Math 104 Math for the Liberal Arts	(3)	
Math 110 Probability & Linear Math		(3)
Math 115 Math for Elem Teachers	(5)	
TOTAL	16-18	

Year 2

Semester One

ED 270 Literacy and Language	3	
HHP 231 First Aid & Safety		1

ED 255 Contemporary Am Indian Studies	3
ONE of the following:	3
ED 242 Meeting the Needs of the Family	(2)
And	
ED 243 Meeting the Needs of the Fam Lab	(1)
ED 281 Partnerships and Collaboration	(3)
(new course – also would be added as an option in the Special Ed minor)	
Any general science course w/lab	3
Electives	3
TOTAL	16

Year Two

Semester Two

ED 283 Strat for Tutoring Lang Arts & Math	3
ED 285 Students with Severe Disabilities	3
ED 289 Paraprofessional Internship	6
Electives	3
ONE of the following:	3
HHP 241 Personal and Community Health(3)	
HHP 245 Human Sexuality	(3)
HHP 256 School and Com Health and Safety	(3)
HHP 354 Adaptive Physical Education	(3)
TOTAL	18
TOTAL Required for A.A.S. Degree	66

Course Descriptions for New Courses

ED 281 Partnerships and Collaboration (3)

This course investigates the relationships that exist between professionals, parents and outside agencies. Students will learn to work effectively with teachers, principals, other school personnel, parents and agencies. Communication skills, collaboration and professionalism will be stressed to promote harmonious working conditions to benefit students with differences.

ED 283 Strategies for Tutoring Language Arts and Math (3)

This course is a methodology course that helps students learn strategies for tutoring in an education position. Effective instruction in reading, writing, spelling, phonemic awareness, comprehension skills and math will be discussed and demonstrated. This course requires a 60-hour tutoring experience in a classroom and/or community-based program. Prereq: All math requirement(s) and ED 270.

ED 285 Students with Severe Disabilities (3)

This course is an in-depth study of the theory, education and care of students with severe disabilities. Extreme cases of autism, multiple disabilities, emotional disorders, cognitive delay, and physical disabilities will be studied. Appropriate handling techniques, educational programs, Mandt Training, and behavior strategies will be stressed.

ED 289 Paraprofessional Internship (6)

This course is the incorporation of an appropriate work experience into the student's academic preparation. Students will develop a learning contract in conjunction with their employer and the Director of Field Experiences, will maintain a portfolio of their work experience, and will make a final presentation of their portfolio/internship experience to the education faculty. The course requires a minimum of 40 hours of appropriate work experience for each credit earned. Prereq: sophomore standing and c/i.

Faculty and Staff Requirements

1. Please indicate, by name and rank, current faculty who will be involved with the program proposed herein.

- * The following list of faculty includes those who instruct general education, professional education, and technology courses included in the A.A.S. in Education Studies curriculum.

Ronnie Monroe, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Science Education
John Xanthopoulos, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education
Glenda Elser, M.S., Assistant Professor of Business
Denise Carlson, M.Ed., Instructor of Business
Kevin Engellant, M.Ed., Director of Microcomputer Center, Instr. of Computer Science
Iola Else, M.Ed., Instructor of Business
Otis Thompson, Ed.D., Professor of Mathematics/Education
Eric Dyreson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics
Jane Maddock, Ph.D., Professor of English/Education
Diana Francis, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English
O. Alan Weltzien, Ph.D., Professor of English
Eva Mastandrea, M.F.A., Professor of Art/Education
Jeri Bonnin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Music/Education
H. Mark Krank, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology/Education
Jennifer Gilliard, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education/Early Childhood Education
Julie Bullard, Ed.D., Professor of Education/Early Childhood Education
Linda Reiten, Ph.D., Professor of Special Education/Education
L. Kay Walker, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Education
Rita Moore, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education
Dave Kendall, M.S., Assistant Professor of HHP, Athletic Trainer
Gary Lundy, Ph.D., Professor of English
Bill Connor, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Health & Human Performance
Rochelle Carpenter, M.Ed., Instructor of Health & Human Performance
Bonnie Sheriff, M.S., Assistant Professor of Health & Human Performance
Janelle Handlos, M.S., Instructor of Health & Human Performance
Deena Alley, M.S., Director of Field Experiences

2. Please project the need for new faculty over the first five years of the program. Include special qualifications or training. If present faculty are to conduct the new program, please explain how they will be relieved from present duties.

The program will be taught with existing faculty during the first year. Since no new courses in this program are offered during the first year, all A.A.S. in Education Studies candidates will enroll in currently existing courses. Potential growth of the program in Year 2 may necessitate the hiring of adjunct faculty to teach additional sections or cover release time for full-time faculty to teach the new courses. Faculty release time will be given during Year 2 of the program to post additional coursework online (\$800/credit for 6 credits). The Director of Field Experiences and Western's PK-12 partners will supervise all of the candidates during their Paraprofessional Internship.

Initial enrollment in the program is conservatively estimated to be between 10 and 20 students based on the survey conducted with area schools. A growth factor of 15% per year for the first three years of the program with a 10% growth rate thereafter is estimated.

3. Please explain the need and cost for support personnel or other required personnel expenditures.

As the A.A.S. in Education Studies program grows, staff will be increased to .25 to supervise paraprofessionals during their field experiences.

Costs for 6 credits of adjunct teaching per year should be approximately \$3600. Adding a half-time faculty member, possibly during the second year of the program, would cost approximately \$20,000 per year, including salary and benefits.

Capital Outlay, Operating Expenditures, and Physical Facilities

1. Please summarize operating expenditure needs

The operating expenditures of the A.A.S. would be proportional to that of Western's other students enrolled in its other programs.

2. Please evaluate library resources. Are they adequate for operation of the proposed program? If not, how will the library need to be strengthened during the next three years?

Since Western's library already provides adequate resources for its teacher education program, no additional resources are needed.

3. Please indicate special clinical, laboratory, and/or computer equipment that will be needed. List those pieces of equipment or computer hardware presently available in the department.

No additional clinical or laboratory equipment would be required. Facilities and space at Western are currently not operating at capacity. Computer hardware and software as well as AV equipment are available in the following locations: Swysgood Technology Center, Lucy Carson Library, Office Classroom Building Macintosh Lab, and the Microcomputer Center located in Main Hall.

4. Please describe facilities and space required for the proposed program. Are current facilities adequate for the program? If not, how does the institution propose to provide new facilities?

Current classroom facilities are adequate. Field experiences will make use of facilities provided by partners or provided using course or program fees to students.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

1. Please name faculty committees or councils that have reviewed and approved the program herein proposed.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by The University of Montana-Western's Education Department; the academic and administrative officers of The University of Montana-Western; the campus Curriculum Committee (pending); and the Faculty Senate (pending).

2. If outside consultants have been employed, please list the names of these consultants, their current positions and titles. Append copies of their written reports (this is a requirement of new doctoral programs).

No external consultants were employed.

Conclusion

As the need for qualified paraprofessionals in the PK-12 school systems continues to rise, Western's A.A.S. in Education Studies degree will be an important component in satisfying the qualified paraprofessional shortage in the local and Montana schools that was created by the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.