Enclosure #1B

The University of North Carolina
Program Review and Recommendations Form

Date: 11/21/08

Constituent University: University of North Carolina Wilmington

CIP Discipline Number: 131203

Exact Title of the Program: Middle Grades Education

Exact Degree Abbreviation: M.Ed

1. **The accompanying guidelines list questions about centrality to mission, quality, faculty and physical resources, demand, costs, duplication, and consequences of deletion. After considering those issues, which of the following does the campus recommend?**

   Retain the program in its present configuration with specific steps to be taken to increase enrollments. Allow one year for additional recruitment efforts and increased on-line course offerings to increase the enrollment in this program.

2. **As more programs, certificates, licensure programs, and courses become available online through the University of North Carolina Online would you be willing to consider online courses or programs from another campus to meet the needs in this program?**

   Not at this time. Would you be interested in exploring a joint online offering with one or more other campuses to meet the needs this program is currently addressing?

   Not at this time. Would you be interested in utilizing an online degree program or courses from another campus to meet the needs this program is currently addressing?

3. Explain the above responses—either the rationale for leaving the program in its current configuration or specific steps proposed to increase enrollments or pursue other options.

1. Introduction

The M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education is offered in the Department of Elementary, Middle Grades and Literacy Education in the Watson School of Education. The degree provides advanced licensure (M level) in middle grades language arts, social studies, math, and science.

2. Centrality to University's Mission

The University of North Carolina Wilmington's mission includes the enrichment of the quality of life and education in our region. The university is committed to providing life-long learning opportunities, assisting with the improvement of public education through effective recruitment, training and retention of teachers, and enhancing the personal, cultural, and economic health of the region. Key to the retention of teachers is the accessibility to professional development opportunities and advanced degrees for practicing middle grades teachers in the region. Given the critical shortage of qualified middle grades teachers in the state, the effective retention of current middle grades teachers is imperative.

3. Quality of the Program

The program was included in the joint SDPI and NCATE review in 2001 and 2006. In both reviews the program underwent rigorous evaluation and was rated positively. In addition, the program collects and analyzes data from multiple stakeholders including, students, public school partners, and the College of Arts and Science to continually monitor the success of the program and make revision as necessary. The program is in compliance with the state advanced master's guidelines and is currently working to fully integrate 21st Century skills and the new North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards into the program coursework. Students and public school partners consistently rate the quality of the program highly.

4. Faculty Involved

Five full-time middle grades faculty teach in the M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education program. These faculty members also teach in the middle grades and elementary undergraduate programs as well as the M.A.T. program in middle grades. All of the faculty hold doctorates in the appropriate field and have graduate faculty status. Faculty in other Watson School of Education programs teach foundations and leadership courses taken by students in this program. The average teaching load for research-active faculty is 6 courses per academic year.

5. Facilities/Equipment

Since 2004, the program has been housed in the Education Building on the campus of UNCW. The facility is state-of-the-art with all classrooms employing smart technology. There are specially designed classrooms for distance education, a literacy laboratory, and on-site curriculum materials center. The facilities and equipment available for faculty and students are appropriate for the program.

5. Demand

The M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education program was established in 1993. The program is consistently rated highly by both students and employers. All of the students who have completed the program are currently employed as teachers in North Carolina or other states. Although the number of degrees awarded annually is consistently low, it is important to maintain this program so that middle grades teachers in our region have an accessible route to an advanced degree and licensure specifically designed to meet the educational needs of middle schools in this region.

6. Costs

The cost of this program is negligible because no WSE faculty teach solely in this program. All of the full-time faculty also teach in the undergraduate and M.A.T. programs in middle grades education. The foundation and leadership courses (18 semester hours) offered as a part of this program are also taken by students in other graduate education programs as either required or elective courses. The program requires a total of 37 semester hours for completion. This is consistent with requirements in other graduate programs. An enrollment of seven students is required for a graduate course to be offered unless special permission is granted by the Department Chair and the Dean. As appropriate, low enrollment courses allowed to run in a semester are counted as a partial faculty workload credit and as such additional costs associated with the program are minimized.

7. Duplication

The M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education program complements the other graduate programs offered through the Watson School of Education, in particular the M.A.T. in Middle Grades Education, Elementary Education, and Language and Literacy. The program does not duplicate any other graduate programs offered on the UNCW campus. Currently, the Middle Grades program faculty is working to provide greater accessibility to coursework through increased online offerings and a continuing commitment to provide all face to face coursework in the evenings and summers to maximize availability for practicing teachers. The program is the longest running graduate program of its kind in the southeast region of North Carolina. It has a unique advantage for recruiting new students given the strong public school partnership forged with 11 schools districts in the region. The ongoing collaboration with these districts provides enhanced visibility of the program and frequent opportunities for prospective students to be actively recruited.

8. Critical Mass

The Department of Elementary, Middle Grades and Literacy Education would continue to exist if the program was eliminated since it houses five other degree programs. There would be a significant impact on other graduate programs if the M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education program was eliminated as courses in this program serve other graduate programs and students from this program provide increased enrollment for shared courses offered by these other programs.

9. Recommendation about the Program

The program should be continued as a separate degree program in order to provide opportunities for middle school teachers in our region to earn advanced licensure in the field. As mentioned above, the costs of maintaining this program are negligible and as such do not take away from the funding needed to run other education programs at an effective level.

Currently, all graduate students at UNCW have the ability to transfer in 6 hours of graduate coursework from another accredited university. As such, students in the Middle Grades graduate program may select courses offered online at other state universities in partial fulfillment of degree requirements. Thus, an online option does exist for a portion of degree requirements.

The M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education faculty has and continues to actively work with the WSE Professional Development System to recruit new students to the program and to assess both the value and outcomes of this program to the southeast region. The feedback from public school partners and students consistently rate the quality of the program as high. With increases in online offerings and continued recruitment efforts there is an expectation for enrollment growth in this program.

4. Department contact person:

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