

April 2018

To: APAP DiLalla, APAP Chevalier, Chancellor Montemagno, President Dunn, and the Board of Trustees  
From: Special Education program faculty in CQMSE (COEHS)  
Re: Program Change Plan

We, the faculty in the Special Education program in the Department of Counseling, Quantitative Methods, and Special Education (CQMSE), are writing this minority report to express our concern about Program Change Plan.

We are concerned about the overall structure of the proposed School of Education (SoE) especially as a small program who could lose their autonomy in a horizontal structure with larger divisions and one administrator. A related concern is the simultaneous use of multiple operating papers is a related cause for concern along with the time and effort needed to develop an operating paper for the proposed SoE. The SoE operating paper will need to take many intra and inter-program/division priorities into consideration to be passed.

As noted in the CQMSE section of this minority report, the Program Change Plan entitled "Comparison of similar programs at Peer Institutions" only refers to School structures at SIUC such as the School of Allied Health and School of Art and Design (School of Social Work, which is currently part of COEHS is notably missing). We ask for examples of true peer institutions employing the same administrative structure along with benefits, challenges and outcomes.

It appears that the writers of the Program Change Plan have limited knowledge of teacher preparation programs. The plan states "...we anticipate significant benefits to students in the integrated school model. They will have exposure to a wider range of faculty and will have opportunities to engage in cross disciplinary research, curriculum, and co-curricular activities." Our program's curriculum sequence is, for the most part, determined by the Illinois State Board of Education. Beginning in the second semester of sophomore year, there are required courses with the SPED prefix. SPED program majors are also required to take a specific Communication Disorders and Sciences (CDS) course and two Curriculum & Instruction math courses. This is the extent of a cross-disciplinary curriculum. Though we are planning to teach out our master's program, the curriculum sequence in each emphasis area is prescriptive as well. As evidenced here, though welcomed, there is little room for cross-disciplinary curriculum and other such activities moving forward with the proposed SoE.

The elimination of a Chair is worrisome. Though a small program, we have two faculty functioning as program coordinators (one for on-campus, one for off-campus). These additional responsibilities are time intensive and will become more so when Chair responsibilities are shifted to the Division Coordinator. The Program Change Plan does discuss the possibility of a course release. In that event, we ask for a guarantee of the availability of funding to hire a non-tenure track instructor to assist so all required courses can be staffed. Without an understanding of these issues and corresponding assurances, there will likely be an adverse impact on our ability to provide optimal teaching, conduct research and participate in service responsibilities.

There is no mention in the plan about recruitment and retention, which is where we turn more and more of our attention to. Many are unaware that a student admitted to SIUC is not automatically admitted into the Teacher Education Program (TEP). Whether beginning at SIUC as freshmen or transferring, we support our students in as ways as we can as they go through the process of TEP admission. We are also proud of our completion rate not only in completing the required curriculum sequence but successfully completing their student teaching, which includes a passing score on the edTPA. Our students typically finish in four years as well.

Lastly, we draw attention to a proposal that was approved in August 2017 between CQMSE and the Rehabilitation Institute. Opportunities for collaboration and synergies abound and are largely untapped. The SPED program also advocated for exploring the inclusion of Disability Support Services, Achieve, and the Clinical Center in the SoE structure to provide a broader focus and offer additional avenues for research and the like. This would also contribute to the SoE to be a true teaching “hub” for the university. It is concerning that neither of these alternatives (CQMSE and Rehabilitation Institute and broader SoE) were advanced once restructuring efforts began.

Thank you for your attention.