January 30, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Craig H. Kennedy, Ph.D.  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Graduate Certificate in Educating Bilingual Learners

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the Graduate Certificate in Educating Bilingual Learners in the Neag School of Education.

BACKGROUND:

Emergent bilingual learners experience persistent and considerable achievement gaps in U.S. schools and a key factor in achievement disparities is the inadequate preparation of teachers. The Graduate Certificate in Educating Bilingual Learners will prepare teachers to support bilingual learners in general education classrooms. Certificate courses will be available to students in the Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCH) or students in their graduate year of the Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s (IB/M) Teacher Education Program, as well as to in-service teachers throughout the state. The program could also be of interest to site-based specialists (such as reading specialists, school psychologists, librarians, etc.) as well as site-based administrators.

Recipients of this Graduate Certificate will be familiar with principles of language acquisition and cultural competence and their implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment with bilingual learners. Students will also become familiar with the many assets of bilingual learners, their families, and communities, and will be able to incorporate those assets into instructional activities.
Request for New UConn Certificate Program

Program information
Name of certificate program: Educating Bilingual Learners
Name of sponsoring department: Education Curriculum and Instruction
Name of Department Head: Suzanne Wilson
Name of sponsoring College: Neag School of Education
Director of certificate program: Elizabeth Howard, Associate Professor of Bilingual Education
Type of certificate: Graduate, Fee-Based, On Campus (Storrs and Hartford) and Online
CIP Code: 13.0201
Projected annual enrollments: 10 Students Per Year

Program outline and description of program learning outcomes

Emergent bilingual learners experience persistent and considerable achievement gaps in U.S. schools, and the disparities in Connecticut are among the widest in the nation (National Academies, 2017; Thomas, 2017). A key factor in the achievement disparities is the inadequate preparation of teachers (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; National Academies, 2017). Connecticut, like other states, has long experienced shortages in the areas of bilingual education and teaching English as a second language (TESOL) (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2015). For mainstream teachers, all teacher preparation candidates currently have a ‘diversity’ requirement that can be satisfied with as little as a 1-credit course, but for those who want more advanced knowledge, there is an ‘all or nothing’ approach in the state in which the next milestone is to complete the coursework and testing requirements for the TESOL (30-credit) and/or bilingual (18-credit) cross-endorsement. Neither of this is necessary or appropriate for the typical mainstream educator who does not want to be an ELL specialist, but rather, wants to be able to effectively support bilingual learners in his or her classroom. There is state-level support and interest in this type of middle level support for mainstream educators, as evidenced by the letter of support provided by the state Commissioner of Education for a recent federal proposal submission that had this graduate certificate at its core (see attached).

Describe similar programs nationally, regionally, or in Connecticut.

There are currently no other programs like this in the state. The closest model is a new online program at Eastern Connecticut State University that leads to the state bilingual cross-endorsement. While that program likely includes many similar courses to this one, it is tailored specifically to the subset of teachers who wish to pursue the bilingual cross-endorsement. A similar program in Massachusetts is a Teaching English Language Learners
certificate program at Boston College (https://www.bc.edu/bcweb/schools/lsoe/academics/departments/tespeci/certificates-teaching-english-language-learners.html). That certificate consists of two courses and a field experience, and is open to pre-service and in-service teachers.

Describe the program learning outcomes (upon successful completion of the program, students will be able to...)

Teachers with this graduate certificate will be prepared to support bilingual learners in general education classrooms. Specifically, participants will be familiar with principles of language acquisition and cultural competence and their implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment with bilingual learners. Students will also become familiar with the many assets of bilingual learners, their families, and communities, and will be able to incorporate those assets into instructional activities.

Curriculum information
Total number of credits required: 12 (4, 3-credit courses)

Required courses

List the course number, title, and number of credits for each required course in the program.
EDCI 5890 Educational Linguistics (3)
EDCI 5875 Multicultural Education (3)
EDCI 5742 Sheltered English Instruction for ELLs (3)
EDCI 5750 Language Diversity and Literacy (3)

Elective courses

List the course number, title, and number of credits for each elective course in the program.
There are no elective courses.

Detailed course information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>course</th>
<th>instructor</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>approval status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDCI 5890</td>
<td>Michele Back (assistant), Elizabeth Howard (associate)</td>
<td>summer and spring</td>
<td>existing as face-to-face course; online and/or hybrid version to be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCI 5875</td>
<td>Erica Fernández (assistant), Mark Kohan (clinical assistant), Danielle Filipiak (assistant)</td>
<td>summer, fall, and spring</td>
<td>existing as face-to-face course; online and/or hybrid version to be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCI 5742</td>
<td>Elizabeth Howard (associate)</td>
<td>fall and spring</td>
<td>existing as face-to-face course; online and/or hybrid version to be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCI 5750</td>
<td>Elizabeth Howard (associate), Elena Sada (graduate student)</td>
<td>spring</td>
<td>existing as face-to-face course; online and/or hybrid version to be developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program evaluation
The program will be evaluated through a combination of indicators:
1) Course evaluations - We will monitor course evaluations for the four courses that are part of the certificate, and if possible, will add an additional, anonymous question that asks certificate participants to comment on the utility of the course in relationship to the other required courses.

2) Certificate completion – percentage of participants who complete all four courses.

3) Job placements of certificate recipients – The certificate director will monitor the job placements of preservice certificate participants, noting in particular the district as well as the percentage of emergent bilingual learners in the school.

4) Exit focus group – a voluntary online focus group will be carried out in the fall following certificate completion (and job placement for preservice certificate recipients) to gain participants’ insights about the certificate program, the ways in which it prepared them to support bilingual learners, and what adjustments they would suggest to strengthen the program.

Financial resources
No additional funding is required at this time because the graduate certificate initially targets existing pre-service teachers and consists of existing courses that are already offered on a regular basis by existing instructors. The goal is to adapt these courses to make them available in hybrid and online formats for easier and expanded access to inservice educators as well as preservice teachers.

Matriculated students and non-degree students are eligible to enroll in this program. The program will follow the same fee structure currently approved for Educational Technology and Gifted and Talented Education (Neag School of Education)

Facilities/Equipment/Library/Special resources
None.

References:
