December 9, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Carl W. Lejuez, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Centers and Institutes

BACKGROUND:

Following review and deliberation, the 2020-2021 Academic Centers and Institutes Review Committee brought forth the following recommendation, which I support.

Granted Status Change:
Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA) to the Center for Educational Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE)

Status Change:
Center for Educational Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation
The Center of Educational Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE, formerly CEPA) is conceived of as a hub of research and scholarly activities in the Neag School. As a Neag School center, it will support faculty engagement in interdisciplinary and boundary crossing research and public engagement activities in education. CEPARE thus differs substantially in mission and scope from its predecessor, CEPA. While CEPA was focused on educational policy, CEPARE has a broader mission to produce high-quality research, evaluation, and policy analysis related to education, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary efforts. Through these changes, CEPARE will extend its relevance to policymakers and practitioners and impact on the field of education in Connecticut and beyond.
Changes in Mission/Scope
The Center of Educational Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE, formerly CEPA) is conceived of as a hub of research and scholarly activities in the Neag School. As a Neag School center, it will support faculty engagement in interdisciplinary and boundary crossing research and public engagement activities in education.

CEPARE aims to support research efforts that may not align with the goals of existing Neag School centers and foster collaboration within the Neag School, across the university, and with scholars at other institutions. It seeks to address work that is not traditionally supported by academic units (e.g., tuition or revenue-generating degree programs, graduate certificates, etc.).

CEPARE thus differs substantially in mission and scope from its predecessor, CEPA. While CEPA was focused on educational policy, CEPARE has a broader mission to produce high-quality research, evaluation, and policy analysis related to education, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary efforts. Through these changes, CEPARE will extend its relevance to policymakers and practitioners and impact on the field of education in Connecticut and beyond.

Changes in Internal Structure of the Center
In line with its schoolwide organization and goals, CEPARE will include affiliates engaged in interdisciplinary or boundary-spanning work from across the Neag School and beyond, as described below. It will also benefit from an advisory board. In addition, CEPARE will receive more resources from schoolwide funds than CEPA. CEPARE will receive administrative support and funding support as described below.

Administrative Support
CEPARE will be supported by the following:

- A director who will coordinate Center activities
  - Director will have a dotted line supervisory relationship to the Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Affairs
- CEPARE Steering committee/Advisory Board consisting of representative members from each identified faculty hub lead (described below)
- Administrative Services
  - ~25% of the ADFRA Administrators time to support CEPARE Efforts
  - Support from the Neag School Business Services (same as offered to other units).
  - Additional administrative support as allowed by funded projects

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1 Scholarly work taking place in other Neag School Centers: Renzulli Center: Gifted Education, Achievement; CBER: MTSS, PBIS, SEL, Postsecondary Education
Funding Support
Anticipated annual support, depending on fiscal circumstances and investment returns. Plans for use of endowment funds to be proposed annually.

- Center Activities (e.g., research training program, speaker series, policy brief series, etc.): ~$40,000: Based on an encumbrance of $1,000,000 allocation from the Ray Neag, which will typically generate a spendable balance of 4%
- Specific Initiatives
  - SETER Alliance: ~$40,000: Encumbered $1,000,000 as seed funding for SETER Alliance activities (e.g., convening, seed funding for projects)
  - Dean’s (Interdisciplinary) Research Incentive Grant (DRIG) Program: up to $30,000 from Neag School IDC Account depending on availability of funds

CEPARE Signature Activities
- Dean’s Interdisciplinary Research Incentive Grant Program
- SETER Alliance*
- Policy Brief Series
- CEPARE Speaker Series
- Research training activities

*Note: The Alliance for Socially and Educationally Transformative Engagement and Research (SETER Alliance) is a proposed research/practice partnership between the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Alliance School districts, and the Neag School of Education. The Alliance Districts are 33 of the lowest-performing school districts in Connecticut, serving 42% of its student population (~220,000), including more than 63% of Connecticut’s students of color, 65% of Connecticut’s 224,000 low-income students, and 76% of Connecticut’s English Learners (EL) students. Collectively, these school districts include 410 schools in 33 unique, diverse, and complex school districts. The aim of this initiative is to provide faculty opportunities to partner with stakeholders in Alliance Districts on research and evaluation efforts to address longstanding and enduring problems of practice in ways that can potentially benefit some of Connecticut’s most challenged schools and districts.

Research Hubs
Research hubs are key areas of research conducted by Neag School faculty or areas of potential research growth. These hubs provide an opportunity to build collaboratories and showcase faculty work that fall under the identified research areas (See Table 1). Each hub is facilitated by a faculty lead who volunteers to coordinate activities as part of his or her service assignment.

CEPARE Goals
CEPARE’s goals, enumerated below, incorporate the goals laid out in CEPA’s 2020 self-review.
1. Increase research and evaluation productivity in Neag
- Increase the number of research grants proposals that are submitted and secured, particularly interdisciplinary or partnership grants (i.e., RPP)
- Increase the number of external evaluation grants that are submitted and secured, including proposals with UConn serving as the external evaluator (i.e., NSF, SEED).
- Increase the number of publications
- Generate a substantial number of website hits accessing research and evaluation products

2. Develop/enhance Center’s reputation as primary source for education policy analysis, research, and evaluation, statewide and nationally
   - Hold at least 3 events a year (e.g., Speaker Series)
   - Issue at least 4 policy briefs
   - Hold one statewide and/or national event every two years, on average
   - Increase the number of groups seeking research and evaluation partnerships

3. Deliver training to enhance productivity and dissemination efforts
   - Research methods
     - upskill or specialized skill development (e.g., using GIS in education research)
   - Evaluation
     - professional development (e.g., using big data in evaluation, value-for-money, principle-focused evaluation, evaluation data dashboard design, systems evaluation)
   - Dissemination to broad audiences
     - Communication with public audiences (e.g., using infographics to convey research results, Public engagement)

Faculty Affiliation
Faculty who may affiliate with CEPARE include but are not limited to:
- Neag school faculty who conduct work in one or more of the hub areas
- Faculty outside the Neag School with interest in one or more of the hub areas
  - Disciplinary faculty at UConn (e.g., STEM discipline faculty interested in education research; sociology of education researchers; educational anthropologists; policy and economy of education researchers)
  - Researchers from other IHEs
Table 1. List of Possible Research Hubs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Topic Areas</th>
<th>Possible Funding Opportunities (Hyperlinked)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Effects and implications of adopted policies</td>
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<td>● Cost-Benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis of policy decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Program Evaluation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Needs and asset assessment</td>
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<td>● Evaluability assessment</td>
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<td>● Program Monitoring</td>
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<td>● Implementation &amp; process evaluation</td>
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<td>● Outcome &amp; impact evaluation</td>
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<td>● Cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, and value-for-money analysis of programs</td>
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<td>● Social impact assessment</td>
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<td><strong>Educator Quality and Effectiveness</strong></td>
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<td>● Educator Identity studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Teacher, Teaching, Teacher Learning</td>
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<td>● Leaders, Leading, Leader Effectiveness</td>
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<td>● Teacher/Leader Recruitment and Retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Effectiveness of Professional Development Programs</td>
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<td><strong>Racial Equity, Disparity, and Opportunity (REDO) Studies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Access, Opportunity, and/or Achievement Gaps</td>
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<td>● Differential engagement and learning opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Issues (English Learners, DACA, low SES etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education</strong></td>
<td>[Independent – focusing on one topic only; Integrated – involving 2 or more of the topic areas]</td>
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<td>● Demographic opportunity differences (race, gender, etc.)</td>
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<td>● Discipline Based Education Research (e.g., undergraduate or graduate T &amp; L)</td>
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<td>● K-12 Teaching and Learning Issues</td>
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<td>● K-20 Pipeline and Issues</td>
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<td>● Literacy (e.g., information, mathematics, science)</td>
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<td>● STEM interventions and outreach efforts</td>
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<td>● Workforce issues (interest, access, retention, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Improvement/Education Reform</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Effectiveness of Intervention (for what? For whom? Under what circumstances)</td>
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<td><strong>Other Educational Settings and Beyond School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Family, Community, &amp; School Connections</td>
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<td>● Informal Education Settings (e.g., museums, community programs, etc.)</td>
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*Note: This table lists possible hub areas. The final list of hubs, will depend on faculty interest.
Potential Funding Sources

- **Carnegie Corporation of New York: Education Grant**
- **Ford Postdoctoral Fellowship Program**
- **National Endowment for Humanities**
  - Research and Development
  - Digital Projects for the Public
  - Summer Seminars and Institutes for K-12 Educators
  - Summer Seminars and Institutes for Higher Education Faculty
- **National Science Foundation (EHR)**
  - Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL)
  - Computer Science for All (CSforAll: Research and RPPs)
  - Discovery Research PreK-12 (DRK-12)
  - EHR Core Research (ECR)
  - EHR Core Research (ECR): Building Capacity in STEM Education Research (ECR: BCSER)
  - Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER)
  - Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources (IUSE; EHR)
  - Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST)
  - NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S-STEM)
  - Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program
  - STEM + Computing K-12 Education (STEM+C)
- **Spencer Foundation**
  - Lyle Spencer Research Award to Transform Education
  - Research Grants of Education (Large)
  - Research Grants on Education (Small)
  - Research-Practice Partnership: Collaborative research for educational change
  - [https://www.spencer.org/research-grants](https://www.spencer.org/research-grants)
- **US Department of Commerce**
  - National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) K12 – Cybersecurity Education Outreach Program
- **USDOE: Institution of Educational Sciences**
  - Education Research (84.305A)
  - Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences (84.305B)
  - Education Research and Development Centers (84.305C)
  - Statistical and Research Methodology in Education (84.305D)
  - Research Grants Focused on Systematic Replication (84.305R)
  - Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking (84.305S)
- **USDOE: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**
  - Education and Innovation Research (EIR): Mid-Phase Grants CFDA Number 84.411B

Others Private Foundation
- State Education Agencies (SEA, e.g., CSDE)
- Local Education Agencies (e.g., School districts)
- Private Foundations
  - 3M Foundation Commitment to Education
  - Blue Meridien Partners
  - Braitmayer Foundation Grants
- Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (spending down their assets in 10 years)
- Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants, State Farm Company Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Laura & John Arnold Foundation
- Travelers Companies, Inc. - Grant
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Research Resource:

- EdInstruments (https://edinstruments.com/)
  - An open-source library of education-relevant measurement tools to support new knowledge for the improvement of educational opportunities.