

TOPIC: APPROVAL OF MAT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

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I. SUMMARY

This action item requests initial and retroactive approval of a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree in Physical Education at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). This proposed graduate program, which UNC has offered the last two years without Commission approval, is for physical education teachers who are currently licensed in Colorado and are returning for graduate level work to increase their applied and practical knowledge. State Board of Education approval is not required because this program is not intended to be used for the initial preparation and endorsement of physical education teachers.

II. BACKGROUND

This degree program recently came to the attention of Department of Higher Education staff. The faculty at UNC had been offering the program under the assumption that it was a simple curriculum change and did not realize the program required Commission approval. The following is summarized from UNC's proposal.

DESCRIPTION:

The MAT in Physical Education replaces the off-campus MS Sport and Exercise Science degree for Sport Pedagogy; the new degree does not change the existing on-campus offering of an MS degree.

Since the inception of the MS degree in Fall 2005, faculty of the School of Sport and Exercise Science have realized that the program was not appropriate for the type of students who were attracted to it, that is, in-service teachers who desire applied and practical knowledge. The MS degree is more scholarship-based and provides students the opportunity to examine and reflect upon different assumptions, conceptions and paradigms of teaching physical activity and sport. In contrast, the proposed MAT degree is more practitioner-focused and will provide students the opportunity to enhance their skills, knowledge and dispositions to improve their practice as teachers and improve the learning and achievement of their K-12 students. Five of the ten courses in the proposed MAT degree are the same foundational courses as in the MS degree. The remaining five courses allow for the application of knowledge to teaching and learning situations. Under the two-year program, two courses will be offered each semester on a three-weekend basis and three courses will be taught in the summer. Cohort enrollment in the MS degree from Fall 2005 to Summer 2007 has been

about fourteen students per semester. Individual course enrollment is greater as some physical education teachers take individual courses for continuing education credit.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT:

The role and mission of the University of Northern Colorado requires that the university be the primary institution for undergraduate and graduate degree programs for educational personnel preparation in the state of Colorado and offer masters and doctoral programs primarily in the field of education (C.R.S. §23-40-101). The proposed degree program supports this mission by providing professional development to Colorado's physical education teachers.

ADMISSION AND GRADUATION STANDARDS:

Admission is open to in-service teachers. While the current MS degree requires an alternative comprehensive exam, the proposed MAT degree will require a student portfolio and demonstration of skills, knowledge and dispositions to the physical education learning environment.

PROGRAM FACULTY:

The degree is offered through Extended Studies and will not change the on-campus offering of the M.S. degree.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Department staff has reviewed this proposed program and letters of assurances from academic administrators to ensure that the degree program meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. §23-5-129.6. The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the Master of Arts in Teaching Physical Education degree submitted by University of Northern Colorado.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant statute, policy, and the letter of approval from the State Board of Education are on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY C.R.S. §23-5-129.6