

**TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF BACHELOR OF INNOVATION IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS**

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**I. SUMMARY**

This item recommends approval for University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) to offer a Bachelor of Innovation in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BI: ECE) degree with teacher endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01) and Early Childhood Special Education (9.08). It should be noted that Commission approval is contingent upon State Board of Education's approval of the educator preparation content of this degree and its associated endorsement programs.

**II. BACKGROUND**

**COMMISSION AUTHORITY**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is to confirm the proposed program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission (per §23-5-129, C.R.S.) and, in the case of educator preparation programs, to ensure the proposed program is aligned with the requirements of §23-1-121, C.R.S. The process for initial approval of new educator preparation programs is as follows: Colorado Department of Education (CDE) conducts a review of the content of the endorsement program(s) to ensure that the content is designed and implemented in a manner that will enable a candidate to meet the requirements for licensure and endorsement in Colorado (C.R.S. §22-60.5). Given that requirements are met, CDE recommends approval of the content to the State Board of Education. Once State Board of Education has approved the content, DHE reviews the proposed program for the following statutory performance criteria: a comprehensive admission system; ongoing advising and screening of candidates; integration of theory and practice in coursework and field based training; supervised field based experience; and assessment of candidates' subject matter and professional knowledge and ability to apply the professional knowledge base [C.R.S. §23-1-121(2)].

**OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM**

The following is summarized from UCCS's proposal:

The Bachelor of Innovation in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BI: IECE) interdisciplinary program will combine both teacher preparation in Early Childhood Special Education (CDE endorsement 9.08) and Early Childhood Education (CDE endorsement 8.01) through a bachelor's degree. The degree is a four-year, interdisciplinary professional degree designed to prepare undergraduate candidates to teach all children through an inclusive early childhood environment. The term 'professional degree' applies to this program because it meets the professional teaching standards established by the Colorado Department of Education for programs in early childhood and special education. The undergraduate program is designed to meet a growing need in southern Colorado for qualified educators of young children, including those with disabilities or who are considered at risk and in need of early intervention. The new BI complements the post-bacc licensure program currently offered by the College of Education and the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences and will be integrally tied to the existing BI programs in the College of Business and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Unlike other areas in the field of education, professionals in early childhood take on unique roles. Early childhood does not always function within the public education system and therefore has a wide variety of opportunities and structures that allow for varying roles and innovation. Some early childhood teachers have the opportunity to direct and/or own their own early childhood centers. There are also administrative options for early childhood educators within the Head Start and other early childhood systems. Further, early childhood services are often provided in the home for children ages birth – 8, allowing professionals in this field to manage their own unique, home-based businesses.

Professionals in this field will need to develop their leadership and collaboration skills before entering the field as they will often be required to collaborate with personnel, design and manage budgets, and innovate in the areas of curriculum and business practices. As a newly emerging field, professionals in inclusive early childhood education are called on to innovate in the area of curriculum development, individual learning supports, and technology. Early childhood educators may have the opportunity to not only run their own businesses, but also invent, design, and market their own curriculum, technology, and applications. Early childhood educators who have preparation in the area of innovation, business, and marketing will be able to take ideas developed while working with children and enhance them through business planning and implementation.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and mission or educator preparation requirements, is attached (Attachment A).

### **III. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL**

CDE staff have not yet reviewed the content of this degree and its associated teacher endorsement programs. Commission approval is contingent upon State Board of Education's approval of the content.

### **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

#### **ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT**

This degree supports UCCS's statutory role and mission, which states in part:

*(c) ...The Colorado Springs campus shall offer liberal arts and sciences, business, engineering, health sciences, and teacher preparation undergraduate degree programs, and a selected number of master's and doctoral degree programs... 23-20-101(1), C.R.S.*

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds that UCCS's proposed Bachelor of Innovation in Inclusive Early Childhood Education degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

#### **EDUCATOR PREPARATION STATUTORY PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Pursuant to §23-1-121(2), C.R.S., department staff reviewed this program and confirmed that it meets educator preparation performance criteria. This proposed program does not exceed 120 credits.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Colorado Colorado Spring's proposal to offer a Bachelor of Innovation in Inclusive Early Childhood Education degree with teacher endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01) and Early Childhood Special Education (9.08), contingent upon State Board of Education's approval of the educator preparation content of this degree and its associated endorsement programs.**

### **V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

Copies of all relevant materials are on file in the Academic Affairs Division and are available upon request.

### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

C.R.S. §23-1-121 Commission directive - approval of educator preparation programs - review.  
C.R.S. §23-5-129 Governing boards - performance contract - authorization – operations.