

**TOPIC: PROPOSALS TO OFFER A BACHELOR OF ARTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LIBERAL ARTS AND A BACHELOR OF ARTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION (BIRTH – GRADE 3) AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

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**I. SUMMARY**

This consent item recommends approval for University of Northern Colorado (UNC) to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Liberal Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Teacher Education (Birth – Grade 3). The proposed B.A. Early Childhood Liberal Arts degree is a non-licensure option. The proposed B.A. Early Childhood Teacher Education (Birth – Grade 3) degree leads to teacher licensure and endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01) by Colorado Department of Education. The proposed changes to these degree programs are not substantial. Rather, this consent item simply seeks to change the names of existing programs to more accurately describe them to students and employers.

**II. BACKGROUND**

At its April 5, 2012 meeting, the Commission reversed its 1986 decision prohibiting institutions of higher education from offering bachelor of arts degrees in Early Childhood Education. In response to this decision, UNC proposes to change the names of two of its existing degree programs. Currently, UNC offers a B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies, with two emphasis areas within the degree: 1) Early Childhood Education emphasis with Early Childhood Licensure (Birth – Age 3), which leads to CDE licensure and endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01) and 2) Liberal Arts Education – Early Childhood emphasis, which does not lead to CDE licensure or endorsement. UNC proposes to turn these two emphasis areas into two new, separate degree programs. The curriculum for these programs will remain exactly the same (see Figure 1 below).

**FIGURE 1: CURRENT VS. PROPOSED DEGREE STRUCTURE**

CURRENT		PROPOSED	
<b>B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies</b>		<b>B.A. Early Childhood Teacher Education (Birth – Grade 3)</b>  <i>*Will lead to CDE teacher licensure &amp; endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01)</i>	<b>B.A. Early Childhood Liberal Arts</b>
Early Childhood Education emphasis with Early Childhood Licensure (Birth – Age 3)  <i>*Also leads to CDE teacher licensure &amp; endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01)</i>	Liberal Arts Education – Early Childhood emphasis		

**ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT**

These degrees support UNC’s statutory role and mission, which states in part:

*(2) The university of northern Colorado shall be the primary institution for undergraduate and graduate degree programs for educational personnel preparation in the state of Colorado... C.R.S. 23-40-101*

**EVIDENCE OF NEED**

UNC currently has students enrolled in its Early Childhood Education (8.01) licensure and non-licensure programs. Also, as reported in the commission’s April 5, 2012 agenda item IIIA, changing the names of these programs will benefit students and the state because:

- ECE has a distinct and legitimate curriculum and pedagogy.
- The current lack of degrees in these specific areas makes our state’s grant eligibility criteria appear weak for some of the most desirable educational grants.
- A bachelor’s in early childhood may increase seamless transfer opportunities for students who start at two-year institutions.

- Having a major in ECE would better allow for a minor in areas such as special education, literacy or linguistically diverse which would make students well rounded and very marketable.

#### **DUPLICATION**

No other public, four-year institution offers a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. Four public, four-year institutions—Adams State University, Colorado State University, MSU Denver, and Fort Lewis College—offer bachelor's degrees in liberal arts with licensure and endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01).

#### **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Given that the content of these programs will remain the same and that these programs were previously approved by the Commission and the Colorado State Board of Education in accordance with SBE's rules (2260.5-R-8.01 and 8.01) as well as the Performance-Based Standards for Colorado Teachers (2260.5-R-5.00), staff finds that no further review or approval of content is warranted. Staff also finds the proposed degrees are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission, per Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b).

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Northern Colorado's proposals to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Liberal Arts. Staff also recommends the Commission approve the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Teacher Education (Birth – Grade 3), which includes teacher licensure and endorsement in Early Childhood Education (8.01).**

#### **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