

A SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs
Consent

AGENDA ITEM: 7 – D (3)
DATE: June 21-22, 2023

SUBJECT

New Program Request – NSU – AS in Early Childhood Education

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2:23](#) – New Programs, Program Modifications, Curricular Requests, and Inactivation/Termination

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Northern State University (NSU) requests authorization to offer an AS in Early Childhood Education. The AS in Early Childhood Education prepares students to provide children with strategies that help them develop the social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to become lifelong learners. Students will learn the theory, education, and practice needed to provide meaningful and impactful early childhood education.

The Intent to Plan request was waived by the Executive Director, per BOR Policy 2:23.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

A summary of the program proposal has been included as Attachment I. Additional information on this proposal is available from the Board office by request.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – New Program Request Summary – NSU – AS in Early Childhood Education

DRAFT MOTION 20230621_7-D(3):

I move to authorize NSU to offer an AS in Early Childhood Education, as presented.

**Full Proposal – AS Early Childhood Education
Northern State University**

BOR Recommendation: The Board of Regents Academic Affairs and the Executive Director support the program request. This program will increase the number of qualified early childhood educators while providing opportunities for people currently employed in this field in South Dakota.

Program Description:

The AS in Early Childhood Education prepares students to provide children with strategies that help them develop the social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to become lifelong learners. Students will learn the theory, education, and practice needed to provide meaningful and impactful early childhood education.

Strategic Impact –

NSU Strategic Impact: NSU is statutorily authorized to offer university academic programs in accordance with SDCL § 13-59.1 in the preparation of elementary and secondary teachers, and a secondary purpose is to offer preprofessional, one-year and two-year terminal and junior college programs. NSU has the authority to credential certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and master's degrees provided formal approval by the Board of Regents. Northern's AS in Early Childhood Education will stack into Northern's BSEd in Elementary Education, BSEd in Special Education, and BSEd programs in secondary education.

BOR Strategic Impact: NSU's AS in Early Childhood supports Goal 4 of the SDBOR's Strategic Plan, Workforce Development and Economic Development, "South Dakota public universities shall create academic programming that responds to the changing educational and workforce skills needed to meet the demands through 2030; promote strategic engagement and investment designed to enhance and drive the state's long-term economy."

The SDBOR Program Gap Analysis (EMSI Study) identified a need to expand Early Childhood Education programs, citing a gap of 207 in Figure 3.2 Directors of the Aberdeen Boys and Girls Club and the Youth Development Center have consistently sought candidates trained in early childhood education for employment. With the addition of this program, NSU will be able to help meet the demands of that workforce need. Creating formalized training that also enables students to obtain a degree serves a need in the community and surrounding areas. Northern State University serves a large region, and centers and preschools dedicated to meeting the needs of very young children are seeking prospects for early childhood teachers through NSU. Providing this opportunity fulfills a need in this area that is unmet. https://www.sdbor.edu/the-board/StrategicPlan/Documents/StrategicPlan_22_27.pdf

Program Summary:

The classification of this program will be 13.1210 [Early Childhood Education and Teaching]. This program is proposed to be delivered at Northern, at Huron Community Campus, and through distance education, utilizing both HyFlex and online courses. The university anticipates students entering this program will be new to the university.

Duplication and Competition:

No regental institution offers an AS in Early Childhood Education. SDSU, USD, and BHSU offer degrees in Early Childhood Education. BHSU also offers a BSED in Early Childhood Special Education.

The program is being developed with support from superintendents in the Aberdeen and Huron areas as well as childcare providers in northeastern South Dakota. The program will help two groups of students: 1. those working in the childcare industry and 2. those who will earn the degree as their first step toward eventually earning a BSEd in Elementary or Special Education.

Regental Universities¹:

University	Conferred Degrees Early Childhood Education	Total Number of UG Conferrals (All University) IPEDS Data
No regental AS programs		

SD Technical Colleges²:

University	Conferred AS Degrees Human Services: Child Development	Total Number of UG Conferrals (All College) IPEDS Data
Lake Area Technical College	22	503
Southeast Technical College	10	522

Private SD Universities³:

University	Conferred AS Degrees Early Childhood Education	Total Number of UG Conferrals (All University)
Oglala Lakota College	14	103
Sinte Gleska University	7	40

Total Sum of SD Peer Findings:

University	Conferred AS Degrees Early Childhood Education	Total Number of AS Degree Conferrals (All University)
Total	53	1168

Among the institutions offering AS degrees in Early Childhood Education, the number of conferred degrees reported by IPEDs was 53 out of a total of 1168 AS degrees in 2021-2022. The data included in the next section will demonstrate that the demand/need for educators in Early Childhood exceeds the degrees conferred.

¹ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2021-2022

² Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2021-2022

³ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2021-2022

Workforce Outlook/State Need:

The national teacher shortage extends to early childhood educators. The pandemic shuttered most childcare centers and closed the doors to preschools. The reopening of schools highlighted the critical need for structured, quality early childhood education. A search of open early childhood positions through the search engine “Simply Hired,” revealed over 100 open positions in early childhood settings in South Dakota alone. Nearly all descriptions list an associate degree in Early Childhood Education as a preferred qualification, and many require the degree. Additionally, Early Childhood Education is a growing field. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for individuals working in early childhood education is strong, with employment expected to grow 18% (much faster than average) over the next eight years (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/educationtraining-and-library/preschool-teachers.htm>).

According to the School Administrators of South Dakota Preschool Levels of Excellence program, to earn a “proficient” level of recognition, which is the lowest level of recognition, preschool teachers must possess an associate degree in the field. Only 43 of the preschools in South Dakota have earned this distinction, with many of them located in the southeast region of the state. Due to the lack of data regarding this field in South Dakota, there is limited information available relating to accountability in Early Childhood Education in the state. Adding this program at NSU serves an educational need in this region, which will positively impact area preschools and their students, as well as improve accountability within the field.

In the state of South Dakota, practitioners of early childhood education can participate in the South Dakota Pathways to Professional Development Career Lattice which is a statewide registry that documents educational and professional accomplishments. It’s a way for practitioners and facilities to accumulate an accurate record of their education and receive recognition for their professional commitment. An associate degree in Early Childhood Education is recognized in Level 5.

The SDBOR Program Gap Analysis (EMSI Study) identified a need to expand Early Childhood Education programs, citing a gap of 207 in Figure 3.2 Directors of the Aberdeen Boys and Girls Club and the Youth Development Center have consistently sought candidates trained in early childhood education for employment. With the addition of this program, NSU will be able to help meet the demands of that workforce need. Creating formalized training that also enables students to obtain a degree serves a need in the community and surrounding areas. Northern State University serves a large region, and centers and preschools dedicated to meeting the needs of very young children are seeking prospects for early childhood teachers through NSU. Providing this opportunity fulfills a need in this area that is unmet.

Student Demand:

Community partners invested in quality childcare and early learning experiences, including the YMCA Youth Development Center and Northeast South Dakota Head Start, have asked Northern to offer an AS in Early Childhood Education. Both Head Start and the YMCA Youth Development Center see the AS degree as essential to promoting upward mobility for their staff within their organizations, and they also see the degree as vital to succession planning to fully staff their centers at a high caliber.

Juli Schultz, Director of Northeast South Dakota Head Start, explained that her program serves counties from Sisseton to Mobridge and from Aberdeen to Huron. The program has 33 teachers,

and it is preferred for the teachers to have an associate degree. However, in rural South Dakota, many early childhood teachers do not. Eighty percent of the lead-teachers have bachelor's degrees. Most of the first-assistant and second-assistant teachers are working on or have earned CDAs (Child Development Associate Credentials). Head Start much prefers the AS in Early Childhood Education over the CDA, and Juli Schultz will support her teachers working on their AS in Early Childhood Education from Northern.

Mike Quast, Director of the Aberdeen YMCA and Youth Development Center states that among their 16 full-time staff, 5 have bachelor's degrees; 5 have associate degrees; and 6 do not have a degree. He will encourage those 6 to enroll in Northern's AS in Early Childhood Education. They have 92 part-time staff, 10 of whom have earned degrees and 56 who are working on degrees. Mike Quast believes more of their part-time staff will complete their degrees once an AS is available in Aberdeen at Northern.

Northeast Area Head Start and the YMCA Youth Development Center will help promote the program, providing a continual stream of interested and motivated students, especially with the potential for this program to be offered with flexible learning.

Additionally, since June 2022, NSU Education Department faculty have received five direct inquiries via phone call, email, and daily conversations from prospective students regarding the possibility of enrolling in an Early Childhood Education program at Northern State University. The individuals inquiring about the possibility of this type of program were interested in a stand-alone program, not a minor program that would be completed in addition to a four-year degree.

Competitor University Peers⁴:

University	Conferred Degrees Early Childhood Education	Total Number of UG Conferrals (All University)
Eastern Florida State College	21	2632
South Texas College	221	3702
St. Petersburg College	25	3899

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the AS in Early Childhood Education, graduates will:

1. Create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for every child.
2. Engage in responsive interactions with children that support their learning.
3. Facilitate children's learning through play, exploration, investigation, and inquiry.
4. Plan and implement appropriate curriculum and instruction that integrates technology to address learning outcomes for young children.
5. Demonstrate professionalism as an early childhood educator and fulfill ethical responsibilities to children, families, and colleagues.

Projected Enrollment:

⁴ IPEDS

ESTIMATES	FISCAL YEARS*					
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year
Students new to the university	10	8	10	10	15	15
Students from other university programs						
Students off-campus or distance continuing students	--	9	7	8	8	13
Total students in the program (fall)	10	17	17	18	23	28
Program credit hours (major Courses)**	170	298	296	314	399	489
Graduates	--	9	7	8	8	13
<i>*Do not include current fiscal year.</i>						
<i>**This is the total number of credit hours generated by students in the program in the required or elective program courses. Use the same numbers in Appendix B – Budget.</i>						

Projected Revenue/Expenses:

FINANCIAL HEALTH SUMMARY						
	1st FY24	2nd FY25	3rd FY26	4th FY27	5th FY28	6th FY29
TUITION & FEE REVENUES	38,192	66,948	66,499	70,542	89,638	109,857
PROGRAM EXPENSES	42,140	40,640	40,640	41,140	40,640	80,779
NET (T&F REVENUES LESS PROGRAM EXPENSES)	(3,948)	26,308	25,859	29,403	48,999	29,078
OTHER SUPPORTING REVENUES	-	-	-	-	-	-
NET AFTER OTHER SUPPORTING REVENUES	(3,948)	26,308	25,859	29,403	48,999	29,078