



# University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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**Date:** May 14, 2021

**To:** Provost and Vice Chancellor, Patricia Kleine

**From:** MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

**Subject:** APC report regarding program review of the Department of Education for Equity and Justice

The Academic Policies Committee (APC) appreciates the time and effort of Chair, Suzanne Fondrie of the Department of Education for Equity and Justice, the members of the Internal Review Committee (Jill Markgraf, Tara Putnam, Lisa Quinn-Lee) and the external reviewer (Dr. Kim Wieczorek) for the review of the Department of Education for Equity and Justice. The internal review committee and external reviewer reports provided the committee useful information to assist us in forming our recommendations. While the APC recommendations are generally summarized on the attached spreadsheet, APC is providing additional details in the form of this letter.

## COMMENDATIONS:

The Department of Education for Equity and Justice is to be commended for the following:

1. A new department name that exemplifies its commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the administrators, faculty, and staff who work with or within.
2. The continued high-level of participation and quality instruction in the LE program.
3. The department's continued commitments to High Impact Practices (HIPs) inside and outside of the classroom for undergraduate students.
4. The department's contribution to producing teachers for the state and region (top 5 in UW System).
5. The department's continued contributions to generated student credit hours.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

**1. Faculty Workload and Faculty Recruitment/Retention Efforts.** It is apparent from all three reports (Self-study, internal reviewers, external reviewer) that the Department of Education for Equity and Justice is operating at capacity in its ability to provide teaching excellence in their programs. The department's use of course overloads and the expectations for some faculty to also undertake additional administrative tasks are not ideal. Considering previous challenges, the department has faced in hiring content specialist positions, attractiveness to future positions must include manageable faculty workload. Due to the difficulty with recruitment of new faculty and a pending retirement of a current faculty member, an urgent challenge persists with additional pressure on remaining faculty, staff, and administrators to work, teach and provide department and university service on overload for extended periods of time. These circumstances have led to reduction in faculty/student collaborative research. The heavy reliance on adjunct instructors is not sustainable and will impact program quality. As indicated in the Dean of COEHS response, the department needs permission to hire tenure-line faculty and reduce their dependence on adjunct teaching.

*EXCELLENCE: Our measure, our motto, our goal.*

*Academic Policies Committee*

*University Senate*

**2. Undergraduate Students Time-to-degree/Credits-to-degree.** Despite the department's efforts in reducing credits-to-degree from academic year 2013-2019, 4-year graduation rates have remained low (< 21%). The compliance with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the department has created a new 120 credit Elementary/Middle School Education major set to begin during the 2021 academic year. It will be imperative that the department continue monitoring and revising the program to improve both metrics. Another strategy that was suggested to assist with this item was to consider establishing a non-teaching licensure major that would serve as a possible off ramp for students no longer interested in pursuing teacher credentialing and/or for students that desire to work with 4k-12 children outside of the educational setting. This avenue may deserve further discussion, but pursuit of this option should be weighed against the lack of FTE to deliver it in the department in its current capacity.

**Summary Recommendation:**

The Department of Education for Equity and Justice is doing a great job in providing a distinctive, rigorous, and highly regarded undergraduate program. For the program to continue in these efforts, the APC recommends these immediate actions:

- Enhanced communication with ARCC regarding majors in the department and the intricacies of navigating course sequencing and pre-service teaching requirements that will aid students in timely completion of program
- Explore ways to either provide and/or encourage earlier practicum experiences/placements for students that may lead to an earlier declaration of major or change of major
- Redesign the secondary block sequence
- Continue to explore ways to attract and retain more students and faculty of color

APC strongly supports the recommendation from all the other review levels to “continue in present form” considering the recommendations made above.

Cc.

Dr. Suzanne Fondrie, Chair, Department of Education for Equity and Justice  
Dr. Mary Hoffman, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs