

Proposal  
Creation of a New Department in the School of Education and  
Professional Studies

Submitted by,  
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**Proposed New Department Name:** Department of Curriculum and Instruction (tentative)

**Faculty in Department:** (4 faculty total)

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**Background:** CCSU is currently focusing an enrollment crisis. The Fall 2021 enrollment numbers are the lowest since the early 1970's. Exacerbating this situation is data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), that forecasts an additional 10.8% decline in undergraduate enrolments by 2026/27 as a result of lower populations of school aged children. This suggests that for CCSU, and the School of Education and Professional Studies (SEPS) to reach its enrollment goals, we must look to untapped populations for recruitment (non-traditional students) and/or increase offerings of post baccalaureate degrees to draw from the existing state and regional populations of candidates who already possess an undergraduate degree. SEPS is primed to take advantage of this population as many of the programs offered by the school result in certification in PreK-12 education. In 2017, legislation was passed that now requires teachers in Connecticut to complete a master's degree within eight years of starting a teaching position, rather than just completing an additional 30 credits. In addition, SEPS offers several post master's certificate and sixth year certificate programs that are attractive additions to a master's degree for teachers looking to extend their skills or take on leadership roles in school systems. In effect, SEPS can partially reach its enrollment goals by "re-attracting" the same students for multiple advanced degrees.

**Rationale:** The creation of a new department will allow for effective collaborations between departments and the exploration of new master's-level programs, that would be attractive to potential students. Currently the MS in Teacher Leadership has shown unsteady enrollments, from a high of 60 in 2017 to a low of 28 in 2020. In comparison, the sixth-year certificate in Educational Leadership has an average enrollment of 200 each year and the sixth-year certificate in Reading and Language Arts has an average enrollment of 30+ each year (see Data figure for degrees earned and enrollments below). Considering that students in sixth-year programs are required to have a master's degree prior to entering the program, it can be argued that CCSU/SEPS is missing an opportunity for growth as the current master's program enrollment does not suggest that most students in the sixth-year programs are completing their master's-level work here. One possibility for the low enrollment in the master's program may be the focus of the content. Currently the program has a heavy focus on eco and social justice. While these are important aspects to both the program and for educators, they are no longer at the forefront of the field. We have already begun conversations for developing new master's programs that are more responsive to the needs in the field. For example, one area of focus that is of intense interest is Social and Emotional Learning, which nicely aligns with the SEL Center in SEPS. This has been a growing area and need in the field of education, especially with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the department of Literacy, Elementary, and Early Childhood Education (LEECE) offers a course with an SEL focus that would foster a collaboration of LEECE with this new master's program. As an aside, similar conversations in Educational Leadership are ongoing about additional tracks in the sixth-year program such as data management and business/fiscal affairs for school administrators. In short, it is believed that there are areas of untapped potential for increasing enrollment in SEPS, particularly in graduate programs.

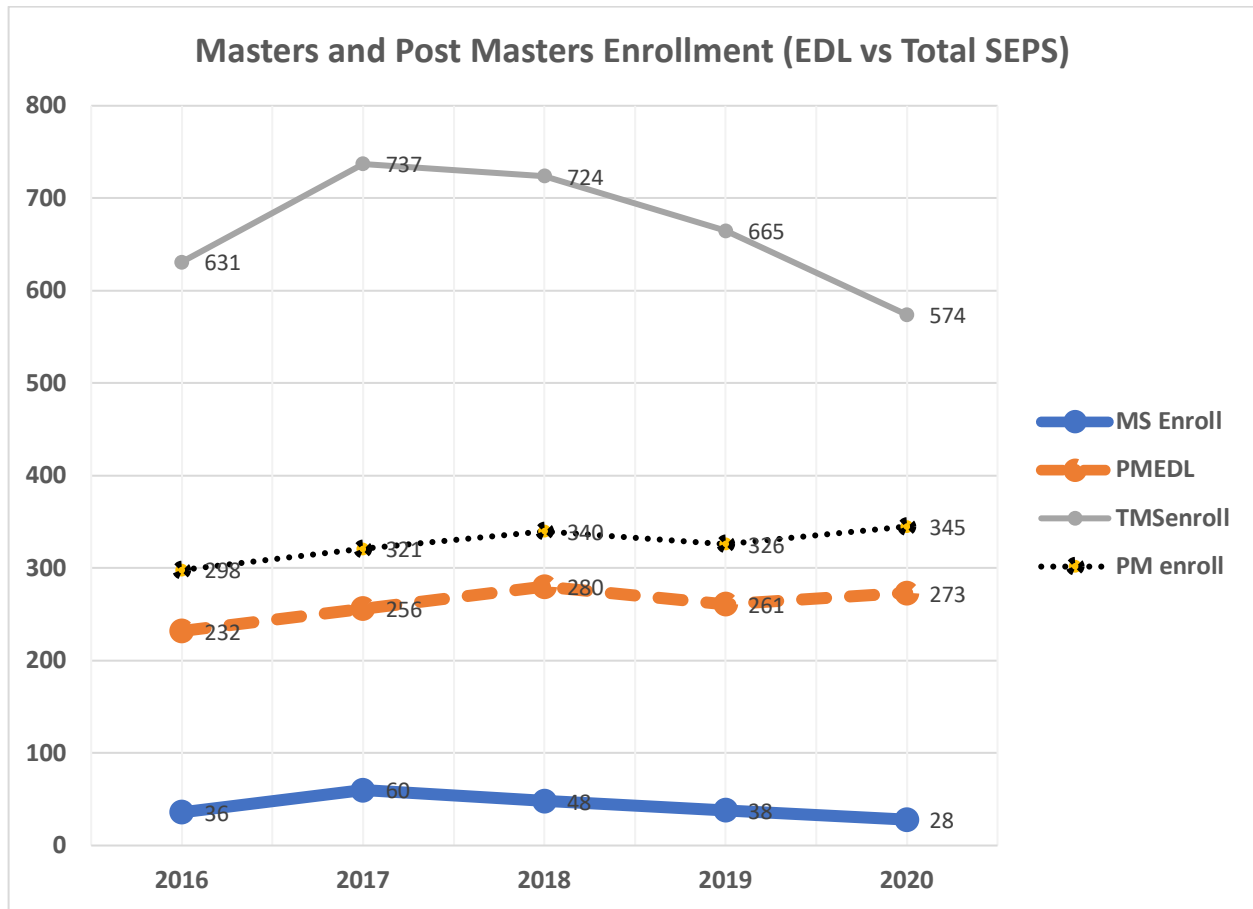
A second goal of the proposed plan is to provide a "home" for the Master's in Teaching (with certification) program (MAT). Currently the program resides in the Dean's Office and is managed by Interim Dean Mulrooney. Prior to that, the program was housed in the department of the faculty

member serving as coordinator. Most recently this was Special Education and Interventions. Without a consistent departmental home, it creates issues in terms of students being able to find the program as well as marketing the program. This may have been part of the reason for the decline in enrollments in this program. Initially the program (a cohort model) was a 13-month program that began in summer and ran through the normal semesters. This placed courses somewhat out of synch with our traditional certification courses. The program was “suspended” for summer 2021 while we realigned the curriculum to create a more effective program in both delivery and cost. The program is now 18 months and begins with the first semester in the spring. Applications are due November 1, and we have already accepted students into the cohort. Some of the courses have been cross listed with courses in the content area to ensure sufficient enrollments and to reduce extraneous faculty load.

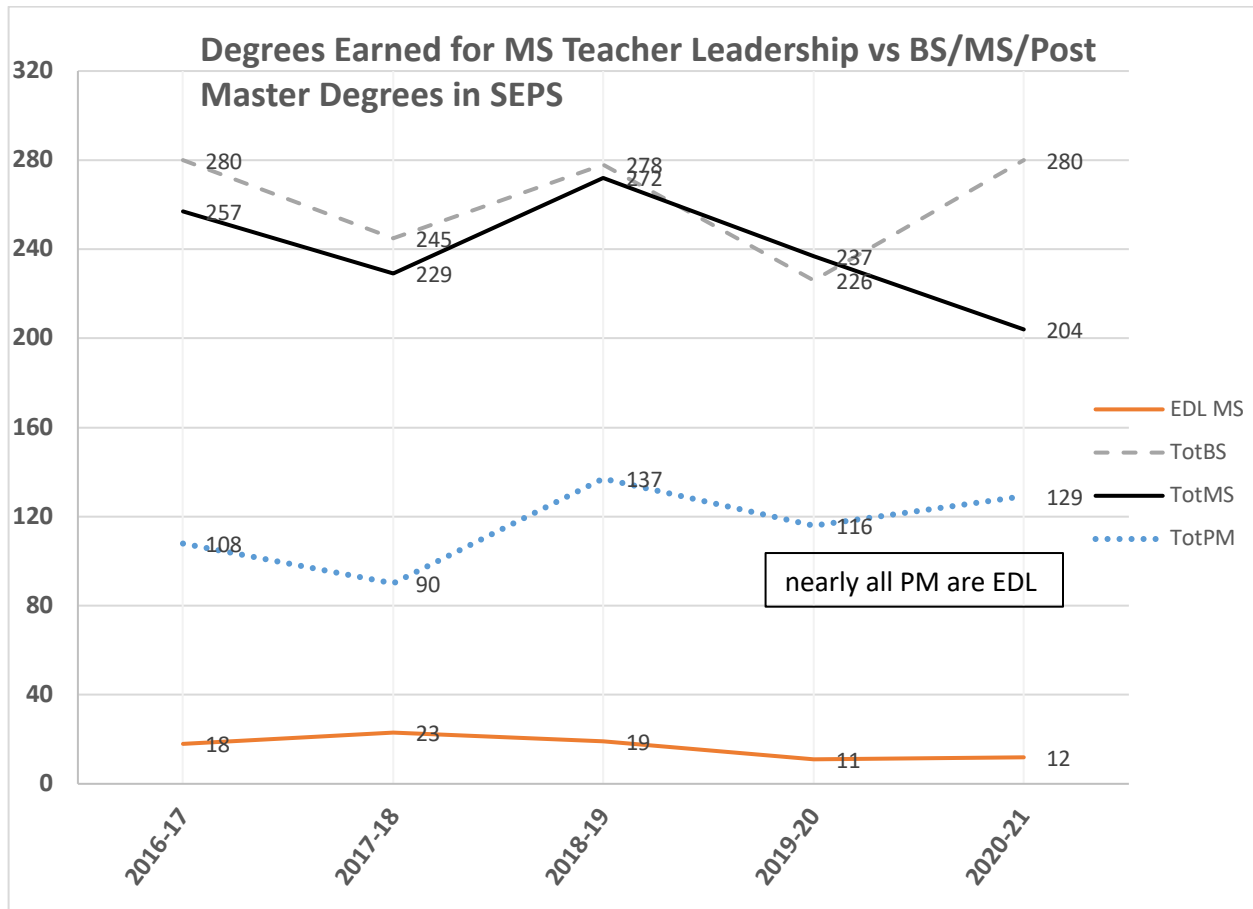
Finally, the faculty in the proposed department teach education courses for students enrolled in programs leading to certification in secondary education. Secondary education has been somewhat “diluted” since the dissolving of the Teacher Education department and movement of the faculty into Educational Leadership, which really has a focus on advanced degree programs such as the sixth-year and Doctoral program. Creating this department, with a focus on secondary education could strengthen CCSU’s position as a provider of Secondary Education Preparation Programs and result in enhanced enrollment in CCSU’s secondary education programs across all schools.

**Role of Department:**

- Coordination of the Master’s in Teaching Program
- Coordination of new master’s programs for potential students holding bachelor degrees in education required to maintain their certification by advancing their education.
- Serve as a feeder program to the sixth-year certificate, Advanced Official Certificate, and Doctoral programs (these programs require students to first earn an appropriate master’s degree)
- Serve as the department for secondary education programs.



**Figure 1.** Enrollment in MS Teacher leadership (blue), Post masters (6<sup>th</sup> year certificates) offered in EDL (orange), Total master's degree enrollments in SEPS (TMSenroll, gray), and total Post masters enrollments in SEPS (PM enroll, black). Note the large discrepancy for the enrollment in the MS in teacher leadership, compared with the 6<sup>th</sup> year programs offered in leadership. Data suggests students in the 6<sup>th</sup> year program are not earning their masters with CCSU.



**Figure 2.** Degrees awarded in MS Teacher Leadership (orange), Post masters (blue), All SEPS masters (black) and SEPS undergraduate degrees (gray dashed). Data suggests that the number of degrees awarded from the MS in Teacher Leadership are consistent with the enrollment numbers, i.e. low as compared to the 6<sup>th</sup> year certificate program.