



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 10, 2023

To: Dr. Kimberly Kostelis, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

From: Dr. Paula M. Talty, Interim Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies

Re: Academic Program Planning Report

A small representative committee met over the past month to discuss innovation and fiscal responsibility related to academic planning. Meetings were recorded for those individuals who were unable to attend. In between meetings Department Chairs and committee members were asked to continue the conversation with colleagues and we would incorporate any additional suggestions or feedback. Over the course of our meetings the committee generated a wealth of suggestions, ideas and thoughts that were compiled and grouped into the recommendations that follow. All committee members reviewed this memo prior to submission to be sure that the discussions and recommendations were presented accurately.

SEPS is committed to growing our individual programs to better serve our students and the community at large. Much innovation has already occurred and will continue through events and work with partnering districts. Actions departments have already taken to promote fiscal responsibility and innovation include:

- The development of an accelerated nursing program
- A redesigned Ed.D. dissertation process which has resulted in cost savings
- Offering the Ed.D. program yearly
- Continued to admit students beyond established deadlines
- Introducing new courses
- Reducing faculty lines by not filling these following a retirement
- The development of a Masters in Social Work Program
- Implementation of simulation for nursing
- The redesign of the MS Elementary Education that will replace the Post-Baccalaureate in Elementary Education
- Establishing a Teacher Residency Program in partnership with Waterbury Public Schools
- Expanding the NextGen Educator program to 18 local school districts

Recommendations from the group focused on the following potential opportunities for innovation:

- **Create stronger bonds with community colleges and Adult Education Programs and other external partners.**

We believe we need to continue to engage transfer and older students and address gaps that are evident in the community college level with our courses/programs. This can be accomplished by building and extending the work of the community colleges by seeking opportunities to communicate and collaborate with a focus on Identify professional pipeline programs and market these aggressively. An example would be a connection between the undergraduate Bachelor's in Education programs with the Master in Teacher Leadership, and that could link to the Sixth Year in Educational Leadership. Another example is a connection between the BSc in Early Childhood with the MS in Elementary Education and then the 6th Year Certificate in Reading/Lang. Arts.

- **Examine and establish certificate programs which can also receive stackable micro-credentials.**

These advanced certificates would enable potential students to participate in courses that would further develop their individual and professional skill set without engaging in a degree program. An example of this is the existing Advanced Certificate in Professional Counseling. Advanced certificate programs are being developed in Dyslexia diagnosis and remediation, Adapted Physical Education, and Health. Investigate the possibility of offering alternative and/or accelerated programs for advanced certificates. (This may have a financial implication for students.)

- **Examine other forms of delivery of course structure and format.**

For example, creating some on demand courses or offering a compacted 8 week 4 - 5 credit course for graduate students. Course facilitation could be accomplished by engaging in more hyflex courses, online and weekend courses. Offering on demand courses for those individuals who are unable to physically attend or who need a scheduled time that we are unable to offer within the existing schedule.

- **Develop avenues to share resources and expertise across schools/programs.**

A shared position between Educational Leadership and Special Education has been proposed. We may be able to offer school districts and other organizations professional learning in a variety of topics, inclusive of cultural competence which will position CCSU SEPS even more firmly as leaders within our fields.

The Academic Program Planning Committee also discussed the following as potential barriers to innovation. While the committee realizes that in some cases the items

mentioned below may be in development or beyond our control, we felt that it was imperative to address these concerns.

- **The existing curriculum approval process is lengthy and moves slowly.** There are a myriad of steps, and these prohibit the faculty's ability to develop new programs and courses that enable us to respond to changes in the field. The current process is cumbersome and does not promote flexibility or creativity.
- **A need to actively track and continue connecting with SEPS alumni.** These alumni will help the school continue to be innovative as they provide feedback on programming, keep us informed about events/changes in the field, and communicate to other potential students.
- **Availability of high quality and consistent marketing was identified as a barrier.** Intentional marketing in terms of target audiences and sharing the innovation that is already happening would increase the SEPS footprint in the public. It was suggested that a representative committee from SEPS meet with marketing to establish lines of communication, assist faculty in advertising events to schools/organizations, and to assist with recruitment materials.
- **The need for a dedicated staff member to manage social media.** Members of the committee agreed that social media (Instagram, Twitter, and other platforms) are what is now being used to communicate out messaging. We believe that a presence and consistent activity across social media will support our efforts to recruit students, reach out to professionals currently in the field and support our alumni. This is a commitment that will support the school in moving further out into the public eye.

Faculty Participants on the Committee

Dr. Tamara Holland, Nursing

Dr. Cherie King, Counselor Education and Family Therapy

Dr. Laura Jacobson, Special Education and Interventions

Dr. Joanne Leon, Department Chair, Social Work

Dr. Maria Mongillo, Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Instructional Technology

Dr. Peter Morano, Department Chair, Physical Education and Human Performance

Dr. Yvonne Patterson, representing the University Planning and Budget Committee

Dr. Ioulia Kara-Soteriou, Department Chair, Literacy, Elementary and Early Childhood Education

Dr. Paula Talty, Dean

Dr. Jacob Werblow, Curriculum and Instruction