

## Graduate Affairs Council Recommendation Regarding Program Discontinuation November 13, 2024

The Graduate Affairs Council (GAC) has considered the Program Review Committee's (PRC) recommendation concerning program discontinuation outlined in its October 17, 2024, "Program Discontinuance Report." In this document, we will describe important context for consideration, the process we used, and our recommendations. GAC unanimously endorses the following.

### **Preface**

As the PRC report notes, this current round of programmatic changes was initiated following EWU's Strategic Resource Allocation (SRA) process that began in AY 2022-2023.<sup>1</sup> The PRC report includes recommendations from the Provost, the Academic Programs Task Force (APTF), and the PRC, along with responses from the School of Education (SoE). GAC is tasked with evaluating and offering a recommendation as to the continuation or discontinuation of the graduate programs identified in the report.

### **Process**

The PRC report identified three graduate programs for GAC to review. All three programs are housed in the School of Education:

- M.Ed. in Career and Technical Education
- M.Ed. in Career and Technical Education—Administrator Certificate
- M.Ed. in Library Media

GAC first discussed the PRC report on October 23, 2024 as new business. GAC deliberated the report and voted on its recommendations on November 13, 2024. Dr. Shelly Shaffer, Associate Professor of Literacy and Director/Chair of the School of Education, attended this meeting to share information and answer questions.

### **Recommendations**

Given the relative newness of the three M.Ed degrees, their trajectory of growth, and potential to serve the region, GAC recommends that the graduate degrees offered by the SoE be **maintained**, provided that the SoE agrees to follow the revision timeline outlined in the PRC report. GAC's recommendation concurs with PRC's recommendation that these three programs be given the opportunity to implement the revisions outlined in Appendices B and C in the PRC report. GAC's recommendation also concurs with the APTF recommendation that the SoE programs be "transformed" rather than discontinued.<sup>2</sup>

The Provost recommends that all three M.Ed programs be discontinued due to "low enrollment."<sup>3</sup> GAC, however, is concerned about the relevance of the data sets on which the Provost's recommendations are based. The most recent data sets provided through the SRA process are from AY 2021-2022. All three SoE graduate programs identified for discontinuation by the Provost first began in AY 2021-2022. One year of data hardly seems a sufficient basis on

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<sup>1</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

which to make a recommendation of discontinuation. The PRC report includes updated data from the SoE, and GAC is basing its recommendations on that information.

*M.Ed. in Career and Technical Education*

- **GAC Recommendation:** GAC recommends that the SoE implement the planned changes and follow the timeline outlined in Appendices B and C of the PRC report. The program's progress should be reviewed after Fall 2026, which the SoE identifies as the conclusion of the planned revisions.
- According to the data provided in the PRC report, program enrollment has grown 77% from the initial inception in 2021 through Spring 2024.<sup>4</sup> This growth trajectory warrants giving the SoE the opportunity to implement its revisions.

*M.Ed. in Career and Technical Education—Administrator Certificate*

- **GAC Recommendation:** GAC recommends that the SoE implement the planned changes and follow the timeline outlined in Appendices B and C of the PRC report. The program's progress should be reviewed after Fall 2026, which the SoE identifies as the conclusion of the planned revisions.
- According to the data provided in the PRC report, the first students entered this program in Winter Quarter of 2022. There has been demonstrated growth of 33% in internship cohorts between Fall Quarter of 2022 and Fall Quarter of 2024.<sup>5</sup> This growth trajectory warrants giving the SoE the opportunity to implement its revisions.

*M.Ed. in Library Media*

- **GAC Recommendation:** GAC recommends that the SoE implement the planned changes and follow the timeline outlined in Appendices B and C of the PRC report. The program's progress should be reviewed after Fall 2026, which the SoE identifies as the conclusion of the planned revisions.
- According to the data provided in the PRC report, this program was first offered in AY 2021-22 under the AP model. There are currently 55 students enrolled in the program, and the program continues to grow.<sup>6</sup> This growth trajectory warrants giving the SoE the opportunity to implement its revisions.

### **Concluding Comments**

Given the limited scope of the data set from which the SRA evaluations were derived, GAC recommends that the SoE be given time to grow their three M.Ed. programs. The data provided by the SoE, which was gathered subsequent to the SRA process, indicates a positive growth trajectory for all three programs. GAC contends that EWU should honor the good faith work the SoE has put into revising the programs to make them sustainable. We should allow them to go through their upcoming accreditation and CPAC processes, and, following the PRC's recommendation, the programs should be reviewed after these processes have been completed.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg 27.

<sup>5</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg 29.

<sup>6</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> Program Review Committee, "Program Discontinuance Report." October 17, 2024. Pg. 4.

In addition, these M.Ed. programs connect directly to EWU's strategic plan and the need to meet Washington's demand for more educators. One of the core values of the strategic plan is fostering EWU's "Regional Impact and Regional Contribution":

We promote economic vitality and regional success through scholarly research, dedicated service, and educational programs that meet regional workforce needs in high-demand fields. When combined with our commitment to a liberal arts education, we enhance social mobility, inclusivity, and the well-being of our community while remaining nimble to its ever-changing demands.<sup>8</sup>

Connected to this value is the goal of serving as a "Regional Anchor" and producing "Regional Impact":

EWU will launch initiatives that focus on applied educational programming, interdisciplinary approaches, scholarly research, community engagement, and athletic excellence. EWU will position its graduates to fill workforce needs and as pivotal contributors to regional needs, equity, and social and economic mobility. EWU will make its campus a model of sustainability through aggressive decarbonization and other initiatives that involve students, faculty and staff.<sup>9</sup>

There is no initiative that more clearly advances these goals than producing the next generation of Washington's teachers and addressing the state's current educator shortages.<sup>10</sup>

In closing, GAC wishes to extend its gratitude to everyone who gave their time and thoughtful attention to this process: the Provost, the PRC, the APTF, UAC, and all the faculty who completed the SRA templates. GAC is privileged to contribute to EWU's model of shared governance.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ewu.edu/strategicplan/>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.pesb.wa.gov/current-educators/educator-shortage/>