



MEMO

Date: April 18, 2017

To: Fred Williams, Chair
Faculty Senate Academic Program Committee

From: Laurie Dinnebeil & Ruslan Slutsky *Laurie A. Dinnebeil*
Early Childhood Education, Judith Herb College of Education *Ruslan Slutsky*

Cc: Mary Humphrys, Chair of the Faculty Senate, Virginia Keil, Interim Dean, JHCOE
Mary Ellen Edwards, JHCOE Faculty Senator, Noela Haughton, JHCOE Faculty
Senator, & Celia Regimbal, JHCOE Faculty Senator

Re: Academic Program Modification: Early Childhood Education

As you know, the music education faculty has raised opposition to our proposed revisions to the undergraduate early childhood licensure program. They state two primary reasons for their opposition: (a) that they did not have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about the proposed changes, and that (b) that they believe that a 2-credit undergraduate course in music education will appropriately prepare early childhood educators to be “highly qualified” to teach music in elementary schools.

On April 17, 2017, we received a letter that was supposed to have been sent to Interim Dean Keil from Tim Brakel, Pam Stover, and Jason Cox outlining their reasons for opposing our proposed program revision. Interim Dean Keil does not remember ever receiving this letter from Drs. Brakel, Stover, or Cox; however, she did receive a copy from Dean Barlow and Director Davis and they discussed the implications of this change on faculty workload in A&L. Additionally, the letter was never sent to the department chair in JHCOE. Please be assured that if we had seen it prior to yesterday, we would have addressed these concerns. It appears as if the main argument for retaining the music education requirement (MED 3030: Music for Early Childhood Education) rests on the assumption that an undergraduate student who has completed this 2-credit hour course is somehow prepared to serve in place of a licensed music specialist in the elementary schools. They also state that our students who have taken MED 3030 are considered “highly qualified” under the Ohio Department of Education to provide music instruction.

First, we have reviewed the requirements for receiving the “highly qualified status” for the fine arts and we note that in addition to having a valid teaching license, an individual who is not licensed as a music specialist would need a minimum of 30 credit hours as a music major to be

“highly qualified” to teach music. We were actually happy to see that because we believe that (a) music education is essential to students’ success and that (b) it should only be provided by a qualified music specialist. To say that an early childhood education major who completes a 2-credit hour (or even 3-credit hour) music education course is prepared to teach music is ludicrous and does a disservice to the appropriately prepared music educators who serve in our schools.

Second, we have reviewed the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards as well as the Ohio Kindergarten-Grade 3 academic standards and music is not mentioned as a content area in any of them. Drs. Brakel, Stover, and Cox correctly mention that the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), our accrediting body requires that early childhood educators be prepared to address the fine arts in the curriculum. We also believe that this is important and is why we will be working to infuse the appropriate level of music content and physical education/creative movement into our methods courses that students will be completing.

Please note that we did not make our decision to revise the program (and eliminate the Music Education and Physical Education requirements as well as the Areas of Concentration) lightly. Our colleagues at Bowling Green State University have instituted a dual licensure program that is very popular—they have seen enrollment increase continuously since its conception. Over the past year, we have engaged in numerous discussions involving ways to continuously improve our program in response to current education policies and market demands. We sought the guidance of area superintendents who unanimously agreed that a UT Early Childhood Educator who finishes his/her program with an early childhood teaching license as well as the Ohio 4/5 Generalist Endorsement is much more marketable than a graduate who finishes his/her program with the music and physical education cognate courses. We believe that we are making the right decision based on what we know is sound education practice as well as based on what we know about market demands. We regret that MED faculty will be losing FTE as a result of our decision and will support their efforts to increase enrollment in their music education major in any way that we can. We strongly believe that schools need qualified music, art, and physical education specialists and stand ready to assist in their recruitment efforts.

Finally, we understand that our colleagues in music education believe that we canceled a meeting with them to discuss these changes. We honestly don’t remember scheduling or canceling such a meeting. It may well be that it happened and if it did, we regret it and apologize for it. In the fall, Ruslan Slutsky and Joan Kaderavek met with department chairs in music education and art education. Since then, Joan has retired. Perhaps she did cancel a meeting, but we have no way of knowing. We also apologize if our colleagues in music education did not believe that they had a voice in this discussion. We followed protocol as best we could—we arranged for meetings with our colleagues and told them about our plans. We also discussed possible alternatives such as an interdisciplinary module in the fine arts and creative movement, but this was not feasible from a scheduling perspective.

In summary, we are anxious to have our program revision approved so that we can begin advertising it for prospective students. We believe that it will attract students to UT and we're doing our best to increase enrollment in a very competitive field. Thank you for hearing us out.

Judith Herb College of Education

Early Childhood Education, Higher Education, and Special Education • Mail Stop 954 • 2801 W. Bancroft St. • Toledo, Oh 43606-3390
419.530.2468 Phone • 419.530.7261 Fax • www.education.utoledo.edu