



College of Health

November 9, 2018

Undergraduate Council
University of Utah

Re: Support for Special Education Minor

Dear Undergraduate Council Members:

I am writing this letter as Chair of the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal submitted by the Department of Special Education to offer a minor in special education.

The proposed minor in special education will be of interest and benefit to students in my Department. Specifically, the minor in special education will complement our undergraduate major in communication disorders by providing our students with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills related to supporting the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families in school settings.

In addition to being relevant to students pursuing a degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders, I believe that this minor will be of interest and benefit to students pursuing a variety of majors across campus (e.g., Early Childhood Education, Psychology, etc.). Students in these majors are likely to work with individuals with disabilities in their chosen careers and will therefore be interested in a minor that will focus on core educational principles in teaching and learning that includes individualized instructional strategies to support diverse learning needs.

Sincerely,

Michael Blomgren, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, ASHA-F
Professor & Department Chair

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
390 South 1530 East, Room 1201 BEHS
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-0252
(801) 581-6725
Fax: (801) 581-7955

November 13, 2018

Dear Undergraduate Council:

I am writing this letter as Chair of the Department of Special Education to express my support for the proposal to offer a minor in special education.

As discussed in the context of the proposal, the minor in Special Education is designed to serve two purposes. One purpose is to complement the majors pursued by students outside of the Department of Special Education who are likely to work with individuals with disabilities and their families in the context of their chosen careers by providing knowledge and skills in teaching and learning (including individualized instructional strategies to support diverse learning needs).

The other purpose is to create a third pathway for degree plus license in Special Education (the other two pathways are via an undergraduate degree plus license or a two-year graduate degree/license). The creation of this third pathway will result in increased flexibility for students and is one of several strategies being implemented by the Department of Special Education to address the critical shortage of special education teachers in Utah and across the nation.

Both of these purposes are aligned with the Department of Special Education's mission to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families. Further, given that all courses in the proposed minor are currently being taught, there will be no additional costs associated with this new minor.



Susan Johnston, Ph.D.
Professor & Department Chair
Special Education

Extraordinary Educators for an Extraordinary Future

www.ed.utah.edu/sped/



November 28, 2018

Undergraduate Council
University of Utah
CAMPUS

Dear Members:

As the Dean of the College of Education I am writing this letter to express my full support for the proposed minor in Special Education.

The minor in Special Education will provide a unique opportunity for undergraduate students to obtain knowledge and skills in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families in the context of their chosen careers. Further, given that the required courses to complete this minor are also taken by students who are majoring in Special Education, Elementary Education, and/or Secondary Education, this minor will create an opportunity for students to participate in interdisciplinary learning opportunities at the undergraduate level.

Further, the proposed minor in Special Education will create an additional pathway for students to become licensed Special Education teachers where there is a tremendous shortage in our state and the nation. As a result of competencies acquired through the undergraduate minor, students who are admitted into the Special Education graduate program will be able to complete a Master's degree plus licensure in approximately 1 year (as opposed to 2 years). As mentioned in their proposal, the creation of this minor is one of several strategies being implemented by the Department of Special Education to address the critical shortage of special education teachers in Utah and across the nation.

I hope that you are able to support this proposal. If you have any questions of me please feel free to call my office 801-581-8221 or email me (el.clark@utah.edu).

Sincerely,

Elaine Clark, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education
Professor, Department of Educational Psychology



November 13, 2018

Dear Undergraduate Council:

I am the Chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies and am writing to express my whole-hearted support for the proposed minor in special education.

The overarching purpose of a minor is to complement or enhance the value of a student's major. I believe that the proposed minor in special education will fulfill that purpose. In considering students who are pursuing a major in Family, Community and Human Development, this minor will provide our students with knowledge and skills related to supporting the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families in inclusive settings.

Specifically, students pursuing this minor will develop knowledge and foundational skills related to:

- (a) instruction and support in inclusive early childhood and elementary general education settings,
- (b) data-based decision making and utilizing measurement tools that lead to instructional planning,
- (c) instructional and behavioral support strategies,
- (d) communication development and intervention (including procedures for the infusion of augmentative and alternative communication systems into home, school, and community settings), and
- (e) federal, state, and local government roles in special education with an emphasis on federal statutory regulations and case law and their effects on service delivery and public policy.

In addition to enhancing the knowledge and skills of our majors, I believe that this minor will be complementary to a variety of majors across campus (e.g., Communication Sciences & Disorders, Fine Arts, Psychology, etc.). Students in these majors are likely to work with individuals with disabilities in their chosen careers and will therefore be interested in learning strategies to support their needs.

Sincerely,

Lori Kowaleski-Jones

Lori Kowaleski-Jones
Professor and Department Chair

Department of Family and Consumer Studies

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November 16, 2018

Dear Undergraduate Council Members:

I am the Assistant Superintendent of Student Support for the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and am writing to express my full support for the proposed minor in special education. As noted in the proposal, the purpose of this minor is two-fold. First, it will serve to enhance the knowledge and skills of students who are not majoring in special education but who are likely to work with individuals with disabilities and their families when they enter the workforce. I think that this will be of interest and value to many students.

The second purpose is to create a third pathway for degree plus license in Special Education (the other two pathways are via an undergraduate degree plus license or a two-year graduate degree plus license). The creation of this third pathway is very innovative on the part of the Department of Special Education and I believe that it will help address the critical shortage of special education teachers in Utah. As you may already be aware, school districts and charter schools across our state struggle each year to hire licensed special education teachers. This shortage of special education teachers has existed for over a decade and projections indicate that it will persist for the foreseeable future. Approving this proposal will hopefully get us closer to the goal of ensuring that there are a sufficient number of licensed special education teachers entering the workforce.

Sincerely,

Leah Voorhies, PhD
Assistant Superintendent of Student Support
Utah State Board of Education
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801-538-7898