



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 5b1.
February 24, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education

FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D, Commissioner for Postsecondary Education

DATE: February 15, 2016

RE: Rhode Island College Proposal for a Certificate of Graduate Study
in Elementary Education – Specialized

Background

Rhode Island College (RIC) is announcing its intent to offer an eighteen-credit certificate of graduate study in Elementary Education-Specialized. This certificate is specialized in that it is designed for Teach for America Corps members who must take specified courses to gain Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) certification. The certificate was developed with Teach for America and recognizes the knowledge students have gained through six credits of coursework taken at Delta State University as part of the Teach for America program.

Rationale

The Rhode Island Department of Education approved an alternative pathway to teacher certification through Teach for America in 2012. Currently, students who seek teacher certification must take the master's degree or take specified courses that are included in the master's program and seek a credential review. Since many students chose coursework and credential review, they have no academic credential linked to certification. The intent of this certificate is to enable Teach for America Corps members who complete this program to gain the skills, knowledge and certification required to continue as classroom teachers, plus have a graduate credential on their transcript.

Further, by offering the courses within a certificate, the college would be eligible to apply for federal financial aid for students in this program.

Institutional Role

The Rhode Island College mission includes preparing students in a number of undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences and in professional fields such as education. The college is further meeting its mission by offering programs designed to meet the economic development and workforce needs of the state.

Interinstitutional Considerations

Rhode Island College reports that no other college or university in Rhode Island offers a certificate in graduate studies designed specifically to meet the certification needs of Teach for America Corps members.

Students who complete the certificate of graduate studies in good standing may apply for the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) at RIC; all of the credits in the graduate certificate will be accepted as meeting degree requirements.

Typically, the transfer of graduate credits is limited. However, with NEASC approval, the Rhode Island College graduate degree program will accept the six credits that Teach for America requires be completed with its affiliated institution, Delta State University.

Program Content

The program content was developed with reference to RIDE certification standards. All of the courses in the proposed CGS already exist and are taught as part of the M.A.T. in Elementary Education. The following courses are required for the CGS:

EL ED 500	Reflections: The Art and Science of Teaching	3 credits
READ 543	Developmental Reading K-8	3 credits
EL ED 540	Curriculum Assessment	3 credits
EL ED 541	Teaching Literacy Across Curricula	3 credits
EL ED 542	Educating All Students	3 credits
EL ED 543	Integrating Theory and Methods	3 credits
Total= 18 credits		

Faculty and Staff

No additional faculty or staff are required.

Students

RIC anticipates the certificate will attract a cohort of ten students annually. The students interested in this certificate are members of the Teach for America corps who are following an alternative path for teacher certification and require the courses in the certificate to gain teaching certification.

Evaluation

The Department of Elementary Education and the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development will evaluate the success of this CGS through monitoring enrollment, completions rate, student GPAs, and student satisfaction surveys.

Financial Considerations

All of the courses in the certificate are currently offered in the M.A.T. program in elementary education. Therefore, the students in the CGS program will add to the enrollment in these courses. There are no additional costs.

RIOPC review

RIOPC staff reviewed the information on the proposed Certificate of Graduate Study in Elementary Education – Specialized, which was supplied by Rhode Island College. The academic changes presented are within the mission, role and scope of Rhode Island College and do not require Council approval.