



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner
80 Washington Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 6a.
May 6, 2014

Barbara Cottam
Chair

To: Council on Postsecondary Education

From: Commissioner Jim Purcell, Ed.D. 

**Council on Elementary and
Secondary Education**

Date: May 1, 2015

Subject: University of Rhode Island Proposal for a minor in Arabic
Language and Culture

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John J. Smith, Jr.

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The University of Rhode Island is announcing its intent to offer a minor in Arabic language and culture.

Rationale

The University reports that Arabic is a growing program. Recently the curriculum was revised and the courses offered as 4-credit intensive courses. URI is now able to offer a minor in Arabic Language and Culture in response to student demand. Students taking this minor will gain the ability to become proficient in Arabic at an Intermediate Mid or Intermediate High level. Additionally students will study Arabo-Islamic culture within the language courses and in courses from other departments.

Program

This will be an 18-credit minor which students can complete through the following options: (1) 5 courses in Arabic language and culture, such as ARB 111 through ARB 311, or (2) 4 courses in Arabic language and culture and a combination of two more classes in history, political science or gender/women's studies. The Arabic minor requires that students take 12 credits at the 200-level and above of which at least 8 credits are in Arabic language. The remaining credits may be in 100-level or higher classes in Arabic language or Arabo-Islamic culture.

Institutional Considerations

Utilizing courses already in place, the University would need no additional resources or faculty to provide this minor. The addition of this minor may make students more likely to take Arabic language classes knowing there is a credential that may be earned. This minor may be attractive to prospective students or students already attending

URI (especially those in international business or engineering) who have an interest in Arabic and want to combine this field of study with another major.

Interinstitutional Considerations

No other public college in Rhode Island offers a minor in Arabic Language and Culture. Providence College offers a minor in Arabic.

Employment

Students completing the minor in Arabic Language and Culture would gain additional skills to improve their employability in a variety of positions in various sectors of the workforce. Adding a minor in Arabic may assist students in finding jobs in law, international business, education, journalism, Foreign Service, intelligence, consulting, finance and banking.

Staff Review

RIOPC staff reviewed the proposal for a minor in Arabic Language and Culture supplied by the University of Rhode Island. The program is within the mission, role and scope of the University and does not require Council approval.



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To: Council on Postsecondary Education

From: Commissioner Jim Purcell, Ed.D. 

Date: May 1, 2015

Subject: University of Rhode Island Proposal for a Master of Arts
in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion

The University of Rhode Island is announcing its intent to offer the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and/or Dual Language Immersion. This 31-credit program is based upon the accreditation standards of the TESOL International Association which is used by Rhode Island for the certification of PK-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) and Dual Language immersion teachers. The degree will have two tracks. The certification track is intended for teachers who wish to add ESL or Dual Language Immersion to their existing teaching certificates. Students in the certification track must already hold certification in early childhood (P-2), elementary (grades 1-6), or secondary (grades 5-12) education. The second track prepares graduates for work with adult TESOL learners; graduate students who choose this track are seeking to develop expertise in working with adult second language learners in a variety of settings. Both tracks promote bilingualism, biliteracy and multicultural competency.

Rationale

The goal for the program is to supply graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop language proficiency of those learning English as a second language and for those seeking literacy in English plus an additional language. By offering this program, the School of Education is addressing the long-range goal of promoting bilingualism and multicultural skills which have been shown to provide those receiving this education, with cognitive, social and employment advantages.

The M.A. in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion is designed as an online program. By utilizing an online format, the program may attract

students from beyond the local area thereby enriching the learning experience by having a diverse cohort. In addition, having the program online is another means to increase the international student population taking URI courses and programs. URI notes that there are few online M.A. in TESOL programs offered online.

There is a growing need in Rhode Island and nationally, for qualified educators in TESOL to teach English language learners (ELLs). Graduates from Track 1 will help meet the shortage of ESL and dual language immersion teachers in RI. In 2013, the number of ELLs had increased by 33% in five years. As a result, less than highly qualified teachers have been given emergency certification to teach in ESL classrooms. Similarly, there is also a need for qualified K-12 educators to launch dual language immersion programs which have become popular in other states. The *Rhode Island Roadmap to Language Excellence*, a strategic plan for language education to meet the unmet needs of local business and government, recommends implementing K-12 language immersion programs in all Rhode Island districts as has been done in Delaware and Utah. Implementation of this recommendation would result in an increased need for qualified teachers to launch these programs. The Teacher Shortage Area Nationwide Listing, published by the U.S. Department of Education, lists English as a Second language as an area with teacher shortages in Rhode Island and in 34 other states.

Employment

Teachers with certification will increase their employability by adding TESOL and dual language immersion certification. Students in track 2, those without certification, would find employment in universities, private schools, non-governmental organization (NGOs), international corporations and government agencies.

Institutional Role

Offering the M.A. in TESOL is in keeping with the University's mission as a land grant institution by expanding the offerings within the School of Education to include a program meeting a high need area. The M.A in TESOL is a natural companion to the M.A. in Adult Education already offered by the School of Education and will provide opportunities for collaboration across both programs.

Interinstitutional Considerations

Rhode Island College offers a M.Ed. in TESOL with similar objectives to the one proposed by URI since both programs are following the Rhode Island state certification guidelines which are based on the national accrediting body, TESOL International. URI notes differences:

- The URI program has the opportunity to target the students in the Flagship

Program in Chinese who would be proficient enough to seek certification in Dual Language Immersion.

- URI offerings in foreign language are more extensive than RIC's and therefore can draw on students majoring in Chinese, Italian, or German or with a minor in Arabic or Japanese.
- The M.A. in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion program will be offered completely online; therefore, the program will draw students from outside of Rhode Island.

In determining whether a program is unnecessarily duplicative, URI points to the following data:

- URI is planning on 15 students in the first year and 27 students in the second year.
- Data from RIDE indicates that between 2010 and 2014, 157 emergency certifications in ESL were granted. Adding in the number of emergency certificates that were renewed, the total number of ESL emergency certificates for this time period is 299. Over the same period, 19 bilingual/dual language emergency certificates were first issued and including renewals, the total increases to 30. The data, therefore, shows that the existing program is not meeting all of the unmet need.

External Affiliations

For students seeking certification, two field placements are required in a school district. The Office of Teacher Education has letters of agreement from participating school districts. Once an acceptable classroom has been identified, the Office of Teacher Education will solicit a letter of agreement from the school district. For students who are seeking work experience and not certification, URI's Center for Career and Experiential Education will work with the program to identify two field placements.

Program

Courses listed below with an asterisk are required for certification extension by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|--|
| <u>LIN 420*</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Second Language Acquisition</u> |
| <u>EDC 501*</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Socio-Cultural Aspects of Language Minority Education</u> |
| <u>EDC 506 or EDC 509</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Researching Language in Educational Settings or Foundations of Educational Research</u> |
| <u>EDC 527*</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Language Study for Teachers of Reading</u> |

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|--|
| <u>EDC 563*</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Teaching Reading to Multicultural Populations</u> |
| <u>EDC 515</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Structured English Immersion and Sheltered English</u> |
| <u>EDC 516*</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>Teaching English as a Second language</u> |
| <u>EDC 519*</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>Teaching Practicum in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion</u> |
| <u>Elective credits</u> | <u>6</u> | |
| <u>Comprehensive exam</u> | | |

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes assessment plans were reviewed and approved by the URI Division of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation.

Faculty and Staff

For the first year, a current faculty member, Dr. Joann Hammadou Sullivan, will teach and with Dr. David Byrd, Director of the School of Education, administer the program. By year two, the School of Education is planning to hire two additional faculty members who will be the program leaders for the two tracks. These faculty positions will be needed to teach ten courses over the academic year, undertake additional work during the summer, and provide faculty advisement for the students in the program. One of new hires will use one course release to administer the program.

Students

The TESOL/Dual Immersion program anticipates attracting students from the following sources:

- URI graduates with a bachelor's degree in early childhood, elementary, or secondary education with state certification interested in extended certification in TESOL/Dual Immersion.
- Students from the Flagship Chinese Program will have the proficiency necessary to gain certification to become a TESOL/Dual Language Immersion teacher.
- As an online program, there is the possibility of drawing students nationally and internationally.

The School of Education anticipates an enrollment of nine in-state and six out-of-state students for year 1 and twenty-seven in year 2 and onward.

Financial Considerations

The budget was calculated to reflect a fully online program. Because this is an

online program the expenses are primarily for personnel; the School of Education intends to hire two assistant professors at \$67,000 each. A memo from Linda Barrett, Director of Budget and Financial Planning, notes that the new funding required for the two faculty positions will be supported by projected tuition revenue. Further, the program is expected to contribute positively to the university's revenue in future years. In accordance with the Board's tuition policy for employer sponsored and selected special learning programs targeting adult students, the university will set the tuition rates for the program.

Staff Review

RIOPC staff reviewed the proposal for the Master of Arts in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion submitted by the University of Rhode Island. The program is within the mission, role and scope of the University. The proposal justifies the need for a second graduate degree in TESOL/Dual Language Immersion on the basis of current unmet need and anticipated job growth in the field. This proposal qualifies as a Notice of Change and does not require Council approval.



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To: Council on Postsecondary Education

From: Commissioner Jim Purcell, Ed.D. 

Date: May 1, 2015

Subject: Notice of Change: Change in degree name and creation of
subplans for Plant Sciences

The University is announcing its intention of renaming the Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Horticulture and Turfgrass Management to the Bachelor of Science in Plant Sciences. The University is also stating its intention of establishing three tracks within the Plant Sciences degree: Turfgrass Management, Ornamental Horticulture, and Sustainable Crop Production.

Rationale

The University is proposing to change the name of the degree to reflect more accurately the mission of the department and the programs offered. The new degree name, Plant Sciences, better reflects an expansion of the mission of the department and the substantial shift in the students' interests away from ornamentals and turfgrass and toward crop science and sustainable crop production. Since the major is already Plant Sciences, this name change also allows for the degree and major to share the same name.

Secondly, the university is now establishing the tracks as official subplans although they had been offered unofficially. This official designation will allow the specific tracks to appear on students' transcripts under the degree name which may be beneficial in gaining employment and entry to graduate school. Instituting tracks within the Plant Sciences major, will allow the university to do a better job of explaining the degree in Plant Sciences to prospective students and provide further information on the specific tracks. This will decrease confusion among students about course requirements, will result in better advisement, and will assist students in planning their course-loads accordingly. As a result of these changes, the language in the catalog description will be clarified to explain the expectations for each

track.

Program

The Plant Sciences major requires a total of 120 credits. All Plant Science majors take 29-30 credits of pre-professional natural sciences, 30 credits in concentration courses specified for each track and 15 credits of supporting electives which are approved by a faculty advisor according to the students' interests.

Graduates of the Plant Sciences degree can meet the standards for several certification organizations as well. Ornamental horticulture students qualify for certification with the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association and the International Society for Arboriculture. Turfgrass Management graduates qualify for certification as turfgrass managers or specialists with the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils of the American Society of Agronomy and meet registration requirements for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Employment and graduate study

Graduates of the Plant Sciences major pursue careers as golf course superintendents, landscape contractors, directors of parks, garden centers or floral shop proprietors, vegetable or fruit growers, lawn service managers, plant propagators, nursery production managers, and technical representatives for seed or chemical companies among other opportunities. Other graduates may choose to enter graduate school in preparation for careers in research and education in the public and private sector.

Institutional Considerations

This proposed change will provide URI with the ability to provide better academic advising to students looking to follow this path of study. The change in language in the course catalog description will also provide better transparency for the program and the university. There are no additional resources required for the proposed changes.

Clarity in the description makes the program more attractive to prospective students who are trying to understand the specific requirements for the degree and identify options in terms of tracks, courses, and interests. The revised degree name and clearly-established subplans might also attract students who were unaware of this degree overall and these tracks which cater to such specific interests. These changes may cause a small increase in enrollment into the Plant Sciences program.

Interinstitutional Considerations

There are no other Plant Sciences degrees offered in Rhode Island.

Students

1. The Turfgrass Management track is intended for students interested in managing golf courses, athletic fields, commercial turf properties, and other facilities. Students in this track will gain competencies in all aspects of turf production and management with a focus on sustainable practices and integrated pest management systems. Students interested in landscape management may also be attracted to this track, but will take slightly different concentration and elective courses to better suit their occupational goals.
2. The Ornamental Horticulture track will attract students interested in nursery management, greenhouse production and the floral industry. Students in this track will develop a wide array of skills allowing them to work in diverse industries where ornamental plant production and management are practiced. Landscape management students may also select this option, if they are more interested in trees than turf.
3. The Sustainable Crop Production track is for students interested in growing plants for food, managing food systems and developing sustainable methods for farming that minimize the impact on the environment while maintaining or improving the quality of food and the environment. Students in this track will learn techniques and strategies for managing small, sustainable farming systems in addition to incorporating food production into the urban environment.

Staff Review

RIOPC staff reviewed the proposal, supplied by the University of Rhode Island, for a Bachelor of Science in Plant Sciences with tracks in Turfgrass Management, Ornamental Horticulture, and Sustainable Crop Production. The program is within the mission, role and scope of the University and does not require Council approval.