PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY
Approved by Executive Council 11/4/08

BACKGROUND

From the 1980 to 2001 the teacher education faculty were organized into a Center for Educational Studies and Services. The Center had a director and two assistant directors; one for graduate and another for undergraduate programs. In 2001 the administrative structure of SUNY Plattsburgh’s teacher-education program was fairly suddenly restructured as the result of the local administration’s decision that a change in program design and organizational structure would be the first step toward responding to New York State’s Board of Regents’ edict that all education programs be nationally accredited. The Center model was changed to its present departmental one under a divisional dean. Departments of Childhood Education, Adolescence Education/Health, Special Education, and Literacy Education together with programs in Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership were formed as separate entities, each with a department chair or program coordinator. (Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership had one program coordinator.)

In the summer of 2008, the Teacher Education faculty developed a proposal for reorganizing the faculty from discrete departments, into a whole unit with distinct degree programs. As virtually all faculty teach courses that serve in all teacher education degree programs, it wasn’t efficient or effective to structure ourselves into departments. Since all faculty need to be involved in decision-making and issues regarding teacher education, it made sense to do business as one entity.

The decision above was made primarily because being organized into departments clearly wasn’t working and our students and programs were beginning to suffer. Making decisions on university business was excruciatingly slow because being divided into departments made communication among faculty difficult. Coherence among degree programs was sorely lacking for much the same reason. Faculty rarely created a forum in which to convene and converse about student and curricular issues. In an attempt to improve these conditions, Teacher Education proposed reorganizing to become one large group.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The following organizational structure for Teacher Education is proposed:

A UNIT consisting of all faculty in all current teacher education departments and programs (Childhood Education, Adolescence Education, Special Education, Literacy Education, and Curriculum and Instruction) except Educational Leadership. (Educational Leadership, an advanced study program, will be added to the UNIT in the future.)

Three COORDINATORS to oversee the three degree programs – BS, MST, and MSEd. Unit Coordinators will be responsible for managing those elements common to all programs: program assessment, standing committees (e.g., Assessment, Governance, Curriculum, etc.), program conceptual framework, faculty development, etc.

Six PROGRAM LEADERS to manage the activities associated with operating the program areas (Childhood Education, Adolescence Education, Special Education, Literacy Education, and Curriculum and Instruction, BA/MST). Program Leaders will be responsible for, among other things, coordinating advising, facilitating program area curricular changes,
coordinating course schedules, determining course offerings each semester, and recommending adjunct faculty as needed. Program leaders will work collaboratively with the Coordinators.

RATIONALE

The proposed model would involve 9 of the 26 full-time faculty in the current department and program areas. One of the shortcomings of the current department model is that only 5 faculty are involved in running the departments, with no Unit or degree program oversight. Communication and collaboration is enhanced with more faculty involved in program leadership.

The need for these two levels of coordination is critical given that program redesign has resulted in our having to offer coursework in the old and new programs simultaneously. Managing the transition from the old program to the new and developing a viable infrastructure to support students in both programs is time consuming.

PROPOSED EVALUATION OF THE NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

With the adoption of TEAC as our teacher education program accrediting body, the faculty have committed to ongoing research of our programs. This commitment extends to our organizational structure, which is part of our Quality Control System. Ongoing research, outlined below, is proposed.

The purposes of the organizational structure change are to enhance program coherence, increase faculty participation and satisfaction with the governance structure, increase faculty development and scholarly activities, and to provide a structure for designing program improvements based on student outcome data. Indicators of success of the structure include:

• analysis of student data for decision making. A significant amount of data are collected from our current students and alumni by our Assessment Data Manager and the Office of Field Experience and Student Teaching (in addition to various unique degree program information). These data will be reviewed for performance scores, student perception of our degree programs, retention rates, as well as various other metrics;
• report of faculty satisfaction with the structure on a survey in order to consider the opinions and impressions of those within the Unit;
• review of information and data on our program coherence and goals in our bi-annual TEAC reports;
• noting any increase in faculty development activities,
• noting any increase in program research activities, especially those involving collaboration amongst faculty and/or collaboration amongst faculty and students; and
• analyzing any increases in submission of annual reports and faculty productivity.

The above mentioned processes are not intended to be exhaustive or complete. As other sources of data and information present themselves, they too will be considered in the success or failure of the newly restructured Teacher Education Unit.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
The Teacher Education faculty have approved this proposal and have identified three Coordinators. They are in the process of identifying the Program Leaders. By-laws are being drafted and will include a descriptions of the roles of the Coordinators, Program Leaders, and Standing Committee Chairs.

When approved, the Teacher Education faculty will become the Teacher Education Unit.