

## **Department of Curriculum & Instruction Strategic Planning 2013-14**

### **Our Process:**

The faculty, staff, and graduate students in Curriculum & Instruction have committed to the development of a strategic plan for the department to guide initiatives related to teaching, research, and service and to inform the allocation of resources.

In Fall 2013, each program (CEAED PK-4, 4-8, and SECED) and graduate emphasis area collaborated on drafting one-page statements in which they addressed the following questions:

Program coordinators and directors met to examine these statements and identify broad themes that cut across programs and emphasis areas. Zbiek and Zembal-Saul met to refine the themes into candidate strategic priorities. These priorities/themes were shared with members of C&I at a strategic planning retreat in January 2014, which was co-facilitated by Rose Zbiek, Mike Dooris, and Carla Zembal-Saul. The retreat was attended by 55 people, including tenure line faculty, fixed term faculty, field supervisors, staff, and graduate students.

Program coordinators facilitated group discussions at tables of approximately 10-11 people with representation across emphasis areas, programs, and roles. Large group discussion allowed for the identification of salient ideas/issues, and small group notes were submitted. Zembal-Saul and Zbiek synthesized notes and developed a draft strategic plan.

Program coordinators discussed the draft with their respective faculties and contributed ideas/suggestions for the version that is provided here. As part of this process, the C&I Mission Statement was also revised.

It is important to note that the C&I strategic plan is still under development during SP14, and that the current version is intended to contribute to planning at the College level.

All draft documents were made public to C&I faculty, staff, and graduate students via Google Drive.

### **Our Mission:**

We believe that every learner deserves excellent teachers, as well as equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant educational opportunities. Thus, the mission of C&I is (1) to advance knowledge about curriculum, teaching, learning, teacher education, and educational supervision through exemplary scholarship and research, and (2) to apply that scholarship and knowledge effectively in teaching, professional service, and educational leadership. To that end, we engage in high quality research and scholarship and prepare excellent teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers and support their develop throughout their careers as active local and global leaders equipped to embrace diversity and meet the challenges of rapidly changing educational environments.

### **Our Commitments/Values:**

***Diversity*** – We believe that every person must be valued as an individual deserving respect and bringing a unique retinue of assets, including different abilities, culture, race, class, gender, religious tradition, sexual orientation, practical experience, formal educational

background, and political affiliation. We value a broad range of research perspectives, methodologies, and agendas.

***Inquiry, Innovation & Technology*** – We are committed to an inquiry stance toward teaching, research, and service as we develop and implement innovations in the service of our mission. Those innovations include, but are not limited to, strategic uses of cutting edge instructional technologies and dynamic analytic research design and methodologies.

***Advocacy*** – We are committed to addressing social and educational injustice, including issues of equity, through action and advocacy informed by honest analysis of research findings. We recognize that in order to be effective, advocacy must extend into discourse communities beyond the profession. For this reason, we support respect for civil discourse and dissent.

The strategic priorities that follow stem from our commitment to diversity, advocacy, and inquiry/innovation/technology.

### **Our Strategic Priorities and Initiatives:**

**Promote Intellectual Community:** *Create a welcoming, collegial, and inclusive environment for faculty, staff, students, and mentor teachers that encourages open exchange of ideas and cultivates leadership.*

- Strengthen opportunities for undergraduate research among education students.
- Enhance Faculty Research in Progress Seminars (FRIPS).
- Support the formation and activities of C&I Graduate Student Association (CIGSA).
- Rethink GA responsibilities/assignments to include both supervised research components and supervised instruction components.
- Cultivate leadership and strengthen leadership succession planning for key department roles, such as Department Head, CEAED and SECED Coordinators, Director of Graduate Studies, and Emphasis Area Program Coordinators.
- Provide resources for professional development of faculty, staff, and graduate students.

**Advance Strategic Partnerships:** *Develop and maintain strategic partnerships within and beyond the department, college, and university in the spirit of co-developing and implementing high quality instructional programs and research projects.*

- STEM Education – C&I faculty have expertise, capacity, and national/international recognition in research and practice associated with STEM teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment at a time when there is global attention on and national need for innovative improvements in mathematics and science education. Possible levers for STEM Education work that connects with alumni, classroom teachers, current and future students, and faculty in other departments and colleges include the newly renovated MTHED Lab, current and emerging IUGs, potential M.Ed. STEM strand, Waterbury Summit, CSATs, interest in Learning Sciences, and collaboration with LDT faculty.
- Early Childhood Education –Our aim is to build capacity in this area in light of increasing attention on ECE at the state and national level by seeking and supporting collaborations among C&I faculty, with the Center for Disability Studies, and between C&I faculty and colleagues within and beyond Penn State. Locally, the Penn State Child Care Task Force recently released a report with recommendations that we aim to leverage as part of our

research and practice (new faculty lines, scholar in residence program). Dedicated lab space will be needed, as exists for LLED, SSED, MTHED, and SCIED.

- Professional Development School Partnerships – C&I has two established and nationally recognized professional development school (PDS) partnerships with local schools, the Elementary/CEAED (PK-4) PDS and the Secondary English PDS. Research and practice associated with the PDS involves collaborative work with teachers, school and district administrators, curriculum support teachers, and university faculty aimed at simultaneous renewal. Our intention is to continue to deepen these relationships and explore ways in which to extend the PDS model to new programs, such as the CEAED 4-8, and new settings.
- Research – We seek to build relationships and collaborate across disciplinary boundaries in our research to share instruments and methods and to pursue new and more complex lines of inquiry. This kind of work promotes a vibrant intellectual community, to which we are committed. One means of supporting cross-disciplinary research is to seek funding from SSRI and other internal and external sources that value this work.

**Foster Literacies Across the Lifespan** (among faculty, staff, and students; research and practice): *Leverage the expertise of faculty across emphasis areas to support the development of innovation in research and practice associated with diverse literacies, including intercultural/multicultural competence and environmental literacy.*

- Develop a literacy education specialty for the C&I M.Ed. offered via World Campus that addresses intercultural/multicultural competency, global citizenship, environmental literacy / sustainability, and media literacy / digital tools. The target audience will be practicing teachers.
- Create a certificate for intercultural/multicultural literacy with an optional study abroad experience.
- Re-invigorate research and practice around EDUCATE, the one-to-one computing initiative in CEAED, SECED ENGL, and WLED. This will include faculty and GA development, as well as exploring digital tools to support teacher learning and development (e.g., digital video analysis).
- Pursue an emphasis on global citizenship that includes study abroad opportunities.

**Cultivate New Audiences:** *Recruit and retain a diverse community of students, staff, and faculty with special attention to new audiences, including domestic and international students and practicing teachers.*

- Partner with the Advising Office to pursue active and innovative recruiting mechanisms for our undergraduate programs.
- Partner with the Advising Office to craft supports for prospective and current students, such as PAPA and PECT preparation.
- Partner with the Multicultural Office to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups to our UG and GR programs.
- Specifically target practicing educators, including alumni, for the C&I M.Ed. offered via World Campus.
- Create new mechanisms for staying connected to graduates of our programs during their first years of teaching (e.g., social networks, induction programs).

- Renew commitment to partnerships with Xavier University and University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez that contribute to the diversity of our student body and enhance the experiences of graduate students in our programs.
- Investigate recruiting and support mechanisms for international UG and GR students.

**Invigorate UG and GR Programs:** *Bring new energy and insights to the revision of undergraduate and graduate degree, certificate, and outreach programs to address the needs of today's students, teachers, and scholars, and to prepare them for changing educational environments and next generation careers.*

- Update UG and GR curriculum to reflect preparation for emerging roles and career paths.
- Expand the C&I M.Ed. offered via World Campus to include new specialties in STEM, Literacy Education, Social Studies Education, and Curriculum & Supervision.
- Generate a comprehensive marketing plan to attract, recruit, and retain diverse and forward-thinking undergraduate and graduate students.
- Pursue innovative pedagogies and digital tools to enhance learning and learning environments.
- Create customizable pathways for teacher education students that include new specialties, endorsements, certificates, and experiences (e.g., Philly Urban Seminar, ESL Ecuador, CI 280 Hazelton).
- Build on emergent CEAED 4-8 options in ENGL and SSED to include SCIED and MTHED. Engage in targeted recruiting and retention efforts associated with these programs.
- Strengthen field experiences by developing deeper connections across the curriculum; building stronger partnerships with PA school districts, especially those that provide diverse settings that enhance our students' field experiences; exploring digital tools for remote supervision and meaningful interactions between Penn State faculty and classroom teachers and administrators; attend to the retention and ongoing professional development of high quality field supervisors.

**Rationale:**

Several of our priorities and associated initiatives are motivated by the national trend of decreasing enrollments in traditional teacher education programs and the proliferation of alternative pathways to become a teacher. In the past, C&I was afflicted with the issue of having more students than we were able to support, especially in K-6 teacher preparation. At the graduate level, we now compete with programs that are highly marketed and offer multiple-year awards of support to incoming students. Although our programs remain nationally respected, we recognize the need to become more proactive and effective at marketing our programs and recruiting excellent students into both our undergraduate and graduate programs.

National trends in teacher work and curriculum policies indicate a need for educators to have higher levels of expertise in specific areas. These observations, coupled with the applicability of faculty scholarship to practice, have led to a number of proposed innovations aimed at customizing our programs by including well-developed specialties, endorsements, certificates, and field experiences. In addition, we have a clear interest in further enriching our programs and

experiences by recruiting and retaining a diverse student body and faculty, which will require attention to department climate and supports.

Related to the invigoration and enhanced marketing of our UG and GR programs is the need to tap and serve well newly emerging audiences. C&I is already admitting international students to our UG programs and customizing curriculum and field experiences to meet their needs. In addition, we are moving forward with expanding the C&I M.Ed. offered via World Campus with the goal of reaching a national audience of practicing teachers.

To solve real problems of practical and empirical importance in education requires teaming with practitioners. The strategic partnerships we have identified build on current strengths and expertise of faculty, as well as potential areas in which we stand to have a significant impact. Several C&I faculty have collaborative relationships with schools and other partners by virtue of conducting research and instruction in K-12 classrooms and other field settings. In particular, we currently have a nationally recognized, award winning professional development school (PDS) partnership at the PK-4 level and in Secondary English Education. We plan to continue to use understandings developed in the PDS setting and other venues to inform our work with teachers and schools and to develop innovative field experiences, especially in terms of working with schools that serve students from high poverty areas and/or populations of students from marginalized groups. These partnerships provide venues that vary in ways that enhance the preparation and ongoing professional development of teachers and the preparation and development of graduate students as teacher educators and researchers.

The STEM strategic partnership addresses the national and global trend highlighting the importance of science and mathematics education. While the movement may be casually seen as more good work in each of these areas, there are calls for professional development, research on learning and teaching, richer connections between content and pedagogy, and attention to practices and processes. Accomplishing work that advances this range of STEM goals leverages the strong faculty expertise and resources in the Department, as well as our connections outside the College.

Given the increasing attention to early childhood nationally and at Penn State, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) focus is both timely and important. We currently have two tenure-line faculty in ECE, both of whom are recognized scholars in the field. In light of the Child Care Task Force Report (released in January 2014), we intend to build the ECE faculty and programs to increase visibility in the field and serve the Penn State community in new ways. In addition, there is a growing interest in connecting ECE with disability studies, allowing for collaborative initiatives with the Center for Disability Studies.

Faculty express growing interest and possess expertise in the areas of intercultural competence, global citizenship, and environmental literacy. We have framed these as “diverse literacies” across the lifespan, and plan to weave these literacies into a number of aspects of our work, including the development of a new certificate, educational opportunities for international students, field experiences in areas where there English language learners, study abroad experiences for students, and faculty exchange opportunities. These efforts come at a time when our students as future educators and scholars need opportunities to learn and live beyond boundaries of place and experience. We are positioned to help them ground issues in scholarship and integrate opportunities into the totality of their Penn State experience.

Across all of these strategic priorities/themes, C&I is committed to innovative approaches to teaching and research that utilize cutting edge applications of technology (e.g., EDUCATE, MTHED Lab). We also note that each priority involves the integration of research, service, and teaching in the spirit of inquiry as we design, implement, examine, and disseminate innovations in education.

### **Degree of Consensus:**

Our approach to strategic planning has been one of transparency and consensus building. This is not to say, however, that there is complete consensus on the priorities and initiatives. Our goal was to achieve general agreement on our direction as a group, as well as to ensure that individual members could “see” themselves and their work being connected to at least one strategic priority. The process we have undertaken has allowed us to get as close as possible to this goal.

From feedback received during the process, there appears to be the greatest levels of consensus around the following themes – reaching new audiences (e.g., recruitment and retention) and revitalizing UG and GR programs. Related to both of these themes is the work being done to expand the C&I M.Ed. offered via World Campus. New specialty areas include STEM Education, Literacy Education, and Curriculum & Supervision, as well as a general curriculum. The target audience for the degree is practicing K-12 educators, a group that we currently serve primarily in residence instruction in small numbers.

As one might expect, Math and Science Education faculty have a strong voice related to STEM Education, and LCS faculty have rallied around diverse literacies. CEAED faculty as a group recognize the importance of early childhood education.

### **Next Steps:**

There is some urgency to pursue certain next steps in the short term. For example, attending to marketing programs and recruiting students is an immediate need, as is our work with World Campus. In addition, opportunities to leverage current attention to ECE must be a top priority if we are to address task force recommendations in a timely and meaningful way. The list below is an attempt to distinguish between near and long term activities.

- Improve recruiting - marketing and website (2 yrs)
- Expand World Campus M.Ed. to include new specialties (2 yrs)
- Enhance STEM presence at PSU and nationally - build off Waterbury Summit, highlight innovative MTHED Lab, offer STEM M.Ed. online (2 yrs)
- Highlight expertise in diverse literacies - possible certificate in multicultural/intercultural competence (2 yrs)
- Launch new and enliven current intellectual community initiatives, including CIGSA, FRIPS, and leadership succession efforts (2 yrs)
- Strengthen ECE presence at PSU and nationally - Child Care Task Force report calls for new tenure line positions and scholars in residence programs and Hort Woods and Bennett (2-5 yrs)
- Pursue partnerships and innovations in field experiences - remote supervision; more diverse settings; deeper connections between PSU faculty, supervisors, and classroom teachers (2-5 yrs)
- Make UG teacher education accessible to international students (2-5 yrs)
- Develop new endorsements, certificates, options; expand CEAED 4-8 programs (2-5 yrs)

- Leverage commitment to innovation and technology - EDUCATE, MTHED Lab, Kraus, etc. (ongoing)
- Seek external funding and resources that build off of these initiatives (ongoing)

**Budget Implications:**

At this point in time, the budget implications provided here are a “best guess” at resources necessary to support our strategic initiatives. It is anticipated that budget requests will become more refined as strategic planning moves forward.

We already have been working with HR and the dean’s office to reshape a staff position to focus on C&I’s web presence and social media marketing. In addition, a group of faculty is working with the Advising Office to explore new recruiting mechanisms for the UG teacher education program.

As we pursue strengthening ECE and related partnerships, there will be a need to pursue new tenure lines (and possibly FT lines). Human resources may also become necessary in other areas identified in strategic partnerships and diverse literacies, depending on how new programs and credentials evolve. At the very least, administrative support will be needed for the expansion of the M.Ed. online.

Strengthening our connections to schools for the improvement of field placements requires recruiting and retaining high quality mentor teachers and supervisors. Some faculty wish to explore mechanisms, such as tuition waivers, for mentor teachers to pursue graduate coursework. Currently, supervisor salaries are relatively low given that they oversee student teaching, the capstone experience in our undergraduate majors. Continuing to build capacity in this area will require us to devote resources to salaries and ongoing professional development for field supervisors. To ensure that meaningful international and intercultural experiences for students are possible for students of all backgrounds, we are prepared to devote increased attention to gifts and endowments.

We also intend to utilize technology, such as remote supervision tools and digital video analysis, to strengthen field experiences. New hardware and software will be required to do this work well. This connects directly to technology-related resources necessary to pursue new research approaches, innovative pedagogies, and program changes, as supported by EDUCATE and other initiatives.

In order to improve both teaching and research, we plan to revise the current configuration of graduate assistantships in the Department. Currently, most teaching assistants have a 2-2 teaching load related to our undergraduate programs. We are working to adjust these assignments to support strategic initiatives and faculty research by reconfiguring GA assignments to include 1-2 alternative assignments. In this way, we can systematically study a variety of program changes, such as technology innovations, work with international students, and new field experience models.

Innovative new initiatives, such as the C&I Graduate Student Association and the ECE scholars in residence programs, will require resources.

Finally, leadership development and succession planning are a major consideration to the successful realization of the aforementioned strategic priorities. We intend to devote resources

to professional development of leadership skills among faculty, staff and graduate students. We are planning to pursue an overlapping year for those exiting and entering leadership roles, particularly the Director of Graduate Studies, CEAED Coordinator, and Department Head.