

ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY



Graduate School

309 Hovey Hall
Campus Box 4040
Normal, IL 61790-4040
Telephone: (309) 438-2583
Facsimile: (309) 438-7912
gradinfo@ilstu.edu
www.grad.ilstu.edu

October 29, 2018

TO: Susan Kalter, Chairperson, Academic Senate

FROM: Robert Quinlan, Chairperson, Graduate Curriculum Committee

RE: Executive Summary – Proposal for the New Interdisciplinary Early Intervention Sensory Disabilities Sequence

The Graduate Curriculum Committee has approved and is forwarding for Academic Senate consideration the attached proposal to add a new Interdisciplinary Early Intervention Sensory Disabilities Sequence in the M.S. in Special Education.

The proposal states that this interdisciplinary sequence provides teachers of the visually impaired and teachers of the deaf with knowledge and skills to meet the unique needs of infants and toddlers who have sensory disabilities and their families. An intense focus will be provided on language, communication, and feeding issues common to this population. A variety of practicum and clinical experiences with children and families will allow students to apply knowledge and skills to professional practice.

Infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families are provided services through Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Illinois, licensure and training for teachers of the deaf and teachers of the visually impaired focuses on IDEA Part B services. Therefore, additional training is needed to understand the impact of sensory loss on early development. Further, children with sensory disabilities often experience struggles in the development of language, communication and feeding. Specialized training that capitalizes on interdisciplinary learning will prepare professionals to meet the unique needs of this population.

This new sequence will required the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to offer additional sections of the courses in the sequence (CSD 406, 412, and 420). They are aware of this and have provided a letter of acknowledgement.

The U.S. Department of Special Education, Office of Special Education, has requested proposals for projects that can meet critical personnel needs. A 5-year grant proposal is being submitted that would supply funding for students electing this proposed Interdisciplinary Early Intervention Sensory Disabilities sequence. This grant would fund a total of 36 students from two cohorts to complete a master's degree.

The Graduate Curriculum Committee supports the proposal to add this new sequence.

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Attachments