University Academic Affairs Committee

Draft meetings

September 25, 2023

**Committee:** Bridget Brew, Gonzalo Campos-Dintrans (secretary), Marcelo Fajardo-Cárdenas, Varun Makhija (chair), Scott Powers, Kelly Yoon (absent)

**Ex officio:** Ana Chichester, Kristen Fairbanks

**Student representatives:** Evan Fletcher, Chase Sullivan

**Guest**: Janine Davis (Education)

Meeting was called to order at 3:39.

Dr. Janine Davis, Associate Dean of the College of Education, met with the committee to discuss the newly proposed BLS Special Major in Educational Studies: Special Education with Licensure in SPED.

During the discussion, the committee and the guest discussed the motivation to create this major (to attend the current needs for educational professionals in the area); its funding, the proposed curriculum, the population it serves (current paraprofessionals in the area), and other questions or concerns that arose in the discussion.

This program has been sponsored through a grant obtained by the local schools and the COE from the federal government. Local schools from Stafford and Spotsylvania counties, as well as the City of Fredericksburg have selected a cohort of students from their teaching paraprofessionals. The program itself will start in summer 2024, and federal funding will cover tuition for these students during the first year. Funding after the first year is not yet clear, but it might come from other sources that students apply to.

In the way the program is designed, there are certain features that strengthen it: its major in special education addresses one of the most needed areas at the moment; students are recruited by local schools themselves, and the curriculum is designed so that most students will be able to finish within two years. Because this is a student population that works during the day, a consideration was made to plan and propose classes that are regularly taught in the evenings. Another foreseeable benefit for students is that this special major would allow students to pursue a Master’s degree in education.

A few suggestions were made during the discussion about the curriculum: a) adding another science class (chemistry); b) adding a math class (MATH 120), and c) considering a second language not currently taught by UMW (this can be done in consultation with the BLS director)

**The committee unanimously accepted the proposal with the changes suggested.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.