

Initial Five-Year Review of Educational Policy Studies Certificate

Department of Educational Policy Studies (EPS)

UW-Madison

Program Description

The purpose of the EPS certificate program is to offer undergraduates an opportunity to receive recognition for in-depth study of educational policy in its multiple dimensions. The certificate offers students the opportunity to engage critically and thoughtfully in various educational policy debates in our nation and across the globe. The EPS department initiated the certificate program in the fall of 2006 in response to student interest. The creation of the certificate formalized the department's commitment to undergraduate education in the School of Education and in L&S.

Program Curriculum

The EPS certificate is a 15 – credit program. Students must take a minimum of two (6 credits) advanced level courses, which are defined as courses at or above 340. Students may take one 3-credit independent reading course in EPS as part of the 15 credits. Students must earn at least a “B” grade in each EPS course in order to count towards the certificate.

The certificate was designed to appeal to students in education and those in the social sciences and humanities, including history, sociology, anthropology, political science and philosophy. The department offers a variety of undergraduate courses in history of education, US educational policy, anthropology & education, sociology of education, comparative and international education as well as a range of topical courses.

Program Admission, Advising, and Administration

At least one completed EPS course is required for admission to the program. Initially we also required a reference from an EPS faculty member for admission, but no longer require this. An advising session is required upon acceptance to program. The process can be retroactive.

The advising position is assigned to the Department Chair, and others designated by the Chair following the initial advising session. Administrative tasks associated with this certificate program (e.g., tracking completion, etc.) were initially assumed by the Department Chair, but have handled by the Graduate Student Coordinator for the past several years.

Instructional Resources

All members of the EPS faculty and department lecturers teach courses that satisfy the requirements for the certificate.

We currently have adequate staffing for all of our social sciences as well as comparative/international education courses, but a recent retirement, combined with faculty administrative and other university-level responsibilities, has left us short-staffed in History of Education. EPS 412, "History of American Education," attracts large number of students to the certificate and is a course taken by nearly all certificate seekers, but it cannot be taught by faculty on a regular basis owing to staff shortages. (Other history-of-education courses that have been very popular with undergraduates have not been available since our colleague's retirement.) We plan to seek permission to search in History of Education so we can provide sufficient course offerings in that area.

Curricular Offerings

The EPS certificate was designed to offer students maximum flexibility to design a program that met their individual interests. The certificate does not have any required courses (aside from the requirement to take two advanced courses above the level of 340, as mentioned above).

The courses most commonly taken to fulfill requirements for the certificate are:

150/Education & Public Policy; 200/Race, Ethnicity & Inequality in American Education; 300/School & Society; 335/ Globalization & Education; 412/History of American Education; 500/Topics on Social Issues & Education; 505/Issues in Urban Education; 567/History of African American Education; 570/Anthropology & Education; 600/Problems in Educational Policy; 675/Intro to Comparative & International Education; and 648/Sociology of Education.

Program Completion

115 students have completed the EPS certificate since 2006, and the number of certificate students has increased steadily over time. The interest in the EPS certificate has led the department to work on the creation of a new undergraduate major in Educational Studies. See attached sheet with enrollment and completion numbers.

Learning Outcomes Assessment and Program Impact

Syllabi for EPS certificate courses are currently in the process of adding explicit learning outcomes, as per new UW-Madison guidelines for all undergraduate courses.

EPS does not have a formal assessment for the certificate program, but informal feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive. Indeed, many students have expressed interest in an undergraduate major in EPS. Furthermore, formal course evaluations for classes commonly taken as part of the certificate are all very positive.

Recommendations

(Note: This section should include recommendations and proposals for curricular changes or administrative improvements)

As part of the 5-year review process, the EPS faculty held two discussions regarding the EPS certificate during the spring of 2015. Our discussions focused on program curriculum and administration.

Curriculum: We discussed the possibility of having specific course requirements for the certificate but decided that the flexibility of the certificate was one of its great strengths. While we decided not to add a requirement for a specific course, we agreed that all certificate students should be encouraged to take EPS 300, *School & Society*, as this course provides an overview of the social, historical, philosophical, and cultural contexts of education. In our original proposal, we identified courses at or above 340 to be “advanced.” As we move forward, we will identify courses at or above 400 to be “advanced.” We believe this change more accurately reflects the actual level of difficulty of the courses.

Administration: At first, the EPS chair handled all advising for the EPS certificate. Upon reflection, we recognized that this is not the most efficient way to handle advising for the certificate. In 2015-2016 the Office of Education Academic Services assumed responsibility for this function.

Given the immense—and constantly growing—popularity of the EPS certificate, the EPS Department is currently working on developing a new undergraduate major in Educational Studies. We have completed and presented the “Intent to Plan” to the School of Education’s APC, which unanimously approved that document and urged us to move forward to the next steps in the process of creating a new undergraduate major. As we move forward with the major, we will engage in conversations about the future of the EPS certificate.