

The Development of the New Undergraduate Minor in Education, Learning, and Society (ELS)

A Collaboration of the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Education at the University of Washington

Projected Submission for Approval: June 2005

Projected Launch: January 2006

There is currently no academic program in the study of education for undergraduates at the University of Washington. Seeking to provide such an opportunity, a team of faculty, administrators, and campus leaders has been developing a preliminary proposal for the new undergraduate Minor in Education, Learning, and Society (ELS). This 31-credit ELS Minor is intended to provide students with strong foundations in how human beings learn and how that learning is shaped by society. In addition, it seeks to provide undergraduates interested in education, learning, and society with a community of peers, and to spark dialogue about important issues in education today.

Preliminary Curriculum Proposal

The curriculum for the ELS Minor will include some courses which are currently in development, as well as select courses from across the University that have been approved for their inclusion in the ELS curriculum by their departments.

- **5 credits in Learning and Development.** This requirement will provide a foundational understanding of how human beings learn. It will address what fosters cognition and ability development, and what deters them.
- **5 credits in Schooling and Society.** This requirement will provide a foundational understanding of how society shapes formal learning. It will address why schooling is organized as it is and how schooling has changed over time. It will also address issues of social justice and schooling.
- **5 credits in Field Experience.** The Field Experience will require students to observe and reflect on contextualized learning in a formal or informal educational setting.
- **1 credit in the ELS Colloquium.** The ELS Colloquium will allow students in the ELS Minor to meet their peers; to learn from researchers on the University campus whose work connects to education, learning, and society; and to discuss the researchers' work with their peers. In addition to providing advising opportunities, the ELS Colloquium will require that students complete a curricular plan including a rationale for Elective courses. The curricular plan must be approved by the faculty advisory committee or other advisory body.
- **15 credits in Electives.** Students will select Electives based on their curricular plan, mentioned above. Electives should provide depth of understanding in a topic of the student's choice. Students may choose courses from an approved list, or they may select courses not listed that related to their interest in ELS. For example, a student might develop a curricular plan on "Gender and Education" and include additional courses relating to gender studies and equity. Or, a student might develop a curricular plan based on his/her interest in becoming a teacher, which would most likely include entrance requirements for graduate programs in education.
- **31 credits total.** There will be some restrictions on how many credits may overlap with a student's other major(s) and/or minor(s).

Reaching Students

The ELS Minor is intended for students with a broad range of interests. Prospective students may intend to pursue careers in education, or they may be interested in issues of public policy, social justice, or learning and cognition. The ELS Minor's development team hopes to reach prospective students in a number of ways, including the following possibilities:

- Undergraduate Advisors may be provided with information about the ELS Minor to share with students who express an interest in related issues.
- Announcements may be made in related courses across the University, especially courses which have been approved for the ELS Minor curriculum.
- Announcements may be made to related student activities and organizations, such as tutoring programs and pre-service teacher organizations.

Steps and Timeline

Completed Steps:

- Establish the purpose of the ELS Minor, including learning goals and prospective students.
- Create an inventory of all existing courses at the University that relate to the ELS Minor as well as a list of new and developing courses.

Steps In Progress:

- Begin contacting departments for approval to include select courses in the ELS Minor curriculum.
- Discuss Field Experience possibilities.
- Discuss and establish advising resources.
- Draft a proposal for the ELS Minor.

Next Steps:

- Compile a list of departmentally approved courses to include in the ELS Minor curriculum.
- Complete the proposal for ELS Minor.
- Submit the proposal to appropriate committees and administrative bodies on campus.
- Upon approval, launch the ELS Minor and begin outreach to prospective students.