Cover Page (College of Education)

- Name of the proposed new unit:

The Arizona Center for Educational Success (ACES) is a proposed new unit to help coordinate and generate new research activities to increase external funding in the College of Education.

- Name, address, phone number, and e-mail information of one contact person for this proposal:

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- List and title of the members of the team who developed the proposal

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Jeffrey Milem, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Dean for Professional Preparation
ACES will be a new unit to generate and coordinate research initiatives among College of Education (CoE) faculty—with a special focus on increasing the capacity of faculty and students to seek and secure external funding for sponsored scholarships. The goal is to provide faculty and students with logistical support in identifying funding sources, preparing and submitting grants, leveraging resources across Departments, and pursuing external funding in a coordinated way to enhance the research capacity of the College. In so doing, ACES will pursue and expand the CoE’s mission to develop research addressing critical problems regarding educational practice and policy.

Centrality of Mission

The CoE generated approximately $5 million in sponsored revenues in FY 2008. The goal is to double that total within the next five years, thus increasing indirect cost revenues for the CoE and the University of Arizona (UA), while enhancing their ranking and reputation. In conceptualizing ACES, we have consulted widely with faculty and students within the CoE and colleagues elsewhere. The clear consensus is that the unit would be a definite asset to the CoE in enhancing its research mission.

Primary Functions

ACES will initially serve the following four functions:

Provide logistical support: ACES will provide administrative and academic support for developing, drafting, and submitting proposals for funded research, with a special emphasis on supporting junior faculty’s professional development. This support will include coordinating budgetary assistance with the CoE Business Office; facilitating compliance with all necessary human subject provisions of IRB; providing consultation in design development, statistical and qualitative data analysis, and program evaluation; creating a searchable database of research opportunities; and obtaining information on software/hardware developments across campus and externally with implications for data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Develop research initiatives: The unit will also coordinate research initiatives for the CoE ranging from projects conducted in local and regional settings to national and international studies. The goal is also to afford opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in research internships, service learning activities, and related experiences. ACES will elaborate four initial themes or strands of research that already have considerable momentum and faculty involvement and that seek to position the CoE to address critical issues in education now and in the future.

(a) Early childhood education and development: This theme not only builds on faculty expertise and external collaborations but has become a central and defining research domain of the CoE, which will allow ACES to build on one of our clear and interdisciplinary strengths in generating new research proposals. For example, the CoE recently submitted a multi-year proposal to conduct the external evaluation of First Things First, Arizona’s state-wide early childhood program. We anticipate generating future proposals using the research team assembled for the preparation of the proposal and, if funded, data from the study.

(b) Educational reform and community development: This theme is intended to develop, implement, and coordinate initiatives aimed at educational reform in formal (K-20) and informal settings; enhance collaboration strategies and develop new partnerships with local and regional communities; and engage communities in both short- and long-term projects responsive to their needs and goals for capacity building and educational success. Here we seek to combine our
research and service to meet the CoE’s commitment to the betterment of educational practices in the rapidly changing social context of the state and region and meet our responsibilities as a foremost land-grant unit. For example, the CoE is currently preparing a collaborative proposal with the UA Science Centre (UASC) for the study of the informal learning of science with youths in local community settings. We fully anticipate using the UASC technological resources and opportunities to generate additional collaborative proposals.

(c) **Globalized competencies and education**: This theme will develop, implement, and coordinate research and service initiatives concentrating on educational issues affected by transnational relations, dynamics, and practices in the Southern Arizona borderlands and beyond. ACES, especially in collaboration with the new UA Office of Western Hemispheric Programs, will seek to extend and establish new partnerships with higher education institutions, public education, and service agencies throughout the Americas and in other countries. Initiatives will emphasize developing competencies and learning outcomes essential for the 21st century in education and society and will address issues such as science and mathematics education, distance learning, international immigration and education, and language and social policies and their impact on educational practice and outcomes in the U.S. and elsewhere. For example, we recently met with the president of the Pedagogical University (Universidad Pedagógica) in Mexico to plan a collaborative project on science and technology learning in schools and communities in both Mexico and Arizona.

(d) **Data collection and analysis**: The goal here is to gather and analyze data to assist the CoE in evaluating the effectiveness of its reorganization and in planning any future modification or change. ACES will establish and manage a database for the college to aid its decision making, while also contributing useful data for the preparation of proposals. Hence, this task will entail gathering new data as needed to inform the CoE and coordinating existing databases of the UA in the service of the same goal. For example, we have initiated discussions with the UA Early Outreach to explore possibilities for collaborating in developing a database of thousands of families in their programs; this database can be used in informing the Outreach Office and generating articles, reports, and new proposals for funding.

**Administrative Structure**

ACES will have a full-time Director and administrative assistant. The Director, a senior professor within the CoE, will be a member of the College Leadership Council, comprised of the CoE Deans and Department Heads. The administrative assistant will be reassigned to ACES from an existing unit. In addition, a CoE research associate will be assigned to ACES, as part of her regular duties, to provide research design, evaluation, and statistical consultation to the faculty and students. Faculty associates from each unit will support the Director in identifying funding opportunities, coordinating proposal preparation, and submission and the implementation of initiatives. Graduate students will be invited to do internships within ACES to gain experience in grant writing and research.

**Budget**

There will be no new costs in personnel for the CoE to staff ACES. Instead, faculty and secretarial appointments will be made through a strategic reallocation of duties as part of the CoE’s reorganization and consolidation. In addition, the CoE will seek external funding and has already had preliminary discussions with funding agencies to make the unit self sufficient and plans to reallocate indirect costs for its support as new projects are funded.