

## Cover Page

**Name of the proposed new unit:**            Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS)

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

Linda Shaw, P. O. Box 210069, phone: 621-7832, e-mail: [lshaw@email.arizona.edu](mailto:lshaw@email.arizona.edu)

**Current Units and Programs that will be Reorganized/Consolidated:**

Programs within Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology:

- Rehabilitation Major:
  - Bachelor of Science, B.S.
  - Master of Arts, M.A.
  - Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D.
  
- School Psychology Major:
  - Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D.
  - Educational Specialist, Ed.S.
  
- Special Education Major:
  - Bachelor of Science, B.S.
  - Master of Arts, M.A.
  - Educational Specialist, Ed.S.
  - Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D.
  - Doctor of Education, Ed.D.

Program within Educational Psychology:

- School Counseling Major
  - Master of Education, M.Ed.

## **Background**

The proposed unit transforms the current Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology (SERSP), a multidisciplinary unit that includes programs in Special Education, Rehabilitation, School Psychology, and Interpreter Training/Deaf Studies. SERSP is already a consolidated unit, composed of several programs that have been joined because of common goals and interests. The initiative to reorganize the University and the College has provided SERSP with the opportunity to establish new funding initiatives and related goals through the establishment of a new structural unit within the College of Education (CoE) that emphasizes special education, rehabilitation, school psychology, disability culture, and counseling. Through research and related scholarship, the focus of this new unit will be on improving education, employment, and the quality of life of people of all ages who have needs related to variations in cognitive, developmental, social, emotional and/or physical disability.

Graduates of the Department qualify for 10 different professional licensures or certifications, depending on their area of specialization and/or degree program. Consequently, the curriculum is determined by requirements of certification, accreditation, and licensure in each area. In each of the professional fields represented in the Department, there are documented shortages of professionals in the state and nation. Several programs include specializations that provide the only education and training of professionals in their respective areas within the State of Arizona (e.g., deaf and hard of hearing, visual impairment, and rehabilitation counseling). Virtually all of the graduates of our programs become employed within their respective area of preparation immediately upon graduation, unless they are pursuing advanced degrees.

The existing SERSP Department includes 17 tenured and tenure-eligible faculty and 14 adjunct faculty members who are employed at .50 FTE or above. Faculty members are highly productive with regard to research and related scholarly activities. In addition, the faculty has been very successful in obtaining external funding, having generated approximately \$2.5 million in grant and contract funding during the 2007-2008 academic year.

The school counseling program currently is housed within the Department of Educational Psychology within the College of Education (CoE). This program was established in August 2000 and offers a master's degree in school counseling leading to certification by the Arizona Department of Education as a K12 school counselor. Currently, this program has one tenured faculty position and one .60 FTE adjunct position. The program director has received funding to convert the Master's program into a hybrid course delivery model, redesigning the courses to distance formats using technology to reach a broader pool of students. This conversion is currently in progress and should be completed by Fall, 2009. Both within the state of Arizona and nationally, projected job openings for school counselors are expected to far exceed the number of qualified graduates from school counseling programs through 2014, due to projected increases in school enrollment, increased emphasis on availability of counseling services in the schools, and availability of targeted funding for such programs (i.e. funding from Joint Technology Education Districts).

***Requested Action.*** The development of the new structural unit, Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS), will involve three changes: (1) transfer of the existing School Counseling program into the current Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and School Psychology (SERSP); (2) development and delivery of several new disability studies courses within the current undergraduate rehabilitation program; and (3) consolidation of three or four Departmental courses to serve several programs through on-line delivery.

## **Advantages to Students, Employers and the University of Arizona**

***Advantages to Students.*** With the transfer of the school counseling program into the newly named Department of Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS), master's and doctoral students will be exposed to a wider range of faculty interests and expertise. Students will also profit from their respective interactions with other students within the department whose professional interests overlap. This combined unit will expand the department's capacity to mentor doctoral students across the doctoral specialty areas within the department. The Disability Studies undergraduate major will provide a home to students across the university who share an interest in disability.

***Advantages to Employers.*** Graduates of the various degree programs within the newly integrated department will be better prepared to work in multidisciplinary teams, consistent with the needs of various school and rehabilitation settings. School counselors will be much better equipped to serve on the schools' federally mandated work groups that determine the educational needs of students with disabilities. School psychology, rehabilitation, and special education graduates will have the opportunity to access additional coursework in counseling and related cross-fertilization of ideas.

***Advantages to the University.*** As a result of the proposed reorganization, there exists potential to integrate courses across programs within the newly formed department. As a preliminary step, faculty members from school counseling are participating in a collaborative task force to examine the curriculum offerings across all degree majors within the new department. This process will help to alleviate the shortfall of instructors that is currently experienced by the recent reduction of faculty positions in several of the programs comprising the new department. This will also enable faculty to expand their collaborative research initiatives and achieve academic excellence through progressive curriculum redesign. Finally, our relationship with the school districts should be further solidified through school counseling's student placements, cooperative programs, and research initiatives.

## **Changes or Eliminations of the Existing Undergraduate and Graduate Programs**

***Transfer of School Counseling.*** Affiliation of the School Counseling program with this unit would provide a logical link between schools and adult settings. Co-locating the School Counseling program with the other Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS) degree programs will provide an increased opportunity for faculty to pursue future academic program development and common research in the mental health field. The expanded focus on mental health that will be realized through inclusion of school counseling will expand access to research funding agencies other than those currently being accessed by the existing SERSP Department (e.g., NIMH, NSF).

### ***Initial Implementation of Undergraduate Disability Studies Programs courses.***

An undergraduate degree in Disability Studies was included in the University's 2009 strategic plan, and last summer, the Board of Regents approved a progressive Disability Studies undergraduate degree to replace the current undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation. This plan was never implemented due to the unavailability of resources needed to begin the program. While we understand that there will be no new resources available to implement this program, we believe that we can capture some of the benefits of the program by modifying several current courses taught in the undergraduate Rehabilitation program. Specifically, we propose to implement several of the courses previously proposed as part of the new Disability Studies Program, within the context of the current undergraduate program. These courses will be further developed with input from each of the programs that emphasize disability topics within the Department of Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS). These courses will be taught by current faculty as part of the current rehabilitation undergraduate major. The department will also commit, however, to developing a plan for seeking out external resources that would enable the future

implementation of the full disability studies program. Such needed resources might be generated through grant applications and other entrepreneurial endeavors. Should such resources be accessed, the unit would be well-positioned to move forward with establishment of this progressive program as those resources are generated. There are substantial benefits to initiating some coursework at this time, however. It is felt that both rehabilitation students and students in the college's other teacher preparation programs will benefit greatly from access to this coursework, as disability studies course content is now lacking, although it is directly relevant to any undergraduate teacher preparation program. Additionally, we believe that collaboration on research projects by faculty both within and outside of this unit will be greatly facilitated by broadening the focus of the undergraduate program to Disability Studies.

### **Teaching, Service and Research Activities**

The consolidation of courses will enable the Department of Psychoeducational and Disability Studies (PDS) to pursue research projects that will increase national visibility and generate external funding to support research projects. Distance education courses will increase Departmental income that can be used to pay qualified instructors and provide specialized funding for Departmental needs that include research-related expenses. The transfer of School Counseling will facilitate collaborative research and allow for shared resources in professional preparation programs that have similar structures and activities.

Benefits of the changes include

- increased student access to courses through distance education
- increased opportunities to develop collaborative research in common topics such as mental health through inclusion of School Counseling
- additional income from courses offered through Outreach College
- additional faculty time to address specialized research-related projects due to consolidated course offerings
- the initiation of a disability studies undergraduate major that will service the entire university

### **Unit/University Ranking or Reputation**

Inclusion of disability studies coursework within the undergraduate major in Rehabilitation will enhance all of the programs within the department as well as all of the undergraduate teacher preparation programs at the University of Arizona. Currently, the Rehabilitation Counseling master's program is ranked #5 in the nation by the 2007 *US News & World Report*. This progressive change in the undergraduate rehabilitation will further enhance the reputation and continuing excellence of this program as well as the other programs within the department.

Although a national certification exists for school counseling, the program cannot currently apply for such certification because it does not meet accreditation standards regarding the size of faculty. The consolidation of school counseling within the new unit will better position this program in moving towards national accreditation in the future.

### **Meetings to Vet Proposal**

The initial proposal draft was developed on 10/1/08 by the Executive Committee of SERSP, which is comprised of the Department Head, the directors of Rehabilitation, Special Education, and School Psychology, and a representative of the adjunct faculty. The proposal was discussed in a College Leadership Council Meeting the following week, with all of the Department Heads, including Dr. Tom Good, who is the Head of the Department of Educational Psychology, the unit within which School Counseling is currently housed. It was also discussed in a SERSP Department meeting attended by

SERSP faculty and staff, which was held on 10/7/08. The SERSP Exec Committee solicited feedback from all interested parties and met to revise the original proposal, producing a draft which was sent out to all faculty and staff of both SERSP and the School Counseling program. Based on input received, the proposal was edited, and finalized. Discussions with SERSP staff were ongoing throughout the process of proposal development and on 10/22/08 the SERSP Department Head, formally met with all of the administrative staff of SERSP to discuss the proposal and the impact on them. There was widespread support for the changes proposed in the SERSP white paper among both faculty and staff. Throughout the process, the proposal has been discussed with the director of the School Counseling program, and she assisted directly in the development of this formal proposal. On 11/24/08 the SERSP Department Head met to discuss the proposal with the School Counseling faculty. On 12/01/2008, the CoE Dean and Department Heads Linda Shaw and Tom Good met to discuss the transition process for integrating School Counseling and the existing programs within SERSP. The proposal has been discussed multiple times in College Leadership Council meetings and in College of Education Faculty meetings.

This proposal has also been thoroughly vetted with our many stakeholders. The Dean of the CoE discussed all of the white papers that were submitted by the College in the November meeting of the Professional Preparation Board. This Board represents most of our stakeholders in the preparation of personnel for the public schools in Arizona/Pima County. The proposal for the reorganization of SERSP was described and attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. Additionally, the School Psychology program has solicited input from community practitioners and received only positive comments about integrating school counseling into the department.

In August, 2007, meetings were held with the Assistant Administrator of the Rehabilitation Services Administration to obtain feedback about the Disability Studies program replacing the current Rehabilitation Services major. The feedback was very favorable and the new program was felt to be more consistent with the agency's renewed emphasis on empowerment. Additionally, the Rehabilitation program's advisory board (comprised of state, private sector and community rehabilitation program personnel) met in December of 2007 and fully endorsed the implementation of this program. While we are not fully implementing the program at this time, these stakeholders will welcome the implementation of some course content in the current rehabilitation undergraduate program for the reasons previously cited (increased emphasis on consumer empowerment).

During early December, 2008, faculty held a series of discussions with students soliciting feedback about the proposed changes to the Department and students were asked to provide input directly to the Department Head. Additionally, the Department Head hosted a student meeting on 12/05/08 designed to inform students and to address questions about the proposed changes to the Department.

### **Summaries of Comments**

To date, virtually all of the feedback we have received about the planned changes has been favorable. Discussions between the Department Heads of Educational Psychology and SERSP and the Dean of the CoE are ongoing, working out transition issues. Formal votes on the white paper occurred during the month of January, 2009 with the following results:

SERSP Faculty:	Approve: 15	Do not approve: 0	Abstention: 2
Educational Psychology Faculty*:	Approve: 6	Do not approve: 1	Abstention: 1

(\*Voted on transfer of School Counseling Program only)

The only issue about which there has been extended discussion was the title of the new Department. Suggestions were generated from faculty and were vetted by the Executive Committee, which includes

the Heads of each of SERSP's programs, and a representative of the Adjunct faculty. The Executive Committee recommended a final slate of names to the faculty of SERSP and the School Counseling program. At the SERSP Department Meeting on 1/20/09 the faculty voted to adopt the new name of Psychoeducational and Disability Studies.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Bauman, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology

Jane Erin, Professor, Special Education, Rehabilitation and School Psychology

Richard Morris, Professor, Special Education, Rehabilitation and School Psychology

Margaret Pysh, Adjunct Associate Professor, Special Education, Rehabilitation and School Psychology

Amos Sales, Professor, Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology

Linda Shaw, Professor and Head, Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology

## **Budget Page**

### **Persons affected by Category:**

Tenure-Track Faculty:

Sheri Bauman, Associate Professor and Director, School Counseling Program

Adjunct Faculty:

Lia Falco, Adjunct Assistant Professor (.6 FTE)

It is not expected that any positions will be eliminated or redefined by the reorganization. There will be no cost savings, initially. However, it is expected that due to course consolidations, we will be able to more adequately adjust to recent losses in lines within the department and to invest in building infrastructure and creating faculty incentives to secure external research funds.

It should be noted that there will be no administrative staff transfers or increases accompanying the transfer of the school counseling program. The new department is absorbing all administrative costs for the program.