

Proposed Name Change for Curriculum Studies Track Within the Curriculum & Instruction PhD and EdD

Current name: Curriculum Studies

Proposed name: Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies

On Jan. 25, 2019, the faculty of Curriculum Studies (a track within the Curriculum & Instruction PhD and EdD programs in the School of Education) voted unanimously to add “Teacher Education” to the name of the track. This change was approved by the faculty of the Department of Curriculum Instruction by a 24-3 vote on March 27, 2019.

This change is motivated by three factors:

1. The new name better reflects the current curricular emphasis of the track. Whereas at one time coursework was dominated by curriculum studies (focused on the critical analysis of curriculum), over time teacher education (focused on the use of theory and research to prepare teachers) has become equally prevalent. The track currently offers three courses specifically focused on teacher education, for example, and the department’s minor in Teacher Education is already part of this track. Because curriculum remains an important element of students’ preparation, however, “Teacher Education” was agreed on as an addition to, rather than replacement for, “Curriculum Studies.”
2. The new name better reflects the career aspirations and employment prospects of our students. Whereas at one time, faculty positions in curriculum studies were somewhat common, few such openings can now be found, either in the United States or internationally. Moreover, few applicants aim to pursue such a position; instead, they plan to work as teacher educators (i.e., faculty who prepare future teachers). Over at least the last 10 years, nearly every one of the track’s graduates has received a position in some aspect of teacher education, not in a position designated as “Curriculum Studies.” The critical analysis of curriculum remains a crucial part of the preparation of teacher educators, but the combined name better reflects the total focus of their preparation.
3. The new name should make recruitment into the track easier and thus increase the number of applicants. The number of applicants to the track has declined significantly in recent years, and this may be due at least in part to the fact that the track’s current name does not adequately signal that it prepares teacher educators. As an academic specialty that exists only at the doctoral level, few potential applicants will even be aware of the meaning of the term “Curriculum Studies.” Adding “Teacher Education” to the name will make it much more likely that applicants will be able to identify this as a program suitable for their career interests, particularly when visiting the School of Education’s website or examining other recruitment materials.