

**MEMO**

**To:** The UVM Faculty Senate  
**From:** Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair  
**Date:** March 4, 2021  
**Re:** Approval of a proposal for a new Community-Centered Design Major from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

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On March 4, 2021, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

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The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a proposal for a new Certificate of Graduate Study in Resiliency-Based Approaches with Families, Schools and Communities from the Department of Education in the College of Education and Social Services (CESS). If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, the anticipated start date is fall 2021.

***Program Description***

While housed in the Department of Education, the proposed Certificate of Graduate Study in Resiliency-Based Approaches with Families, Schools and Communities (CGS RBA) is a collaboration between faculty from multiple departments within CESS. It leverages existing coursework and faculty expertise to create a flexible, online curriculum designed to prepare educators and health/human service professionals to address the complex challenges associated with trauma and adversity using restorative, strength-based, and collaborative approaches that build the resilience essential for children, youth, and families to thrive and learn within and beyond school borders. The CGS RBA builds upon the neuroscience of relationships to understand and enhance social, emotional, and behavioral wellness for children and youth, while exploring the structural bias and environmental factors that pose a threat to equity and well-being.

Completion of the proposed CGS RBA requires a minimum of 15 credits of graduate-level courses (see Curriculum section for details). The curriculum includes core courses, following which students select one of two tracks for specialization: Trauma-responsive and Restorative Practices (TRP) or Family-school-community partnerships and interprofessional collaboration (FSC). The curriculum is designed to 1) develop students' socio-ecological understanding of the structural solutions inherent in equity, culturally sustaining partnerships, and resilience, 2) help students learn about the impact of trauma and adversity, and 3) build a toolbox of skills for fostering resilience through building and restoring relationships with families, schools, and communities. Individuals that complete the proposed CGS RBA will leave the program with a toolbox of interprofessional approaches to apply with children,

families, schools, organizations, communities, and themselves. The specific learning objectives indicated in the program are:

- Understand the contexts that create trauma and adversity such as inequity, racism, trauma, and other social injustices and their impact on social, emotional, educational, and behavioral well-being.
- Understand how resilience is influenced by relationships, cultural identity, and other protective factors.
- Learn strategies for utilizing family partnerships as a protective factor to mitigate the impact of trauma and adversity in culturally diverse communities.
- Learn to apply strategies for fostering resilience including the use restorative and trauma-responsive approaches within families, schools and communities.
- Apply strategies to critically examine power, privilege, and equity to influence and transform approaches that support resilience among students, families and communities.
- Embed a racial and equity perspective into practice and evaluation to understand the underlying structural factors that perpetuate inequity.
- Apply empirical evidence on best practices for cultivating social emotional learning and resilience into practice with children, schools and communities.
- Assess and implement organization-wide trauma-responsive systems change initiatives.
- Learn to effectively partner with children, youth, families, and professionals from other disciplines to enhance resilience & well-being in those affected by trauma and adversity.
- Recognize the signs of vicarious resilience and secondary traumatic stress among professionals and caregivers; and learn prevention/mitigation strategies.

### ***Rationale, Justification, and Evidence for Demand***

UVM is known for its commitment to social justice, and our mission as a land grant university emphasizes our responsibility to a high quality, educated workforce. Graduates of CESS strive to increase equity in their work with children and families in schools, communities, and health/human service organizations. Many of those served, are among Vermont's most vulnerable, facing adversities including trauma and maltreatment, discrimination, racism, and rural poverty. Evidence supporting the need for enhanced curriculum and instruction in the area of the proposed CGS RBA from three sources was provided in the proposal, and is summarized below. Data from these sources highlighted the importance of training educators and health/human service in effective, evidence-informed responses to support the social, emotional, educational, and behavioral well-being of children and families impacted by adversity and trauma. Additionally, a market analysis prepared by EduVentures that accompanied the proposal reinforces the demand for online coursework in trauma and resiliency-based approaches.

- *Alumni Study Results:* The Department of Education alumni survey of teacher preparation programs conducted in 2017 found that more than 33% of graduates reported feeling under or unprepared to manage children with trauma-related and other behavioral challenges in the classroom.
- *Informal state workforce needs analysis:* In 2018, sub-group of the Faculty Activity Network (FAN), which consists scholars across CESS committed to addressing social and educational inequities that

lead to disparate opportunities for learning, health, and well-being among oppressed and marginalized population, received a CESS Imagine Grant to advance their work. Their endeavors included conducting informal interviews with state Commissioners or Deputies from the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE). Findings identified specific knowledge gaps in the workforce. With the passing of Act 173, the AOE identified a need to provide instruction to teachers and other school professionals on effective and equitable services for all students requiring additional support, in particular social, emotional, and behavioral supports. In their discussions, deputy commissioners from the three agencies expressed enthusiasm for academic programming that would provide the workforce in child welfare, mental health, and schools with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary for building resilience through supporting children, youth, and families who have complex needs and social inequities.

- *Community Assessment:* The Placement Stability Project conducted a statewide assessment of child welfare and mental health workers, and found that in-service professionals were seeking advanced knowledge and skills the areas addressed by the proposed CGS RBA. The findings supported shifting training and education from community-based agencies to classrooms, and building capacity and self-efficacy among pre-service professionals so they enter the field more prepared with necessary skills to meet the complex needs of families, schools, and communities.

### ***Anticipated Enrollment***

The proposed CGS in RBA is aimed at K-12 school-based professionals, counselors, social workers, health and human service professionals, higher education affairs advisors, and others who work with children and families who have experienced adversity. Based on the findings from the three sources described above and current course enrollments, the proposers anticipate course sizes ranging from 8 to 30 students. They predict that the number of students will initially be at the low end of that range, and then increase over time with continued marketing outreach, which will be guided by the EduVentures marketing analysis.

### ***Relationship to Existing Programs***

In the proposal, the proposers listed only nine similar programs that exist nation-wide. The proposers indicated that a search of the UVM Graduate Catalogue found five courses (all within CESS) with content related to social/emotional and complex trauma, however none have an extensive focus on trauma and resilience and cover many other topics. UVM does not currently offer any graduate programs or certificates focused on resiliency-based or trauma-responsive approaches to families, schools, and communities. The closest is a graduate course sequence advertised by Continuing and Distance Education, which would be formalized into a Certificate of Graduate Study through this proposal. The CGS in Community Resilience and Planning housed in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics, is wholly different than the proposed CGS RBA as it prepares students with the “skills and knowledge needed to lead and guide communities through periods of change brought on by natural, economic, social and political shocks and disruptions.” The two CGSs share the word resilience in their respective titles only. Professor Chris Koliba in CDAE reviewed the proposal for the new GCS in RBA and provided a letter of support.

## Curriculum

Completion of the proposed CGS in RBA requires 15 credits including 6 credits of foundational courses, 6 credits of applied courses in one of two specialization pathways, and a 3 credit of capstone course (see table below). The two applied pathways are Trauma-responsive and Restorative Practices (TRP) and Family-school-community & interprofessional collaboration (FSC).

<b>Foundation Courses (select two; 6 credits total)</b>	
EDSP 330	The Trauma Lens: understanding core concepts of trauma and resiliency (online)
EDCI/EDSP 331	Society, stress and brain (online)
EDSP 332	Trauma informed, resiliency based, and interprofessional practice in schools and social service agencies (online)
<b>Specialization Courses (select two within the TRP or FSC pathway; 6 credits total)</b>	
<i>Trauma-Responsive and Restorative Practices Pathway (TRP)</i>	
EDSP 334	Trauma informed practices with child/fam (online)
EDSP 333	Resilience-oriented systems change (online)
EDSP 200	Restorative Practices
EDCO 291	Special Topics in Mindfulness
EDSS 200	Social Justice Education
<b>Family-School-Community and Interprofessional Collaboration Pathway (FSC)</b>	
EDSP 387	Collaborative Consultation
EDSP 332	Trauma informed, resiliency based, and interprofessional practice in schools and social service agencies (online)
ECLD 205	Family, School, and Community Collaboration
EDSP 299	Global perspectives on building resilience through families, schools, and community collaboration
<b>Capstone Project (select one; 3 credits total)</b>	
EDSP 333	Resilience-Oriented Systems Change (online)
EDLP 350*	Survey Research Methods
EDLP 459*	Mixed Methods Research
SWSS 316*	Understanding and App. of Critical Social Construction ( <i>only for matriculated social work students</i> )
EDCO 389*	Internship in Counseling ( <i>only for matriculated counseling students</i> )

*Other courses may be approved as fulfilling a requirement with permission of CGS core faculty.*

*\*Students who select these courses must submit a final capstone project related to RBA to core program faculty for approval.*

The foundational courses introduce students to the impact of trauma, resilience and protective factors, and strategies for preventing and mitigating trauma's effects. Courses that are part of the two specialization pathways will provide students the opportunity to focus on an area of interest under the umbrella of resiliency-based approaches to families, schools, and communities. In the capstone course, students undertake a project that allows them to apply skills and learning from earlier coursework. Examples of capstone projects provided in the proposal included a project related to

faculty research initiatives such as restorative practices, positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-responsive practice, trauma-informed parenting training, family-school-community partnerships in a global context, trauma informed school transformation, or other community-based research initiatives related to resiliency-based content. Capstone projects can also be completed in conjunction with a graduate thesis, internship/field practicum, or dissertation. Students will need to receive approval by their CGS advisor/coordinator before beginning and upon its completion.

The proposed CGS RBA can stand alone as a defined certificate of graduate study or stack into one of five existing master's programs offered by CESS: Counseling, Curriculum & Instruction, Educational Leadership, Social Work, and Special Education. In addition, it can also stack into the existing Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program. In order to be a stackable credential, students must apply to and be accepted into the CGS before the last 9 credits are taken; students must then apply to an appropriate master's or doctoral program to use the CGS credits towards that degree.

### ***Requirements for Admission and Advising***

Criteria for admission into the proposed CGS RBA and selection of candidates are listed below.

Professor Jessica Strolin-Goltzman will coordinate the program and provide initial advising for students as they are in the recruitment and early admission phases. Subsequently, additional core faculty will advise students in the proposed program.

- Undergraduate degree and GPA of 3.0 (exceptions may be made for advanced undergraduates similar to AMP)
- Experience working or interning in a school or health/human service agency
- Interest in obtaining graduate education

### ***Assessment Plan***

In addition to being evaluated through the Academic Program Review process as part of CESS's graduate offerings, summative assessment will be conducted using capstone projects. A table was also provided indicating the courses in which each of the specific learning outcomes will be assessed.

### ***Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget***

No new resources are required to launch the proposed CGS in RBA. All courses already exist and can be taught by core faculty in the program. The UVM library has significant holdings to support the certificate in the fields of education, the environment, and social sciences generally. A net revenue analysis was conducted using updated IBB 3.0 algorithms and summarized in the proposal. The analysis assumed a cohort of 15 students with a balance of 80% in-state and 20% non-degree. Non-degree students typically test out of a course before they apply to GCS programs. Additionally, two of the five courses will be programmed during the summer term during which student tuition prices are decrease by 30%. Despite the conservative assumptions, the analysis predicted a net positive revenue. A second analysis was conducted assuming non-degree students only and indicated the value of converting the existing CDE graduate course sequence into a GCS.

### ***Evidence of Support***

Letters were provided by the individuals below...

- Scott Thomas, Dean of CESS
- Brenda Solomon, Chair of the CESS Curriculum Committee
- Cynthia Belliveau, Dean of CDE
- Jeremy Sibold, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in CNHS
- Brenda Gooley, Director of Operations at the Vermont Department for Children and Families
- Rory Waterman, Associate Dean of CAS
- Christopher Koliba, Professor and Program Coordinator, Certificate of Graduate Study in Community Resilience and Planning (CDAE/CALS)

### ***Summary***

Evidence from multiple sources point to a need for a program that helps educators and health/human service professionals gain the skills and knowledge to better handle the complex challenges associated with trauma and adversity. The proposed Certificate of Graduate Study in Resiliency-based Approaches with Families, Schools and Communities leverages existing courses and faculty expertise to provide a flexible online curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs identified by alumni, commissioners and deputies from relevant state agencies, and a state-wide community assessment. Individuals completing the program will develop a set of interprofessional approaches to apply with children, families, schools, organizations, communities, and themselves. As the proposed CGS RBA can be a stackable credential for students that decide to matriculate into a master's or doctoral degree within CESS, it could lead to increased enrollment in other CESS graduate programs. The proposed program helps support the CESS mission of elevating social justice, reducing oppress, and engaging with community partners in both the education sector and the social work sector. It also aligns with UVM's mission of preparing our students to be accountable leaders. Thus, the proposed CGS RBA will be a valuable addition to UVM's graduate offerings.