



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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October 16, 2020

Dear School of Education Community,

I am writing with an update about our recent proposal to suspend admissions to the Teacher Education program for one year to give our faculty the time required for a significant program redesign. While still convinced that a major redesign is necessary, we have listened to faculty, staff, and community input and have decided to slow down our process. Accordingly, I will not be putting this question to a faculty vote at this time. Instead, we will engage in a deliberative and collaborative process for deciding if admissions need to be suspended during the redesign process, or if there are satisfactory alternative approaches. Admissions will stay open, and we will welcome our next cohort of credential students in summer 2021.

We remain committed to a thoughtful redesign centered on justice and equity. A teacher preparation program must be responsive to constantly evolving educational priorities and must model the continuous improvement process that we instill in our own students. We have received input through course evaluations, end-of-year surveys, student town halls, and focus group interviews telling us that we need to update both our coursework and program design to reflect significant changes in public school systems. Our program must create opportunities for prospective teachers to effectively engage with the current climate, including by addressing systemic racism; meeting the needs of LGBTQ students, bilingual students, and students with disabilities; and using digital tools to promote learning.

We are going to take time now to reflect and connect. We realize that quickly putting forward our proposal to School of Education faculty failed to allow sufficient dialogue and consideration about the best approach. We realize that this caused concern for our colleagues, and we apologize. We expect to take the next several months seeking advice from our faculty, students, district partners, and other stakeholders about the best way to move forward. We will post this letter on our website and share periodic updates to keep members of the School community and the public informed about our process and timeline.

We are heartened by the community support for our work. The outpouring of support for our Teacher Education program has been overwhelming. We have heard from hundreds of concerned community members, and their affirmation of the value, reach, and impact of this program is inspiring. Some of that response was driven by misunderstanding, such as fear that the program might be permanently shut down, which was never under consideration. But all of it demonstrated a passion and appreciation not only for our program, but also for teaching and teachers, for students and schools, and for the transformative role of education. It is a passion that I share. I trust that our common values and goals will help us create the best possible teacher education program.

Again, thank you for reaching out and providing input on this important decision for the School of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Lauren Lindstrom'.

Lauren E. Lindstrom
Dean and Professor