DATE: November 25, 2014
TO: Whom it may concern
FROM: Bob Coffman, Chair
RE: STEMTeach Proposal

We have been asked to provide input about a new initial certification pathway program that is in the process of being developed at UW-River Falls. Our understanding is that this program would be used to provide post-bacs (including those changing careers, as well as recent graduates that are now entertaining the idea of teaching) a one-year pathway to become licensed to teach in various areas of STEM. We are supportive of providing a program like this for teacher candidates to become licensed to teach mathematics, as long as they have the necessary background in algebra, geometry, and probability.

We currently have an EA-A licensure program in mathematics for undergraduate teacher candidates. We foresee the current program and the STEMteach program meeting the needs of two different populations. As such, then, while we support the STEMteach proposal, we would not be in favor of replacing our undergraduate program with the STEMteach undergraduate program.

We would, however, inform seniors in our Liberal Arts – Mathematics program about the STEMteach program. Doing so would provide them an opportunity to pursue EA-A licensure after they complete their Liberal Arts degree, giving them a career option that they might not have considered previously. We would not, though, recruit teacher candidates for STEMteach from the ranks of Secondary Education – Mathematics majors.

We currently offer graduate level math courses as part of the MSE-Mathematics program. Since there are plans to incorporate an initial-certification master’s within STEMTeach, the Math Department would support the enrollment of in-service math teachers into targeted MSE-Mathematics courses for the fulfillment of any applicable STEMteach content coursework requirements.

Note that the department feels that it would be very problematic to provide the staffing needed to support this program from within the current ranks of its tenured faculty.