UW-RIVER FALLS FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO TEACHER PREPARATION AND LICENSURE
(RE: JFC OMNIBUS MOTION #457)
Approved by the Faculty Senate
June 10, 2015

WHEREAS the University of Wisconsin-River Falls provides professional teacher education for hundreds of students every year. UWRF prepares its teacher education graduates to enter classrooms highly qualified to teach their licensed subject areas using best practice pedagogies.

WHEREAS provisions of Joint Finance Committee (JFC) Omnibus Motion #457, if enacted, could dramatically undermine the quality of teaching and thus of student learning and achievement across the state.

WHEREAS we fully endorse the Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE)’s concern that “the quality of education provided for adolescents in Wisconsin will be significantly diminished if these proposals are approved.”

WHEREAS we affirm WACTE’s accurate assessment re: Section 46 re: Alternative Licensing that:

• “The extension of an alternative licensure option that bypasses the GPA, testing, course work, and clinical experience requirements for graduates of approved educator preparation programs and alternative licensure programs is not justified.”

• “There is no documented shortage of fully prepared teachers in the fields of English and social studies.” And “There is simply no documentation of teacher shortages in fields such as art, music, theatre, consumer education, etc. to justify this provision.”

• “Research has clearly shown that student achievement in mathematics and the sciences improves when teachers are firmly grounded in and use best practices to engage learners with content and differentiate instruction.”

• “Allowing teachers with no professional preparation or clinical experience to assume full teaching responsibilities in these critical fields will likely put students in high need rural and urban school districts at greater risk for failure in academic areas critical to the economy of the state.”

• Provision allowing individual schools and governing boards to issue teaching permits on a case-by-case basis is woefully silent on the question of “exactly how proficiency [and relevant experience] would be determined.”

• The requirement that the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) “offer an online teacher training program for those who hold a license or permit based on a school board’s recommendation” ignores
the fact that DPI is an administrative agency, and not an academic teaching institution. "With thirty-three approved educator preparation programs in the state and several functioning alternative licensure programs, it is not ethical to give responsibility for educating underprepared teachers to an agency that is not designed or staffed to do that work."

WHEREAS we affirm WACTE’s accurate assessment re: Section 48 re: Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs that -

- "In compliance with PI 34, educator preparation programs in Wisconsin are reviewed annually by DPI personnel in an outcome-based and data-driven Continuous Review Process, with a more intensive review every five years. We are confident that Wisconsin’s standards for state approval are both extensive and rigorous."

- "In addition to significant organizational problems within [the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation] CAEP, many (perhaps the majority) of Wisconsin’s colleges and universities have chosen not to seek CAEP accreditation because of its excessive financial cost, both in terms of accreditation and program review fees. The extra workload the accreditation process imposes on an institution—money and time—is better spent on direct work with teacher candidates."

- Moreover, we do not understand why the state would turn to outside agencies to accredit Wisconsin’s educator preparation programs when the review teams for those agencies are not familiar with Wisconsin’s PI 34 requirements, the CAEP standards are not aligned with PI 34 standards or requirements and, perhaps as important, there is no evidence that accreditation by CAEP results in producing better K-12 educators.

AND WHEREAS we join WACTE in expressing disappointment “that measures related to teacher licensure were introduced late in the process and were not the subject of outside review, debate, or public scrutiny before they were voted on in the Joint Finance Committee. This is unacceptable. As the proposed licensure provisions primarily will affect the teachers in grades 6-12, we are deeply disappointed that greater weight was not given to the need for highly qualified teachers for adolescents during a critical period in their cognitive development. Grades 6-12 teachers do need to know their subject matter, but that is not sufficient to qualify them for the important work of teaching adolescents. They must also understand adolescent development, know the goals and objectives of the middle/secondary curriculum, and be skilled in implementing best practices to engage all learners in mastery of critical subject matter. That corpus of professional knowledge is best developed through an approved, PI 34-compliant educator preparation program.”

[excerpted with permission from WACTE memo to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Education, May 25, 2015]

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Faculty Senate agrees with the Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [WACTE], and calls on members of the Wisconsin legislature to delete Sections 46 and 48 of Omnibus Motion #457.