Proposed Initiative:
This initiative proposes to create a self-funding Montessori Teacher Preparation Certificate/Master’s program in the CEPS, after initial start up. The program will offer certification in early childhood and lower elementary, ultimately expanding to include upper elementary and birth to age 3 programs, and possible UG and international student programs. Accreditation through the American Montessori Association (AMS) and Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Ed (MACTE) will be sought.

Proposed by:
Larry Solberg, Dean, College of Education and Professional Studies, and Katrina Larsen, Director, Outreach

What strategic goal does this initiative support?
Distinctive Academic Excellence; Innovation and Partnerships

Describe how the initiative supports the goal(s).
No AMS accredited training programs in WI. Existing upper Midwest programs are place specific and don’t accommodate working professionals. UWRF would be one of few public US universities to offer Montessori training. The number of Montessori schools in Wisconsin is growing; schools report difficulty finding teachers with Montessori certification (supported by SRC survey results). Strong support from WI DPI, Wisconsin Montessori Association and several Montessori schools throughout WI. Unique partnership with the RF School District provides fully equipped Montessori classrooms for instruction, eliminating the costs of establishing classrooms and lab school at UWRF. Program model accommodates working professionals by using hybrid courses that meet monthly Sept-May with online work in between and limited summer f2f courses. Partnerships with existing public Montessori schools provide practice, observation and student teaching sites throughout the state.

Based on the definition of university-wide initiative, indicate how the proposed initiative has a university-wide impact.
The Montessori Teacher Preparation program, once established, will be self-funded, with overhead and surplus revenue going back to support the University, CEPS and Outreach.
- This program puts UWRF on the map as one of few public institutions that offer such a program.
- Complements the existing excellent elementary education program.

Please provide a set of benchmarks and/or indicators of success to support your initiative.
Establishment of the curriculum and approval of courses and certificate program within UWRF. Some courses will need to be fully developed, others will utilize pieces of existing courses.
• Achievement of AMS and MACTE accreditation within 3 years of launching the program.
• Benchmark the enrollment of students in the Certificate and/or Master’s degree programs to cohort levels of 12-15 students per level.
• Job placement of graduates of the program.

What elements are involved in the initiative?
Sustainability, Inclusiveness, Human Capital, Facilities, Finance

Indicate how each element would be/would not be affected by the initiative.

• **Sustainability:** Once established, this program will be self-funded, providing overhead to the University and surplus revenue to the College and Outreach for new program development initiatives.

• **Inclusiveness:** The format is specifically designed to accommodate non-traditional students and working professionals. Faculty Montessori connections in Korea and China could lead to future international components.

• **Human Capital:** In addition to a current faculty member, adhoc Montessori trained instructors will be needed to co-write curriculum. Program will fund academic coordinator and faculty/IAS. Services of UWRF’s instructional designer may be utilized in course development. A program (not campus) funded strategic hire of a certified Montessori faculty within CEPS is projected in year 3 of the program.

• **Technology:** Technology won’t be affected. Only the use of D2L resources and staff computers/printers are planned and they are University standards.

• **Facilities:** Through a partnership agreement, courses will be held at River Falls School District’s Montessori equipped classrooms, thereby eliminating the need to purchase the equipment and materials to furnish classrooms or provide a lab school for observation/practice sites. Partnerships with other existing Montessori schools throughout WI will provide practice, observation and student teaching sites.

• **Finance:** This self-supporting program requires start-up funding to cover course development, initial accreditation fees and advisory committee expenses. It is estimated that these expenses will run approximately $43,000 over a five year period. (A detailed budget and market study are available upon request.)

• **Other:**