

# Education Policy and Evaluation Center Proposal

## Description and mission

### University of Georgia Education Policy and Evaluation Center

The Education Policy and Evaluation Center (EPEC) identifies, promotes, and supports rigorous research on education policy and program evaluation for education, human services, state and federal government entities, and other nonprofit organizations. EPEC takes a comprehensive approach to education policy research and evaluation, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods methodologies, including experimental designs.

We believe that establishing the Center will help UGA do the following:

- Enhance a collaborative context for education policy and evaluation research at UGA
- Attract top faculty and graduate students to UGA
- Expand research funding opportunities
- Improve and expand the education policy and evaluation research infrastructure in the field
- Establish and strengthen ties to the education policy and evaluation community

### EPEC Mission

- **Improve education** by providing nonpartisan information, research, and evaluation on education issues to policymakers and other education stakeholders
- **Encourage rigorous program evaluation** across a variety of settings by providing evaluation expertise and services to diverse agencies, organizations, and businesses
- **Expand knowledge of effective** policy and evaluation research methods by developing, modeling, and disseminating innovative approaches to policy and evaluation research
- **Assist the public, policy makers, and education professionals** in weighing alternative policy options for key educational issues
- **Assist individuals and organizations** in the public sphere in engaging in participatory policy making for a vibrant democratic society
- **Coordinate** education policy and evaluation research efforts in the college, university, and university system.
- **Provide training** in policy and evaluation research

### Education Policy Research

EPEC provides nonpartisan research and in-depth analysis to policymakers and educators on issues to improve education. The Center assesses education policies, policy options, and education reform initiatives.

## **Education Evaluation**

EPEC conducts education research for government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and private companies. The Center also designs and conducts comprehensive evaluations that provide frequent and constructive feedback to improve program effectiveness and impact. In addition, EPEC works with other researchers and evaluators to provide assistance on research and evaluation design.

## **Dissemination**

The Center will publish policy and research briefs to inform the conversation on education policy issues. EPEC collaborates with state, regional, national, inter-governmental, and international organizations and agencies to identify trends in education. EPEC also hosts and participates in workshops, seminars, and symposia throughout the year.

Examples of current research and policy briefs by affiliated faculty can be found at these web sites.

<http://www.coe.uga.edu/ORG/research.html>

[http://lpsl.coe.uga.edu/projects/projects\\_all.asp](http://lpsl.coe.uga.edu/projects/projects_all.asp)

## **Other Activities and Working Groups**

### **1. Statement of Operating Procedures & Policies**

#### *Structure*

The Education Policy and Evaluation Center (EPEC) will be located in the Dean's Office of the College of Education, specifically the Office of the Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs.

EPEC will have a director, and possibly an associate director, who will be responsible for coordinating center functions, fostering communication between the Center and education policymakers at all levels, and serving on the COE R&D Center Directors' Advisory Committee. It is envisioned that EPEC will eventually be able to support other center staff as needed.

#### *Responsibilities of any participating units*

It is anticipated that only individuals will participate in the center rather than other units.

#### *Advisory Committee structure*

The Center will have an external advisory committee of stakeholders, including governmental representatives, education professionals, directors of public and private agencies, and representatives of non-governmental agencies.

#### *Processes for appointment or reappointment*

Until a permanent Center Director is hired, an interim Center Director will be appointed. A search committee will be appointed for this internal search. The Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs will chair the search committee and appoint the interim

director. The interim director will serve until funds are secured for a Center Director and a search is completed.

The Center Director will report to the Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs. A search for this senior tenure track position will be conducted. The search committee will be chaired by the Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs. A minimum of 5 faculty will serve on the search committee from multiple departments with interest in the center. During the search process, faculty from the anticipated home department would be included in the interview, tenure decision, and final selection process.

The Center Director would be reviewed annually by the Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs. The home department would conduct post-tenure reviews and graduate faculty appointment and reappointments.

One or more Associate Directors will be appointed and will report to the Center Director. These positions could be filled by either a tenure track faculty member or a research scientist. Like the Center Director, the Associate Director[s] will be budgeted full time in the center. The Center Director will conduct annual reviews.

Other faculty appointments will be handled according to the Centers and Institutes Academic Affairs Policy number 7:

Tenure-track faculty who participate in center/institutes will be appointed to departments or schools in accordance with normal appointment procedures with the exception that search committees will be formed jointly of department/school and center/institute faculty. Both entities must agree on the employment of a new tenure-track faculty member.

Non-tenure track faculty with time budgeted in a center/institute as well as in other units will have their promotions and merit raises managed in a manner determined at the time of appointment.

Although some portion of tenure-track faculty time may be budgeted in a center/institute, tenure and promotion processes will be initiated through the relevant department or school. However, the departmental review process will be organized to reflect the advice and recommendation of a center/institute if a third or more of the faculty member's appointment is in the center/institute. Merit salary decisions for those faculty with time divided between a department/school and a center/institute will be made jointly.

Part of the time a tenure-track faculty member has budgeted in a department should include formal instruction. An exception to this teaching responsibility requires the approval of the appropriate department head and dean. This is to insure that center/institute tenure-track faculty have regular contact with the department in which tenure resides, and, in particular, with teaching.

If a tenure-track faculty member is appointed jointly and the department does wish to recommend tenure but the center or institute does not wish to continue the appointment, then it will be the responsibility of the department, if tenure is approved in the university review process, to come up with the funds required to purchase the faculty time from the center or institute. If the department does not wish to tenure a person, even though the center or institute favors tenure, then tenure will not be awarded (other than through a successful appeal based principally, as our Guidelines now provide, on process). A position vacated because tenure was not awarded will not be allocated by the department for different purposes without the explicit knowledge of the center or institute director and the explicit approval of the cognizant department head, dean, or vice president. Similarly if the services of a non-tenure track faculty member are not to be continued in a center/institute, and another unit sharing that person's services wishes to retain his or her services, then the other unit is responsible for obtaining any needed salary.

## **2. A description of amounts and sources of anticipated income**

Anticipated sources of income

- a. Policy work
- b. Evaluation

Anticipated financial arrangements between the center/institute and other units

- c. COE policies on distribution of salary release funds and indirect cost returns will apply to EPEC.

Sources for funding for the first year:

- d. COE will provide instructional release for an interim director and a support budget. The instructional release will be negotiated with the interim director and the department head. See attached start-up budget.
- e. COE will seek funds for a faculty line and search expenses for the EPEC director.
- f. Pre- and post-award, communications, and technology support for affiliated faculty will be provided through the Office of the Associate Dean for Research, Technology, and External Affairs.
- g. The interim director will initiate contacts with various foundations who have a history of supporting similar efforts such as Gates, Hewlett, Pew, Woodruff, and Annenberg.

## **3. A description of the formal arrangements through which faculty will participate with the center/institute and the extent to which each affiliated faculty member will have his or her salary contained in its budget.**

The sustainability of the center will depend on faculty who participate through work on EPEC grants, whether as Principal Investigator (PI) or grant staff. Any UGA faculty member may contact the EPEC director if they wish to affiliate with the Center. Affiliated EPEC faculty may participate in any center activities, such as study groups, professional development, and proposal-development. Faculty who would like to have their grants housed in the center should contact the Center Director.

#### **4. A list of participating faculty and their roles in the center/institute**

##### ***Interim Director/Director***

- a. Serving as primary liaison between COE faculty and state and national policymakers, public and private agencies, and professional organizations.
- b. Identifying and screening potential grant and research opportunities related to the center mission
- c. Coordinating across multiple grants from initiating proposals to managing them
- d. Disseminating findings from policy and evaluation studies
- e. Providing professional development opportunities around policy and evaluation research for faculty and graduate students

##### ***Associate director***

- a. Provide day-to-day oversight of operations
- b. Support the director in his/her primary roles.

##### ***Affiliated Faculty***

This will include individuals with grants who wish to move the grant into the center as well as other interested faculty. Vitas of faculty are attached as Attachment A and a brief description of each grant follows.

*Title: The Role of Technical Colleges in Meeting the Workforce Needs for the Strategic Industries of the “New Georgia”*

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education

Duration: ? -6-06

Amount: \$

PI: Desna Wallin

Project Description: The Governor’s Commission for a New Georgia’s Strategic Industries Task Force report (Garrett, 2004) recommends that the State focus on six strategic industry clusters: aerospace, agribusiness, energy and environmental, healthcare/eldercare, life sciences, and logistics and transportation. Further, GDTAE Commissioner Vollmer noted that an important challenge for technical colleges in the future is to help build the workforce in Georgia. Thus, Commissioner Vollmer committed to begin focusing new resources on those strategic industries the Governor identified. The new jobs will be in those areas, and the technical colleges have a responsibility to prepare the workforce.

The purpose of the research project is to determine specific jobs included in the six strategic industries and delineate the education and training necessary to provide skilled personnel for those jobs. The deliverable at the end of the project (June, 2006) will be a report which 1) describes the most in-demand jobs within the six strategic industries, 2) highlights the workforce development programs that currently exist in the technical colleges (by individual college) to prepare workers with appropriate job skills, and 3) provides a gap analysis of those areas in which new programs may need to be developed. The report will also include programs from outside of Georgia that might be used as models to develop appropriate training within the Georgia Technical College System to fulfill GDTAE’s commitment to further the growth of the six strategic industries for the “New Georgia.”

*Title: Preparing the Next Generation of Middle School Teachers: An Online Adolescent Literacy Course*

Funding Source: Carnegie Corporation of New York

Duration: 1/1/06-1/1/08

Amount: \$100,000

PI: Donna Alvermann

Project Description: In keeping with the call for collaboration between established teachers and those planning to enter the profession, the goal will be to develop an online adolescent literacy course that will enable students enrolled in READ 6070 Middle School Reading (graduate level course for inservice teachers) to work in partnership with preservice teachers enrolled in READ 3530 Content Area Literacies for Middle School (a requirement for middle school certification in the state of Georgia). A major objective of the online adolescent literacy course will be to engage pairs of teachers (inservice mentor teachers paired with preservice teachers) in tutoring middle school students who are reading/comprehending one or more grade levels below grade placement. In support of that objective, the online adolescent literacy course will have built-in mechanisms (through WebCT) that enable faculty in the colleges of education and arts and sciences who teach middle school education majors to assist these prospective teachers in the use of domain knowledge as part of their tutoring experience with struggling adolescent readers.

*Title: Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Health Information Kiosks for Georgia's Immigrant Latinos*

Funder: UGARF/OVPPSO, Faculty Research Grants Related to Poverty and the Economy

PIs: Paul Matthews, Bob Galen, Don Rubin, Lorilee Sandmann

Amount of Award: \$22,368

Description: Latinos in Georgia are less likely to be insured and are more at risk for death from various chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus, than other populations; thus, improving effective health-care and health information serves to benefit this population, and the state as a whole, economically and socially. This project investigates the cultural and linguistic elements necessary for successful use of web-enabled health-information kiosks providing diabetes care information for Latinos. Effective cross-cultural communication of health information, especially through electronic media, must entail more than just translation of material into Spanish. This pilot study will investigate the usage patterns of up to 20 focal participants over a 4-month period, and will also gauge their satisfaction, preferred features, and recommendations for future modifications, with two different styles of kiosks at two locations (pharmacy and community) in the Athens area. The kiosks will allow these focal patients, as well as the public, to access diabetes information in Spanish and in English, to learn about local resources for diabetes, and to monitor their blood glucose, weight, and blood pressure. This collaborative project involves faculty and graduate students from the College of Public Health, College of Pharmacy, College of Education, and College of Arts and Sciences.

*Title: Literacy Practices in Afterschool Web-based Youth Communities*

Funding Source: Robert Bowne Foundation

Duration: (1/1/06-1/1/07)

Amount: \$10,000

Co-PIs: Donna Alvermann & James Marshall

Project Description: This research project will document and analyze the ways in which the literacy practices of afterschool Web-based youth communities contribute to young people's engagement with reading and writing. It is unique in that we will invite 8 underserved high-school age students to act as our co-investigators in this year-long study. Our purpose will be to increase an appreciation for, and a better understanding of, the ways in which Web-based communities foster motivation and a sense of self-efficacy among youth who, while sometimes struggling to complete school assignments, behave more like proficient readers and writers in afterschool settings. A study of this kind is especially needed in a time of high accountability and a narrowing of what counts as literacy—two characteristics of the present push for educational reform aimed at closing the literacy achievement gap among underserved adolescents in the United States.

*Title: Evaluation of Reading First in Georgia*

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Education

Duration: July 2004 - June 2007 (annual contracts)

Amount: Year 1 - \$478,085; Year 2 - \$347,000; Year 3 (proposed)- \$348,883

Co-PIs: Dorothy Harnish, Donna Alvermann, Michelle Commeyras

Project Description: Serve as external evaluator for 106 Reading First (RF) schools in Georgia to assess implementation, progress, and impact of Reading First program. Conduct an onsite observation visit to K-3 classrooms in each RF school each year and report findings. Compile, analyze, and report results of annual student performance on DIBELS, ITBS Reading Tests, PPVT, and CRCT Reading Tests. Conduct annual statewide surveys of RF school principals, teachers, Literacy Coaches, parents, and Regional Coordinators and report results to GDOE.

*Title: Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Evaluation*

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Education

Duration: July 2005 – June 2008 (annual contracts)

Amount: Year 1 - \$753,865; Year 2 (proposed) - \$753,865; Year 3 (proposed) - \$753,865

Co-PIs: Dorothy Harnish, Catherine Sielke

Project Description: Serve as external evaluator for 68 CSR-funded schools in Georgia to assess implementation, progress, and impact of CSR strategies in the schools. Conduct a two-day onsite observation visit to each CSR school three times each year with teams of two external evaluators/school and report findings. Compile, analyze, and report results of annual student performance on CRCT, GHSGT, and EOCT achievement tests. Conduct annual stateside surveys of CSR school administrators, teachers, and parents and report results to schools and GDOE Title I Office.

*Title: GLADD – Giving Life to American Democracy and Diversity*

Co-PIs: Melissa Freeman, Ph.D., Judith Preissle, Ed.D

Funding Sources: Interfaith

Alliance Foundation (TIA) and the Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers

Duration: December 2005 – August 2006 (annual contracts)

Amount: Year 1 - Total requested funding: \$11, 780

This program is a week-long summer program designed to teach high school students about religious diversity and civic engagement. Its action-oriented mission aims to empower young adults to become informed and engaged citizens in a religiously diverse nation. The program is sponsored by organizations committed to promoting democratic values, interfaith understanding and cooperation, and informed civic participation. An 18-member advisory council of individuals from these organizations as well as other youth advocates and educators are overseeing its development and implementation. This evaluation study has two phases, each having a different purpose and methodology. The first is to work with planners on how they want to assess program effectiveness during the program's December 1 – 5, 2005 gathering. The second is to document the implementation of its August 2 – 8, 2006 pilot program and to determine whether or in what ways the effects of the program on the youth participants are consistent with the program's mission and objectives. What is the effect of programs such as these on young people's beliefs about and intentions to act on democratic principles and civic participation? It is important to study how people are educated to participate in a democratic society if civic participation is to be encouraged.

*Title: Evaluation of Quality and Effectiveness of Georgia SES 2005-06*

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Education

Duration: January 2006 – August 2006

Amount: \$110,539

PI: Dorothy Harnish

Project Description: Assist GDOE Title I Office in collection, analysis, and reporting of evaluation data on effectiveness of Supplemental Educational Services and Providers in Georgia. Analyze student CRCT and GHSGT data from 161 Title I schools to compare achievement results for SES-recipients with non-recipients. Design and conduct stakeholder surveys of parents, middle and high school students, SES providers, and Title I Directors in all systems and schools offering SES throughout the state. Analyze results for state as a whole and for individual providers to assess quality of services.

*Title: Assessing the Impact of Georgia's School-to-Work Strategies: The Final Report*

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education

Duration: October 2005 – September 2006

Amount: \$139,930

PI: Richard Lynch

Description: Complete assessment of STW projects in Georgia by compiling cross-report analyses and producing a monograph summarizing contribution of STW to workforce development in Georgia. Conduct an assessment of 23 sites in the Middle and High School Initiative – Stay in School Grants and report findings to GDTAE.

*Title: Next Generation School Project Evaluation, 2004-05*

Funding Source: Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education

Duration: March 2005 – February 2006

Amount: \$30,000

PI: Dorothy Harnish

Project Description:: Collect and analyze data on student progress on academic achievement tests and broader evaluation indicators and measures for five school systems funded by NGSP for after-school and intersession extended instruction programs. Compare gains in achievement over a five-year timeframe for the five funded school systems.

**5. Letters of support from affected departments, schools, colleges, other units, and the administrator who would have oversight responsibilities**

COE department heads

Dean, ADs

SPIA dean, other deans (Social work, public health, CVIOG)

**6. A plan for how unavailable resources are going to be acquired**

Seed money from The College of Education will be provided. Additional seed funds will be sought from UGARF and from the Provost's office.

Funds from existing grants that will move into EPEC will provide initial basic operational support.

The College of Education Development Office will launch an initiative to generate seed funding from donors.

**7. A description of anticipated additional staff or faculty, if any**

EPEC will begin with the interim director and any additional staff employed by existing grants.

Future staff needed includes:

- a. Permanent director
- b. Program manager or associate director
- c. Staff support

**8. A description of the responsibilities of any participating units**

It is anticipated that only individuals will participate in the center rather than other units.

**9. Recommendations, if appropriate, for the creation of courses or degrees and how they are integral to the functioning of the institute**

Not applicable.