

Major Proposal: Educational Policy
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Educational Policy

I grew up in Eastern Arkansas in an area known as the Delta. The Delta is infamous in Arkansas for being both an economically and educationally depressed region. Since I knew nothing different I assumed the education I received through the public school system in my hometown was on par with other public school systems around the nation. It was when I arrived at Hendrix I realized this was not the case. I was noticeably behind most of my classmates academically, which was something I had never experienced. In high school I was an A and B student, and never felt the need to worry about my grades. I graduated ninth in a class of over 200 students. While I knew college would offer more of a challenge than high school, I assumed my high school career had prepared me for the task. I knew my high school education was lacking, when I had to work twice as hard to keep up with my peers. The experience made me realize how vastly uneven public schools education is in Arkansas as well as the nation as a whole. This is something I want to change.

While Hendrix does have an education department, it does not have an education major. I considered obtaining a major Hendrix offered, then going through the education department to become a secondary education teacher. I recognized doing this, however, would only give me the opportunity to help one set of students in one class per year. I want to be able to reach whole regions and make changes to improve entire public school systems. The only way I can accomplish this goal is to become an "educator of education". My future goal is to be a college

professor and to advocate change in public school policies, at the local, state and national level.


To accomplish this I want to design my own major entitled: Education Policy.

This major will be composed of two clusters, an education cluster and a policy/political cluster. The education cluster would be composed of courses not only in education, but also psychology and anthropology. The education courses will give me a stronger knowledge of education and how it is approached in addition to what issues it faces. The anthropology and sociology courses will give me a perspective on the possible outside social reasons for academic variance among regions, as well as a way to test social differences. The policy cluster would include courses in politics focusing on policy making and general government behavior. These courses would provide me with the knowledge of how a judiciary system works as well as knowledge on policy changes. Other possible electives can be added as needed. Dr. James Jennings of the Educational Department and Dr. Anne Goldberg of the Anthropology/Sociology department will be my advising committee.

For my senior capstone, I will engage in a research project identifying the differences in the educational levels through the Arkansas public school systems focusing on the Delta. I will write a 20 page paper outlining my research and recommending steps that can be taken to improve the public educational system in the Delta. I will also include in the paper information I gain from the topics course EDUC 400: Closing the Achievement Gap. My capstone experience will be graded in two parts: a completion grade for my research and evidence (5%) and a letter grade for my paper (95%) that will be determined by my faculty committee.

This interdisciplinary proposal has been approved by:

Dr. James Jennings (Chair)

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Dr. Anne Goldberg

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne J. Goldberg", written over a horizontal line.