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# 4A

## Action

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

### **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage II: Eligibility Requirements for Northeastern University**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, Northeastern University's Eligibility Requirements responses for consideration and possible approval of Stage II of the IIA process by the Commission.

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission review the responses to the Eligibility Requirements and determine if the institution may move forward in the Initial Institutional Approval process.

**Presenter:** Michele Williams-George, Consultant, Professional Services Division

#### **Strategic Plan Goal**

#### ***II. Program Quality and Accountability***

- b) Effectively and efficiently monitor program implementation and outcomes and hold all approved educator preparation programs to high standards and continuous improvement through the accreditation process.

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## **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage II: Eligibility Requirements for Northeastern University**

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### **Introduction**

This agenda item presents for consideration one institution of higher education seeking to become a program sponsor through the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process. Northeastern University seeks IIA in order to offer four programs: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, Preliminary Multiple Subject Credential, Preliminary Single Subject Credential, and Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education. Northeastern University has submitted responses to Eligibility Requirements for consideration and possible approval by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission).

It is an important reminder that approval of the institution for Stage II does not permit the institution to offer an educator preparation program that leads to a credential or license. Approval of Stage II allows an institution to move forward to Stage III in which Common Standards will be submitted for review by members from the Commission's Board of Institutional Review and then consideration and possible approval by the Commission. In addition, although there is important information about the proposed program contained in the submission for Stage II, evidence for Common Standards and applicable Preconditions and program standards will be reviewed in subsequent stages.

### **Background**

California law provides the Commission with the authority to accredit institutions to offer programs that lead to a credential to serve as an educator in California's public schools. Among other responsibilities, Education Code section 44372(c) sets forth the Commission's responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation.

The Commission requires that an institution seeking to offer new educator preparation program(s) must first be approved for initial accreditation as a new program sponsor and must do so by completing the Commission's IIA process. At the December 2015 Commission meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process requiring the satisfactory completion of five approval stages as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017 Commission meeting. A chart detailing the five stages of the IIA process is provided on page three.

### **Mills College at Northeastern University**

Mills College, as an independent institution of higher education and Commission-approved program sponsor, has offered educator preparation in California since the 1970s. On June 30, 2022, Mills College ceased to exist as an independent Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited institution. Mills College activated their teach-out plan for educator

preparation programs, recommending those candidates that had completed their programs, and making arrangements for other surrounding Commission-approved programs to assume any candidates who still had remaining requirements to complete.

Northeastern University, a Boston-based institution, accredited by the New England Commission on Higher Education, worked in collaboration with Mills College to continue to provide services to the Mills College community by assuming Mills College's operations. A new campus of Northeastern University was formed and is called "Mills College at Northeastern University". Although the two entities are describing the move as a merger, for the purposes of Initial Institutional Approval by the Commission it is important to note that all of Mills College's operations, facilities, and remaining faculty have been assumed by Northeastern University as the controlling entity. The new campus, Mills College at Northeastern, will join the main Northeastern University campus in its accreditation under the New England Commission on Higher Education. Because Northeastern University does not have Commission approval to offer educator preparation programs, it must now go through IIA. If Northeastern University completes the IIA process, it would be the program sponsor with the proposed programs offered at the Mills College at Northeastern University campus in Oakland, California.

At its Mills College Campus, Northeastern University seeks IIA in order to offer four programs: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, Preliminary Multiple Subject Credential, Preliminary Single Subject Credential, and Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education. Summaries and excerpts of Northeastern University's responses to the twelve [Eligibility Requirement Criteria](#) are provided below. Northeastern University's full responses are also available on the [Mills College at Northeastern University](#) webpage. Responses for Eligibility Requirements, Criteria 1 through 9 have been reviewed by staff and a recommendation has been provided. Criteria 10, 11, and 12 have been summarized for the Commission's review and consideration.

### Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

Northeastern University is seeking approval of Stage II as highlighted in the chart below.

IIA Process	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
<b>Action</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Preconditions &amp; Common Standards</b>	<b>Program Standards</b>	<b>Provisional Site Visit</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California  Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission's accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	Ensures institution meets all relevant preconditions  Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
<b>Requirements</b>	Institution must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: • 12 Eligibility Criteria	Submit responses to: • Preconditions • Common Standards	Submit responses to: • Program Standards	Institution must: • Collect data • Host provisional site visit
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Staff	Staff	Preconditions: Staff Common Standards: BIR	BIR	Site Visit Team & COA
<b>Authority</b>	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
<b>Decision</b>	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Provisional Approval: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Program(s): 1. Approve 2. Deny	1. Grant Full approval 2. Retain Provisional Approval with Additional Requirements 3. Deny Approval
<b>IIA Status*</b>	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

\*At conclusion of stage

\*\*Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs

\*\*\*May begin offering approved program

### **Criterion 1 through 9**

*In accordance with the Commission adopted process for determining eligibility for Initial Institutional Approval, Eligibility Criteria 1-9, as follows, includes a staff review and recommendation.*

#### **Criterion 1: Responsibility and Authority**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- At its Mills College campus, Northeastern University is proposing to offer four programs: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, Preliminary Multiple Subject Credential, Preliminary Single Subject Credential, and Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education.
- Northeastern University has submitted a complete organizational chart that indicates where its Mills College campus educator preparation programs will be housed.
  - The Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject Credential programs will be situated in the Teacher Education Department.
  - The Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education program will be situated in the Early Childhood Education Department.
  - The Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program will be situated in the Educational Leadership Department.
- Each department identified above will have a position titled “Program Director” which will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the respective program and report to their respective Department Chair.
  - The Program Director of the Educators for Liberation, Justice, and Joy will coordinate both multiple and single subject preliminary teacher credential programs. This position will report to Tomás Galguera, Department Chair of Teacher Education.
  - The Program Director of Early Childhood Special Education will coordinate the Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education program. This position will report to Jaci Urbani, Interim Department Chair of Early Childhood Education.
  - The Program Director of Administrative Services will coordinate the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential. This position will report to Dana Wright, Department Chair of Educational Leadership.
- Northeastern University assures that the duties related to credential recommendations will be performed only by employees of Northeastern University and that these individuals will take part in the Commission training related to the recommendation process. Northeastern University has identified the Mills College campus Credential Analyst as the position responsible for credential recommendations.

#### **Criterion 2: Lawful Practices**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- A non-discrimination policy for the institution's employees is provided in the Faculty Handbook and University Policies website.
- A non-discrimination policy for the institution's candidates is provided in the Student Services website.

### **Criterion 3: Commission Assurances and Compliance**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Northeastern University provided a statement of assurance signed by Mike Jackson, Vice Provost of Curriculum and Programs, that states the institution:
  - a) Will comply with all preconditions.
  - b) Will submit all data reports and accreditation documents.
  - c) Will cooperate in an evaluation of the program by an external team or monitoring of the program by Commission staff.
  - d) Will participate fully in the Commission's accreditation system and submission timelines.
  - e) In the event any or all programs close, will offer the program and meet all adopted standards until candidates complete, withdraw, are dropped, or admitted to another program.

### **Criterion 4: Requests for Data**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Kate Carlin, Academic Coordinator and Credential Analyst for the Mills College campus is identified as the qualified officer responsible for reporting and responding to all requests for data within timeframes specified by the Commission.

### **Criterion 5: Grievance Process**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Northeastern University has provided a grievance process which will be accessible to all candidates and applicants on the main Northeastern University website of the Office for University Equity and Compliance (OUEC) as well as the Academic Catalog.
- Candidates will be required to attend Graduate Orientation; the agenda for which includes explaining various university policies including the Grievance Process.

### **Criterion 6: Communication and Information**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Mills College at Northeastern University webpage will be accessible to the public without the requirement of log in information. This webpage is linked under Criterion 6 of the full submission.

- Northeastern University includes the mission, governance, administration, and admission procedures for the Mills College campus on the Mills College at Northeastern University webpage. Northeastern University's new Academic Plan, *Experience Unleashed*, details the university's vision for education.
- Program information will be available through Mills College at Northeastern University's webpage as well as academic catalogs and course descriptions, which are separate from the catalogs.

### **Criterion 7: Student Records Management, Access, and Security**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Current candidates will be able to access unofficial transcripts at any time via the Student Hub, an online/mobile student portal providing access to university resources. Current candidates and alumni may request official transcripts and degree verification from the Northeastern University Registrar's Office.
- Transcripts will be maintained by the Office of the Registrar at the Boston campus. They will be electronically stored through the university's student information system, Ellucian's Banner.
- Northeastern University will maintain student records in two redundant data centers, one is on the main campus in Boston, Massachusetts, and the other, which is the backup center, is 30 miles away off-campus. Both data centers are closed to the public.

### **Criterion 8: Disclosure**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Programs offered at Mills College at Northeastern University will integrate three teaching and learning modalities, including in-person, hybrid, and online.
- Programs offered at Mills College at Northeastern University will only be offered on the Mills College campus at 5000 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland, California 94613
- No outside organizations will be providing educational services.

### **Criterion 9: Veracity in all Claims and Documentation Submitted**

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- An assurance signed by Mike Jackson, Vice Provost of Curriculum and Programs, has been submitted attesting to the veracity of all statements and documentation submitted to the Commission. The letter also attests to Northeastern University's understanding that a lack of veracity is a cause for denial of Initial Institutional Approval.

### Criterion 10, 11, and 12

*In accordance with the Commission approved process for determining eligibility for Initial Institutional Approval, [Eligibility Criteria 10-12](#) include a staff summary of the institution's submission, but do not include a staff recommendation.*

#### Criterion 10: Mission and Vision

Northeastern University has a mission and vision statement for the overall university. The Educator Preparation Programs at Mills College at Northeastern University also have mission and vision statements.

Northeastern University: The Academic Plan, Experience Unleashed, represents Northeastern University's mission and vision for the future of education and is founded on five pillars: 1) Build on the power of diversity 2) Erase boundaries 3) Maximize the power of experience 4) Create new currents for discovery 5) Deepen immersion in the world

Educator Preparations programs: **Mission** – “The educator preparation programs at Mills College at Northeastern cultivate scholar practitioners through lifelong experiential learning that transforms communities towards just and equitable societies. The university educates candidates to think critically and communicate responsibly and effectively, to accept the challenges of their creative visions, and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effect thoughtful changes in a global multicultural society.” **Vision** – “To ignite learning networks to co-create inclusive and equitable changes, and to critically examine our positionality within sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic, historical, environmental, and economic systems and how we impact teaching, learning, and schools.”

Northeastern University believes the mission statement for the educator preparation programs embody values and principles embedded in the adopted California state standards and frameworks for TK-12 students. In the submission, the university states, “The framework that guides the design and implementation of the credential programs to be offered at Mills College at Northeastern University is underpinned by a deep commitment and concern for culturally-sustaining, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and universally designed practice. Under this social equity overarching focus, we foster a principled approach to practice that allows us to fine-tune principles that are particular and contextualized for the assets and needs of candidates and faculty in each program.”

Northeastern University states Mills College at Northeastern University will “continue to offer educator credential programs that rely heavily on the tradition and innovation of the former Mills College programs integrated with Northeastern University's equally rich history of experiential education.” In this way, the university believes it will demonstrate its commitment to preparing candidates who will work effectively with the full range of California TK-12 students.



### **Criterion 11: History of Prior Experience and Effectiveness in Educator Preparation**

Mills College was a private, independent college founded in 1852 and which began offering educator preparation programs in 1991. In July of 2022, Mills College closed as an institution and collaborated with Boston-based Northeastern University and became Mills College at Northeastern University. The College of Education at Northeastern University was formed in 1953 and accredited during the 1960s by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; at the same time, the College began to mandate student teaching for all students. In 1992, the education department moved to the College of Arts and Sciences where it remained a department of the college until July 1999 when it was renamed the School of Education (SOE). By 2015, the university stopped offering undergraduate programs in education, at which time the school was renamed the Graduate School of Education (GSE) as one of the arms of the College of Professional Studies. In 2019, the GSE established a focus on “... developing people through exploration of their current experiences and access to new experiences, ideas, and scholarship, guided by reflection, support and direction of a knowledgeable facilitator.”

- In addition to its home campus in Boston, Northeastern University currently has 10 campuses, including two in California and three international sites. The university is currently offering educator preparation programs at its three Massachusetts campuses.
- Northeastern University states it intends to “...continue offering educator certification programs in the tradition of Mills College...” The preparation programs that Northeastern is proposing to offer at the Mills College at Northeastern University campus are programs for which Mills College was accredited before its closure.
- Northeastern University has posted the third-party invitation for comments on the Mills College at Northeastern website where the public and all constituencies can access it. No comments have been received at this time.
- As required by this criterion, staff researched the possibility of any additional available information relevant to Northeastern University’s application for IIA and found none.

### **Criterion 12: Capacity and Resources**

- As evidence of capacity and resources, Northeastern has provided a copy of its most recent audited budget for its Mills College campus including fiscal years 2022 to 2025 as well as a copy of a proposed operations budget for its education unit.
- Northeastern has also detailed within its submission, the facility resources that will be available for its candidates. These include the Mills College facilities used prior to its closure as well as the addition of the integration of the learning management system, Canvas, across all programs.
- Additionally, within the submission document, Northeastern University has identified the job responsibilities and minimum qualifications for the program personnel and instructional support for educator preparation programs offered at the Oakland-based Mills College at Northeastern University campus. Personnel and instructional support will consist of the following:
  - Various instructional personnel including faculty and mentors
  - Three Program Directors
  - Three Department Chairs

- A Credential Analyst and Academic Program Coordinator
- For the purposes of fieldwork, Northeastern University intends to partner with the same institutions with whom Mills College had partnerships prior to its closing. The 18 identified institutions are listed in the full submission.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Commission consider the responses to the Eligibility Requirements submitted by Northeastern University and grant eligibility.

Granting eligibility would allow Northeastern University to move forward to Stage III of the IIA process in which responses to Preconditions and Common Standards are submitted for review. Approval of Stage II will not authorize Northeastern University to offer an educator preparation program that leads to a credential or license.

If the Commission grants Eligibility, it may identify topics that it will be looking for in Stage III. If the Commission denies Eligibility, it may identify what it sees as missing in the current submission in the event the institution decides to continue to work toward institutional approval.

### **Next Steps**

Based on the Commission's action, staff will take appropriate next steps related to the option chosen.