

June 25, 2025

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Anne D'Alleva, Ph.D.

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



RE: Program Closure: Graduate Certificate in School Law

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Trustees approve the closure of the Graduate Certificate in School Law.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Graduate Certificate in School Law was approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2014. The fully-online certificate was designed to provide administrators, educators, and parents with a user-friendly means to understand the legal dimensions of K-12 education. School administrators were anticipated as a key population for recruitment, due to their daily focus on legal issues, such as disciplining students, hiring and terminating teachers, engaging in collective bargaining, and maintaining school safety. Teachers receive very little exposure in school law through pre-service programs professional development. By educating teachers about how legal concepts apply to the school setting, the certificate was designed to help teachers make legal *and* educationally sound decisions in the school setting. Parents and educational advocates were expected to be a final population interested in the certificate, as the curriculum supported strengthening effective advocacy skills for children.

Total enrollment in the program has averaged nine students for the past six years, with a slight decline in numbers. Completions have averaged five per year over the last five years. The program is offered by the Department of Educational Leadership, which also offers the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree. In contrast to the Graduate Certificate in School Law, the Ed.D. has seen strong and consistent enrollment, with an average of 40 students each admission cycle since 2020. As three of four courses in the Graduate Certificate in School Law are taught by the same faculty member, closing the certificate will allow the faculty member to better support the needs of the larger Ed.D. program.

The Department of Educational Leadership developed a teach-out plan for the program, as there were current students enrolled when the decision to close the program was taken. The Department committed to offering all required courses across the 25-26 and 26-27 academic years. Admission to the program was suspended in early January 2025. Students already admitted in Spring 2025 were notified of the plans to close the program, and were offered reimbursement for their application fee if they chose not to enroll in any courses. The program will be sunset, with full termination once all enrolled students have completed, likely in Fall 2027.