Mission and Philosophy

The mission of the Graduate Programs in Special Education (GPSE) is to prepare educators and scholars to effectively teach and support people with disabilities to be self-determined, included, and respected members of their schools and communities. The GPSE are also committed to influencing research, practice, and policy related to people with disabilities at the international, national, state, and local levels.

GPSE prepares teachers to effectively educate children and youth with disabilities in their educational setting and to support placements and programs in the least restrictive environment, especially general education settings. This is consistent with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Unit’s Core Values, the views of full-time and adjunct faculty, and program objectives.

Because GPSE candidates participate in a highly coherent program, because they are evaluated in every course, because they have to demonstrate competency in teaching and research and collaboration, because they are taught how to use research-validated teaching and curriculum methods in general and special education settings, and because they are taught to make instructional adaptations and modifications, GPSE believes that candidates

• Graduate with a solid understanding of human development, abilities and disabilities, and instructional strategies and procedures.

• Can support the success of students with disabilities and their families across the cognitive, social and emotional, behavioral, physical, self-help, and communication domains.

• Can work effectively with general education personnel, related service providers, educational specialists, and families.