

Department Response to the Evaluation Team Report

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

April 28, 2014

Introductory Statement

We would like to thank the members of the review team, Tracey Wheeler of Dixie State University, Aaron Popham of Brigham Young University, Adam Johnston of WSU's Physics Department, and Sally Cantwell of WSU's School of Nursing, who gave us their time and expertise to be objective observers of our programs. We appreciate their comments of our strengths, concerns, and recommendations. Although they listed seven strengths, it will be the challenges and concerns that will be addressed in this response. Each concern will be addressed separately.

Challenges

- New faculty induction/culture due to retirements.
 - This issue is recognized within the Teacher Education Department because no faculty in the department are designated as "graduate faculty." Steps are being taken to enculturate new faculty members by assigning them mentors and having faculty-wide retreats to discuss the structure, policies, practices, and assessments used in the department.
- Placement and length for field experiences in the post-baccalaureate (post-bacc) licensure tracks.
 - Currently, the director makes all placements for the practicum, which takes a great deal of her time just as a new semester is beginning. The department is evaluating whether or not those placements would best be handled by the Student Teaching Coordinator and the administrative assistant.
 - The length of the practicum is similar to the undergraduate Level 2 elementary students. It is a total of 60 hours, which can be extended or re-done if the student is unsuccessful in the placement. Because of the post-bacc nature of the licensing within the M.Ed., it is felt that this amount of base time is sufficient to determine whether or not someone will be successful to move into student-teaching, which is a 50-day/all day experience.
- Development of new assessment protocols and reliability measures.
 - In many ways the post-bacc licensing is mirroring the undergraduate licensing programs, and as such, with TEAC (Teacher Education Accreditation Council) rapidly approaching in the 2014-2015 academic year, the faculty would like all assessments of those who are licensing (whether undergrad or post bacc to be identical). Those protocols are currently being developed and tested.
- Decline in applicants.
 - Although we have seen a decline from a high enrollment three years ago, we seem to have enough students to keep us busy. Many of the licensing people are

beginning to come back to complete the full master's degree, and we have a fair number of applicants each admission round (three times a year with applications due (Sept. 15 for spring admission; Jan. 15 for summer admission; and May 15 for fall admission).

- Low graduation rates in M.Ed. program since beginning the licensing (post back) tracks.
 - This is a challenge. It was assumed when we began the licensing through the M.Ed. everyone would want to obtain a master's degree. We did not anticipate the number of people who came into the program holding a master's degree or in some cases, doctoral degrees.
 - In response to this challenge, we are beginning the process to designate each of our licensing tracks as "institutional graduate certificates." We hope to have the process completed by spring, 2015; however, the request must be approved through the Utah Board of Regents so it may take until summer, 2016.

Concerns/Weaknesses:

- **Program Concern 1:** Program outcomes are appropriate and stated for a graduate M.Ed. program (*Standard C: a-c*). However, there is not enough distinction between outcomes for the post-bacc licensure track when compared to the M.Ed. program mission. Learning outcomes should be defined for each measure/standard which has created some confusion with the dual track program (*Standard C: b*).
 - **Response:** The department has already begun the process to create institutional graduate certificates (IGC) for all students pursuing a teaching license in the post-baccalaureate (master's) program. The IGCs and the pursuant coursework will delineate the differences between the "regular" M.Ed. and the post bacc licensing. The learning outcomes will be clarified and defined through the IGC process.
 - **Response:** The mission of the M.Ed. program has been changed. It reads as follows:
 - The mission of the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (MEd) program is to extend the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators in schools, business, industry, and higher education through advancing the theoretical and practical applications of curriculum and instruction. The program is approved the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The program has a secondary mission of preparing post-baccalaureate students for an entry level teaching license in either elementary education, secondary education, or special education. The mission of this part of the program aligns with the Teacher Education Department's mission: We work within our communities to prepare caring, competent educators and to promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative education practices.

- **Program Concern 2:** With a dual track, students need a clear process for advising. A single office advisor may not be sufficient for this need (Standard D: b).
 - **Response:** Although the program director does a majority of the advising, maybe it was not clear to the review committee that the administrative assistant does some advising as well, especially in the initial stages of whichever program the student is pursuing. Additionally, those who are licensing receive advising from the Student Teaching Coordinator and the advisor in charge of licensing after student teaching is completed.

- **Program Weakness 1:** It seems there are two missions in the M.Ed. and post-bacc programs. There is need for a dual role explicitly stated, one for the traditional M.Ed. program, and another for the licensure program. While these are both valuable and laudable, their missions feel distinct from one another. Students, especially, stated different, discrepant missions for the program (Standard A: b, c).
 - **Response:** The process has begun to ensure two distinct missions within the M.Ed. program in which the post bacc licensing is housed. The beginning step was to change the mission statement as stated above. The second step will be to follow through on the IGC during this coming school year.

- **Program Weakness 2:** It was not evident that data collection was done in a systematically manner and used to improve and direct program change (Standard C: e).
 - **Response:** Data collection in the past has been somewhat minimalistic. Also, some data that are expected now were not collected in the past. That is particularly true on the current review form which was new during the 2013-2014 review process. We are continually improving the ways we collect data and what data are collected to ensure we have a quality program.

As the department moves forward with new protocols and assessments, the post bacc licensing will adopt those protocols with their requisite data collection points. The transition should be relatively smooth because the faculty are working in professional learning communities to develop the protocols which will then be adopted by consensus.

Although it may not have been evident in the report, data do inform program changes. Several changes have been made to the program recently based on data collection: (a) moving MED 6085 – Proposal Writing from a 1 to 2 credit hour course; (b) adding an “Integrating the Arts” course into the elementary licensing; and (c) adding a “Technology for Pre-Service Teachers” course for those licensing in elementary or secondary education.

Submitted by Peggy J. Saunders, Ph.D.
 Director, Master of Education