Concordia University, Nebraska
Institutional Report – 2013
Onsite Visit – April 14-16, 2013

Explanation of Attachments: Attachments are coded to the section of the report. 1.3.a would indicate that the exhibit is in Standard 1, element 3, and is exhibit a. "I" indicates an exhibit in the Introduction. The entire report is also available at http://wp.cune.edu/accreditation.

Standard 1 – Graduate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Concordia is a Christ-centered institution that is dedicated to preparing candidates to be effective leaders in their classrooms and positive role models for their students. Effectiveness is demonstrated in being knowledgeable of content, capable in preparation and presentation, and excellent in engaging the students in the learning process.

Initial Level:

Concordia offers initial teacher preparation programs at the undergraduate level in early childhood, special education, ESL, elementary, middle level and secondary education and at the graduate level in early childhood and secondary education. 1.1.a CU Programs

The Conceptual Framework outlines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teaching, leading, and learning that are the foundation of a highly qualified teacher. The fifteen teacher performance areas are tied to each of the courses and to each of the field experiences that a candidate has while he/she progresses through the program at Concordia. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards are coded to the Conceptual Framework. This provides a link between nationally recognized benchmarks and the goals of the initial programs at Concordia. Programs leading to state certification are aligned with the standards of the Nebraska Department of Education as outlined in Rule 24 – Regulations for Certification Endorsements. Standards of the specialty professional associations are aligned within the Rule 24 matrices for all endorsement programs providing another nationally recognized benchmark. 1.1.b CU Conceptual Framework, 1.1.c CU Conceptual Framework GR, 1.1.d NDE Rule 24

Concordia candidates know and demonstrate content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. This is assessed through coursework and through evaluations done by the candidate, by cooperating teachers, and by university

supervisors as they complete program requirements in their chosen field. 1.1.e Teacher Education Data - Mapping, 1.1.f Teacher Education Data (2) - Mapping, 1.1.g Teacher Education Data (3) - Mapping, 1.1.g.2 Candidate Information - TED, 1.1.g.3 TED Counts 2012

Basic knowledge in reading, writing, and mathematics is assessed with the Praxis I – Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) exam. All candidates are required to pass the PPST prior to full admission into teacher education. This is considered an indication of basic knowledge. A study was completed in the summer of 2010 that indicated high correlation values between the high school tests and the candidates' scores on the subsequent PPST exams. Using this information we decided that attention would be recommended for any candidates whose lower predicted PPST value did not exceed the minimum passing PPST score. These candidates were advised during their checkpoint 1 interview that past test history at Concordia indicates that while they have an excellent chance to pass the test, there is also significant chance for a failing score and so test preparation should be done accordingly. Referral to campus services or other available commercial options was made. A summary of the study, "Predictive Relationship between ACT or SAT scores and PPST", is included in the exhibits along with a PPST score summary. 1.1.h ACT SAT PPST Predictive Relationship, 1.1.i PPST Summary 2009-2012

Content knowledge is demonstrated in candidate GPAs. Candidates are required to have a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA and a minimum 2.75 GPA in professional education coursework, endorsement coursework, and subject endorsement coursework for middle level and secondary education candidates. Candidate GPAs are recorded when the candidate is first interviewed for admission into the program. They are checked after each semester for continued admission. The GPAs are also recorded when the candidate applies for admission to student teaching. 1.1.j GPA at Admission to Student Teaching, 1.1.k GPA Comparison - Teacher Education with Arts and Sciences

Candidates demonstrate pedagogical knowledge in written lesson plans, presentations, a capstone experience, and student teaching. The capstone teaching experience was added as a requirement in Fall 2010 and has been revised and strengthened since then. The capstone is a 3-day teaching experience prior to student teaching. 1.1.l Capstone Candidates also complete a Teacher Work Sample (TWS) during their first student teaching assignment. The TWS was instituted in Fall 2003 and underwent a significant revision in summer 2012. 1.1.m TWS Scores 09-12, 1.1.n TWS Scoring Rubric (2 docs), 1.1.o TWS Changes and Rationale Data on the first semester of the new revision will be available at the time of the onsite visit.

Pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills are evaluated by the candidates, instructors, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors throughout the candidate's progression through the program. Evaluation data is entered into the Teacher Education Data (TED) system.

Data can be retrieved for an individual candidate, for a cohort of candidates, or for candidates in a specific content or program area. 1.1.p TED Cohort Analysis, 1.1.q TED Data Chart Pre-Student Teaching, 1.1.r TED Data Summary

Candidates in the elementary and early childhood programs complete the Elementary Education Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (EECIA) Praxis II exam. Candidates must take the test, but the Nebraska Department of Education does not require a license exam for certification. A minimum score of 159 has been set by NDE for candidates to be considered highly qualified. 1.1.s EECIA Summary

Candidate impact on student learning is assessed during the capstone, Teacher Work Sample, and student teaching experiences. Assessments are done by the candidate, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor. Data on student learning is documented by the candidate in the Teacher Work Sample. 1.1.t TWS Candidate Artifacts (5 docs)

Candidate performance, knowledge, skills, and dispositions are a key part of the evaluations done during field experiences and student teaching. Candidates complete a minimum of 100 hours of field experience which is connected to required coursework. Field experiences are evaluated by instructors and cooperating teachers. Candidates also complete two 8-week student teaching assignments that are evaluated by cooperating teachers and the university supervisor. The placements are generally in two different schools with two or more different cooperating teachers and two different university supervisors. This provides multiple perspectives on candidate performance and also the opportunity to experience two different situations with respect to grade level and school. 1.1.u Field Experiences (5 docs)

Candidate dispositions are evaluated throughout the program beginning with the initial course, Teaching as a Profession, and continuing through the student teaching experience and evaluations. Data is entered in the TED system and is reviewed on an annual basis by the unit. 1.1.v Candidate Dispositions

Advanced Level:

Concordia offers advanced level programs in curriculum and instruction, special education, literacy, English as a Second Language/ English Language Learners (ESL/ELL), and early childhood. We also offer programs for other school personnel in principal, reading specialist, and curriculum supervisor. 1.1.a CU Programs

Candidates in advanced programs must have a 3.0 GPA to be accepted into Concordia programs. A 3.0 GPA must be maintained throughout the program with no course grade less

than C. Candidates demonstrate continued content knowledge through successfully completing the coursework requirements in their program.

All candidates complete coursework in their content area that deepens their knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and learning. Those who complete a Master's degree are required to take four core courses: Contemporary Thought, Psychological Foundations of Teaching and Learning, Research Evaluation and Design, and Serving and Leading in Community and World. Contemporary Thought (Educ 501) addresses current issues in education from the multiple perspectives of the candidates in the class. Psychological Foundations of Teaching and Learning (Psy 511) looks at current philosophy and practice for classroom effectiveness and learning for all students. Research Evaluation and Design (Educ 594) discusses how current research should be read to achieve the greatest amount of pertinent information. Research processes are discussed using current research. Serving and Leading in the Community and World (Soc/Theo 565) focuses on the vocation of teacher and how he/she can be an effective partner with people from diverse backgrounds. A complete list of course requirements for all advanced and other school personnel programs is included in the exhibits. [I.5.a Ed Admin, C&I, Early Childhood, Reading Specialist, Special Education](#) (5 docs in Introduction Section)

All advanced candidates complete a practicum as part of the program. The practicum is a focused experience where the candidate demonstrates their knowledge and skills in an authentic situation. Practicums are generally conducted in the candidate's classroom to afford maximum application. Practicum experiences are monitored by university instructors and mentors. [1.1.w Course Syllabi for Advanced Practicums](#) (6 docs)

Candidates in advanced and other school personnel programs complete a portfolio that documents their progress through the program and also presents evidence of competency in their area. Portfolios are aligned with professional standards of the individual programs. Portfolio components address research in the field, appropriate use of technology, professional standards, policy and procedure, and the effects of a positive environment on student learning. The portfolios are reviewed by program directors and instructors as part of the program completion process. [1.1.x Advanced Portfolio Information](#) (10 docs – Special Education has not had a completer yet.)

1.2.b Continuous Improvement

After the 2005 NCATE accreditation visit the unit reviewed the Conceptual Framework and revised it, streamlining the teacher performance areas from 27 to 14. The next year an additional review was completed and a 15th teacher performance area was added to address personal characteristics. The revised Conceptual Framework addressed the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by candidates in the areas of teaching, leading, and learning. The

Conceptual Framework is shared with initial candidates during their first course in the teacher education program. 1.2.b.1 Conceptual Framework, 1.2.b.2 Conceptual Framework GR

A Teacher Education Data (TED) system was developed to collect data on the fifteen areas of the Conceptual Framework. During a candidate's time in the program over 400 data pieces are collected and entered in the TED system. Additional information on the TED system is included in the Standard 2 narrative section. 1.2.b.3 TED mapping, 1.2.b.4 TED mapping (2), 1.2.b.5 TED mapping (3)

The process was begun in the summer of 2012 to move from a paper portfolio to an electronic portfolio. A portfolio template was developed and was piloted with a small number of initial program candidates. A web tutorial was developed for the candidates and help sessions were scheduled to assist in the implementation and completion of the portfolios. 1.2.b.6 Electronic Portfolio Template (click on titles in the black bar to explore the template)

A curriculum mapping process is currently underway to align instruction to the program goals, conceptual framework, state and national standards, and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for teachers in the 21st century. The curriculum map will indicate when concepts and standards are addressed as well as the extent to which they are addressed. Assessment of the goals and standards will be indicated in the map to provide a clearer picture of when, where, and to what extent program goals and national standards are being met. The curriculum mapping process is being completed for all programs at the initial and advanced levels. Dialog among instructors at both levels has been beneficial. A demonstration will be available at the onsite visit. 1.2.b.7 College of Ed Curriculum Mapping (In Progress)

Integration of core courses at the advanced level creates classroom situations whereby candidates in all programs - educational administration, early childhood, literacy, and curriculum and instruction – become part of the discussion. This is beneficial to our candidates by exposing them to thoughts and concerns of candidates in those specialty areas. It also helps to challenge any group-think that might be happening as a result of sharing twelve classes with the same cohort.

Over the past two years a better coordination of course schedules has allowed the unit to combine cohorts in core or shared courses and to increase fiscal responsibility within the unit.

Candidate feedback and reactions through several portfolio documents helped us to confirm the need for the educational administration practicum experience during the first year of the program. We also learned that it is important to give the candidates a full academic year plus some summer time to finish their required 250 hours. Candidates in the September cohort begin the program with the initial practicum course. Candidates in the March cohort take the

initial practicum course in the following September. Both groups enroll in their second practicum course during the following summer term.

The literacy/reading specialist program has undergone two changes since 2005. The first was a streamlining of the courses to trim the program to a 30-hour Master's. Candidates indicated that they were not getting enough applicable instruction for their program. Additional candidate and instructor feedback helped us to confirm the need for two additional reading courses in the program, moving the program back to a 36-hour Master's. Both recent graduates and faculty were asked about the need for additional content. The results of those two studies led to the addition of EDUC519-Word Study: Decoding, Comprehension & Fluency and EDUC520-Literacy Assessment & Intervention to program requirements. Students entering the program with the September 2012 cohort will be required to complete those courses.

Candidate portfolios, evaluation feedback, and instructor input also caused us to change our philosophy and content for our research courses. Candidates were unprepared for the research design course previously offered. We found that focusing upon finding, reading, and evaluating research articles from a research process perspective would better serve our candidates' needs. A new course was designed and implemented. Not only did the new course address research from a consumer perspective it also contains a unit on APA style. Candidate feedback from early offerings of the course caused us to move the course to the start of the program so that candidates have these skills as they enter courses in the program that require heavy locating and reading of research articles. Currently our Research Evaluation and Design course (Educ 594) is offered in the second or third timeslot for the cohorts. 1.2.b.8 Syllabus - Educ 594

A formal portfolio review process was begun in the 2011-2012 academic year. Evaluation rubrics were developed and a portfolio review day was scheduled and included the participation of program directors and adjunct instructors.

A follow-up study of graduates from the programs has not been as effective as hoped. Even though the responses to follow-up surveys have been helpful the number of responses to the surveys has been limited. A more concerted effort is being made to obtain post-graduation information from candidates.

Future goals and direction include the following:

- Completion of the curriculum mapping process for all programs at all levels and a clearer understanding of the portfolio expectations and process on the part of candidates at all levels. All programs at all levels have made great strides over the past two years. The intent of the unit and the institution is to continue to offer quality programs for all candidates.

- Increase the use of on-campus diversity to speak to candidates (panels, forums, speakers, etc.)
- Give more attention to program development/improvement/response to feedback in the advanced level programs.
- Increased attention to issues of diversity at the advanced level.
- Address the issue of program director/advisee ratio at the advanced level for increased communication, problem solving, and greater retention.
- Continued development for increased communication with the Dean of Graduate Studies and with the Dean of Education.
- Explore options for development of a Master's in ESL.