

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>.

Introduction

I.1 Historical Context and Unique Characteristics

Concordia University – Nebraska, one of 10 schools in the Concordia University System, is owned and operated by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Founded in 1894, it opened with thirteen students, two professors, and one building. Today, the campus is situated on 120 acres with more than twenty-five academic and service buildings and had an enrollment of 1130 undergraduate, 610 graduate, 279 dual credit students, and 72 degree completion students in 2012-2013 for a total enrollment of 2091. Current offerings include liberal arts and pre-professional programs in addition to programs in education.

Concordia’s primary function remains service to congregations and schools of the Church. Concordia educates more men and women for careers in professional church work than any other college or university of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The legal name of the institution was Concordia Teachers College, until June 30, 1998. On July 1, 1998, the legal name was changed to Concordia University to enhance the mission of the institution and to better prepare servant leaders for church and world.

The original institution was a preparatory academy for a Lutheran normal school located at Addison, Illinois. In 1905, Concordia added a two-year normal program to its offerings. Concordia first granted a Bachelor of Science degree for elementary teachers in 1939. The secondary education program was added in 1958 and the graduate program in 1966.

Concordia is a residential college of nearly all full-time students, about 80% of whom live in on-campus residence halls. A variety of student activities and entertainment options provide students with opportunities for relaxation and personal growth outside the classroom. Seward, Nebraska, a town of almost seven thousand people, offers a safe, peaceful environment for students. Seward is 25 miles west of Lincoln, Nebraska.

I.2 Institution's Mission

Mission - Concordia University, Nebraska is an excellent academic and Christ-centered community equipping men and women for lives of learning, service and leadership in the church and world.

Vision - By 2015 Concordia University, Nebraska will grow and expand its influence to diverse populations by fostering collaboration and adapting to our changing environment while remaining faithful to our mission of excellent Christian education. [Concordia University Strategic Plan](#)

The Purpose Statement of Concordia University College of Education - The College of Education strives to prepare candidates who exemplify Christ-like leaders and who will serve as educators in Lutheran, parochial, private, and public school classrooms and parish education programs of our church and our world.

Concordia's faculty, staff, and students are committed to excellence and integrity in performance both in the classroom and in scholarly activity and research, service to the church and community through a commitment to strong partnerships with shared objectives, and a spirit of community within the university family. Our programs and activities set forth an explicit value system, which has as its core faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Savior of the world. Therefore, this value system adheres to the Holy Scriptures as the communicator of that faith and commits to the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of the Scriptures.

Concordia's programs promote intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, physical, and spiritual growth. They nurture religious commitment, enlarge social and cultural understanding, provide insights for Christian action in the world, and facilitate effective communication. The programs provide an opportunity for intelligently selecting vocations of service to God, church, and society. They are designed to develop professional competencies and communities required for responsible participation and leadership in a complex and diverse society. [Undergraduate Catalog](#), [Graduate Catalog](#)

I.3 Unit and Significant Changes

The College of Education is one of three colleges at Concordia University. It offers initial certification programs in early childhood, special education, elementary, middle level, and secondary education. The College of Graduate Studies offers master's degree level (advanced) programs and initial certification programs. The College of Arts and Sciences offers Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees and also provides coursework in subject areas for teacher

education candidates. The initial and advanced programs offered by the College of Education and the College of Graduate Studies are approved by the Nebraska Department of Education and accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. [I.3.a Concordia Univ. Cabinet](#)

The unit includes both the College of Education and the College of Graduate Studies. The Deans work in cooperation with each other in coordination of programs. Each college has its own governance structure. Communication between the two Deans and the colleges insures efficient operation of both programs and effective cooperation and communication between them. [I.3.b Academics](#), [I.3.c College of Education](#), [I.3.d College of Graduate Studies](#)

The undergraduate unit's administrative structure consists of a Dean, a chair, a director of clinical and field experiences, and six program directors. One of the program directors oversees the Director of Christian Education Program, a non-teaching program that prepares candidates to serve in other parish educational ministries in churches of the LC-MS. A Dean and six program directors serve in the College of Graduate Studies in education programs.

Undergraduate programs are currently offered on campus during a two-semester academic year and a summer term. Graduate programs are offered in cohort format in Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska and in an online format. Courses are offered in 8-week terms with 6 modules per calendar year.

Program Changes at the Initial Level:

- An introductory course, Teaching as a Profession (Educ 101), was added to the core curriculum in 06-07 to provide opportunity for candidates to reflect on their teacher vocation choice and to learn more about our program. [I.5.b Syllabus Educ 101](#)
- Teaching Diverse Learners was added to the core curriculum in 07-08 to better prepare candidates to meet the needs of all students. The course was renamed Differentiated Instruction (Educ 424) in the fall of 2012. [I.5.b Syllabus - Educ 424](#)
- The literacy courses for early childhood/elementary candidates (Educ 461) and middle level/secondary candidates (Educ 470) were revised to focus more on the literacy needs of students at those grade levels. [I.5.b Syllabi Educ 461 and Educ 470](#)
- Infants and Toddlers (Educ 331) was added to the early childhood curriculum in 07-08 to broaden the background of candidates in the program. [I.5.b Syllabus Educ 331](#)
- In 08-09 the unit implemented the Teacher Education Data (TED) system for collecting performance data on undergraduate (initial) candidates. TED is aligned with the Conceptual Framework and 400+ different pieces of data are collected during a candidate's time in the program. [I.3.e-g Teacher Education Data \(TED\)](#)

- A para-educator-to-teacher program was added in Fall 2009 in partnership with Omaha Public Schools. [I.3.h OPS Para Educator Program](#)
- A secondary teacher certification program for second-career candidates was added in Fall 2009. [I.3.i Secondary Graduate Teacher Certification](#)
- Due to low enrollment in the special education endorsement during the 2005-2006 academic year the program was dropped as an endorsement and only those students who were enrolled at that time were allowed to complete the program. During the 2009-2010 academic year sufficient interest was shown to reactivate the program in a revised format. The program was added into the 2010-2011 catalog and offered as an endorsement that could be added at the elementary, middle, or secondary level. 16 candidates graduated with the endorsement in 2012. [I.3.j Special Education - Initial](#)
- A Christian Teacher Diploma option was added in 11-12 to give non-Lutheran candidates interested in teaching in faith-based schools the opportunity to prepare for that vocation. [I.3.k Christian Teacher Diploma](#)
- Four new faculty members have joined the undergraduate program since 2005: Dr. Bernard Tonjes – 2006, Amanda Geidel – 2008, Annette Oliver – 2009, and Beth Pester – 2012. Shanna Opfer also serves as a full-time interim member since 2011.

Program Changes at the Advanced Level:

- The Curriculum and Instruction program at the advanced level was dropped after the 2004-2005 academic year due to continued low enrollment and the unintended necessity to offer much of the program as independent studies. The program was a subject-content based program.
- K-12 Teacher Alliance (KTA) was contracted as a recruitment service in spring 2009. Enrollment in the graduate education programs grew from around 200 to over 600 in one year. [I.3 K-12 Teacher Alliance \(KTA\)](#)
- New programs were added to the graduate offerings: Curriculum and Instruction (teacher leader focus) - Fall 2010; permission from Higher Learning Commission to offer all programs online - Fall 2011; initial endorsement in special education for currently certificated teachers - Spring 2012, initial endorsement in early childhood for candidates with a bachelor's degree - Spring 2012. The last two programs offer initial certification but since the candidates have an undergraduate degree the programs are offered at a graduate level. [I.3.l Curriculum and Instruction Program](#), [I.3.m Special Education Initial-Grad Level](#), [I.3.n ECE Teacher Certification - Graduate Level](#)
- There has been a significant change in College of Graduate Studies leadership. Dr. Paul Holtorf resigned from the position in the spring of 2006. Dr. Jane Fryar served as Dean for the 06-07 academic year. Dr. Judy Preuss was interim dean from July 1-December 31, 2007. Dr. Marsha Konz served as Dean from January-June 2008. Dr. Ron Bork

served as Dean of Graduate Teacher Education from July 2008 - May 2012 and continues to carry out leadership for teacher education programs at the graduate level. Dr. Thad Warren is currently the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

- Six new faculty members joined the graduate college since 2005: Annette Oliver – Fall 2009; Dr. Robert Smallfoot – Spring 2010; Barb Perlewitz – Fall 2010; Dr. Alice Epstein – Fall 2011; Dr. Vicki Anderson – Summer 2012; Dr. Kathleen Wheeler – Summer 2012.

I.4 Conceptual Framework, Standards, Proficiencies, and Conceptual Framework Changes

The Education Governance Committee first approved the Conceptual Framework for teacher education in 1992. The goal was to set forth a series of teacher performance areas that would identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be a successful teacher. In the fall of 2005 the original framework was revised and the 27 teacher performance areas were reduced to 14. In the fall of 2008 a fifteenth performance area – Personal Characteristics – was added.

There is a single Conceptual Framework used at both the initial and advanced levels with the only difference being the wording – teacher education candidate or graduate candidate. The core part of the conceptual framework is described as Teaching, Leading, and Learning. These themes, operational in the curriculum and especially in the teacher laboratory experience since the late 1970s, are specifically and systematically applied throughout our programs. The three themes summarize program purposes and performance areas and describe outcome goals for evaluating basic and advanced programs. [I.4.a Conceptual Framework](#)

Candidate Proficiencies Aligned with Professional and State Standards: 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. Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards are aligned to the Conceptual Framework. The alignment of these recognized national and state standards provides benchmarks for assessing candidate proficiency from a broader perspective. The Conceptual Framework for initial and advanced programs is included in the exhibits. [I.4.b NDE Rule 24](#), [I.4.c Concordia Rule 24 Matrices \(the link to Rule 24 is on the left side\)](#)