

2003-2004 IBHE Program Review Report Summary

Program Reviewed 13.1202 Bachelor of Science in Education – Elementary, General Option

Summary

The program has a tradition of excellence in teacher education. The strengths of the elementary program are apparent from the fact that the program was reaccruited with NCATE and from the satisfaction of alumni who are employed at an 87% rate according to a recent Career Survey.

Early field experiences and partnerships with area schools provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to link theory with practice. Special initiatives include the assignment of credit units for two faculty members as liaisons with Charleston and Mattoon schools. A program that has resulted from a partnership with the Carl Sandburg Elementary in Charleston is project WOW. Project WOW enables students to partner with classrooms to create social studies lessons that integrate other areas of the curriculum culminating in multimedia presentations synthesizing the learning experiences of the students. In addition, a School Cohort Initiative Program (SCIP) is a pilot program begun with volunteers of pre-service teachers during their freshman year. PT3 grants enabled the acquisition and the use of technology tools in pre-service education and in partner classrooms. In addition, the departmental survey conducted Fall 2004 shows the program to be strong in the preparation of pre-service teachers in both content knowledge and performance. A mean of at least 4.0 in a scale of 1-5 as assessed by students, alumni, and cooperating teachers was fairly consistent with appreciation for field experiences noted. Areas that were less than 4.0 included all three areas of the fine arts, art, drama, and music. Cooperating teachers rated preparation for classroom management slightly less than 4.0 while students and alumni rated their preparation at 4.0. While alumni and cooperating teachers found preparation in history and social science at the 4.0 level in both content knowledge and performance current students felt slightly less prepared. English and language arts were the strongest areas with the area of grammar being perceived as slightly less prepared than written or oral communication and vocabulary.

To assist pre-service teachers in building an understanding of cultural diversity, a pilot experience in a cultural immersion option is available during intersession 2004. Students may enroll in a special section of the required second practicum. The program includes hours in an Illinois school and hours in schools on Andros Island in the Bahamas. The department is also working on some additional study abroad opportunities that will allow pre-service teachers to broaden their horizons

At present, the department is in the midst of a “sea change.” The chair of the past sixteen years retired in 2002 and two key faculty members retired in 2003. A new faculty member and a new chair were hired in 2002 and three new tenure-track faculty members were hired in 2003 with another search for a tenure-track position currently underway. In addition to personnel changes, outreach efforts continue at satellite locations in Danville and a new cohort program was launched in 2002, with classes offered in Kaskaskia Fall 2003. Although the hiring of new personnel was and is needed, the department has not been successful in replacing and retaining individuals in other tenure-track vacancies. Therefore the number of annually contracted faculty and adjunct instructors increased, creating the current almost 50-50 ratio of tenure track to annually contracted faculty. There are currently only five tenured faculty of the eighteen full-time faculty members who began our year. One has been taken for a grant in the Dean’s Office. Another of the faculty is currently on medical leave. One faculty member is submitting a portfolio for tenure this year. There are four other tenure track faculty members.

As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation to meet the needs of children are being explored. In addition, significant recruitment efforts to fill vacancies with excellent minority candidates are an on-going goal. One of the new faculty hired for 2003-2004 is African American. The department also seeks to recruit more minority students. The 2003-2004 credit hour production is at 8764 with the cost per credit hour for the department at \$258.31. Students can complete the degree programs offered by the department in four years, except for the early childhood special education track which takes an additional semester.

The Undergraduate Program

- 1. Enrollments in Elementary Education continue to increase, even after the Early Childhood track became a separate major a few years ago. Based on the job market, staffing levels, and resources available to the department, is the size of the major appropriate? If not, what is an appropriate size and why is it appropriate. How will the department achieve it?***

Enrollments are increasing in the university and in the department. The university has had two of the largest freshmen classes in recent years during the 2003 and 2004 academic years. The draw to the Elementary Education program at Eastern is a significant percentage of both freshman and transfer students. Eastern has been the school of choice for the preparation of teachers throughout much of the state. EIU graduates an average of approximately 300 Elementary Education majors per year. Due to the decision of a sister state to limit the Elementary Education majors at that institution, EIU has received additional transfer students. The retention rate from freshman to sophomore for 2002 was 91% for students indicating they plan to major in elementary education.

The job market remains strong throughout the state and nation, although not always in the hometown of some of our majors. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov, January, 2004) retirements will affect the number of teachers available. Although a slight population decrease is expected in about eight years, enrollments in teacher education remain fairly constant or may slight rise even in the Midwest to meet teacher shortages caused by retirements in some areas. The Illinois State Board of Education Research Division published a document in, stating that “27,000 teachers will be eligible to retire in school year 2003, a 40% increase from school year 2000” (Illinois Education Research, December 2000). Of these the largest group in number are self-contained elementary teachers with the greatest percentage being Title I teachers (20%) and Gifted Teachers (20%). Although EIU does not currently have a gifted track in the undergraduate program, the undergraduate program feeds the Title I Reading Certification program. Further, administrators must have classroom teaching experience before becoming principals and superintendents. Therefore, elementary education is a foundation for other aspects of the profession. Teachers are an export of the state and the nation. Projected figures compiled by the College of Education and Professional Studies support the trend that at least through 2008, significant additional students will choose to major in elementary education (CEPS Projections, January, 2004).

Eastern Illinois University was first a normal school and has maintained a high degree of appreciation for this aspect of higher education history. While broadening the mission to include four other colleges, it is significant to note that the respect for teacher education has been maintained. While historical perspective is beneficial, it does not suffice for current trends and demands. Additional understanding of children and learning is now available. The importance of the early years is well documented. Understanding of the complexity of child development is studied in terms of physical, mental, and socio-

emotional, as well as in the cultural context of the family. Therefore, teacher education is more complex than in the past.

Factors that affect quality teacher education are also factors that affect elementary classrooms. These include class size, resources per pupil, highly qualified teacher educators, positive interactions from teacher to student, and positive leadership.

To determine the appropriate size of a teacher education program is an interesting endeavor. It is linked closely with what the institution believes about the institutional mission. The program can continue to grow and flourish as additional terminally degreed and experienced faculty join the department and if the appropriated funds to support faculty are provided. Another important resource for the program is adequate support through advising. The department employs additional advising staff, with the equivalency of two full-time positions in academic advising realized as of 2003-2004.

The department and university expectation of faculty includes visibility at the local, state, and national level. Several faculty have successfully written grants for both internal and external funding. These provide academic leadership and the funds to help offset expenses. The present number of elementary education majors, approximately 1100, is being well served. To maintain the current positive reputation additional terminally degreed faculty are needed.

The Department vision and goals include the preparation of individuals who can meet the needs of diverse students from and in diverse communities who can contribute positively in their own communities and as they move into ever widening circles of influence. The department continues to nurture and challenge the students who come to EIU to be elementary teachers. These generally are individuals who desire to make a positive difference in the world. The department also continues outreach efforts to underserved areas of the state. At present there are undergraduate cohorts at Danville and Kaskaskia. Conversations are underway with the Olney area for a possible additional site for both graduate and undergraduate needs there. However, without considerably more resources, these activities must remain limited.

Colleges of Education nation-wide tend to be the “bread and butter of the institution, yet the expenditures are less than for majors in other colleges. Enrollment patterns at EIU indicate that when the enrollments in elementary education were limited a few years ago, the total enrollment figures for the institution also diminished. Therefore, maintaining and creating even a more innovative and quality teacher education program in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education benefits the whole university.

To attest to the strength of the program, as noted in the overview of this report, graduates of the program report that 87% find jobs upon graduation (EIU Career Report, 2002).

The Elementary Education program was reaccredited by NCATE along with the College of Education during the 2000 -2001 accrediting report cycle and subsequent visit.

2. *The current staff comprises a 50/50 ratio of tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. What are peer institutions' staffing patterns? What is the department's staffing goal? How does it plan to achieve this goal?*

Tenure track faculty were not replaced with terminally degreed individuals at the rate that retirements and relocations took place during the past eight years. Over time this has somewhat eroded the ability of the department to stay on the cutting edge of research-based, innovative best practice. Further, faculty have had to assume overloads in the past two years due to budget constraints. Peer institutions are facing similar challenges. Some have chosen to “cap” their programs in light of resource restrictions.

The goal of the department is to move to at least a 80% terminally degreed tenure-track faculty in the next three years. It is likely that two – four additional retirements will occur in the next five-seven years and at least one annually contracted member will leave within a year. Support, both financial and in staff development is needed for new faculty members hired to replace other retired faculty or faculty who have relocated. The present search is nearing what we hope is the successful conclusion. While the department is pleased with the faculty hired in the past two years, more are needed.

The department appreciates the support of our dean and our Vice President for Academic Affairs and we will continue to make our needs known to them. Further, program needs are dictating that some creative ways be investigated that include visiting professors.

3. *Documenting the connection between curricula, national standards, and assessment remains a priority in the College of Education and Professional Studies. How is the Department continuing to ensure that the course work and other program requirements support these standards and appropriate assessment?*

The department created a matrix based on standards for Language Arts, Technology and overall teacher education state standards during 2002-2003. The matrix is being used as a reference as faculty meet in job alike work groups this semester. Further, faculty are involved at the state, national, and international levels with professional organizations and committees to maintain and impact this work.

Assessment is an ongoing endeavor. A departmental survey was conducted, Fall 2003, to provide feedback from current junior and senior level students, alumni, and cooperating teachers in the field to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the program. Many of the respondents are actively engaged in alignment of standards and assessment of education.

4. *What unique, noteworthy activity is the department involved in that the IBHE/state of Illinois should be made aware of? (This activity may pertain to either the graduate or undergraduate program or both of them.)*

The department has benefited greatly, as have area schools, with the funding and subsequent opportunities provided by the PT3 grant, which concluded December 2003.

Grants to use these funds to redesign courses, provide hardware, and the appropriate software were written from within the department often with area school partners. This has enabled a greater level of technology infusion.

The department is embarking on two pilot programs: School Based Initiative Program (SCIP) and International/Intercultural Education. The School-based Cohort Initiative Program (SCIP) is an undergraduate program with a local primary school in which a select group of the same 20 students will work in the school over the course of their four-years at EIU. In addition to the work in the school, some additional field trips and study trips to see other schools are integrated in the experience.

The second program is the creation of a study abroad experience that is embedded in our regular curriculum with a portion of the laboratory experience in the schools and communities of Andros Island in the Bahamas. This experience will also have some graduate independent study components. Other international education opportunities are under investigation. There is an independent study option for undergraduate and for graduate students.

5. Major Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Description and assessment of any major changes in the disciplinary context [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field; (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].

- a) Research on learning and brain functions, chemical imbalances and behavior, the move toward inclusive classrooms, societal changes with the increase in fractured families make it necessary to address these issues to a greater extent than even ten years ago. In addition, Federal legislative demands rippling from the NCLB and state standards initiatives have required that additional attention be given to standards and standard alignment.
- b) Student demand – Students continue to seek opportunities to study to be teachers. Even with the required 2.65 GPA, Basic Skills Test, and three other standardized tests required by the state of Illinois, students seek admission to the program at a rate consistent with or in addition to the last eight years.
- c) Implications of the society demands mentioned above, must be addressed along with research based best practice.
- d) EIU was historically a normal school, preparing elementary teachers. That tradition has been and is honored as a cornerstone of the university with total

enrollment closely tied to enrollments in education of which the elementary program is currently the largest.

- e) Other elements appropriate to the discipline in question include the need to engage in and to remain informed about current research and trends such as research on the brain and learning as well as visual and auditory acuity, and changes in demographics.
- f) Other – No additional comment at this time.

5.2 Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.

The departmental survey conducted Fall 2003 with current students, alumni, and cooperating teachers indicated that there is in general feeling that students are well-prepared in all areas of the curriculum and in professional knowledge. Ratings for content knowledge and performance had a mean of 4.0 of 5.0 in almost every category. Perception of slightly less knowledge and application of fine arts was reflected in means that were slightly lower for students, alumni and cooperating teachers. Social studies knowledge was also slightly lower than other curricula areas with a mean of approximately 3.8 as perceived and reported by students. See results in appendix.

5.3 Description and assessment of any major program changes [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].

Assessment and adjustments based on external input, and assessment of students through multiple assessment measures from authentic, project based assessment to the inclusion of standardized assessments such as the Basic Skills test and the other required state assessments continually impact the program.

5.4 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes:

Additional library resources, technology resources from the PT3 Grant have resulted in changes in instructional practices to address more of the learning modalities of students. A departmental retreat Fall, 2003, and departmental meetings focusing on teaching and curricula concerns have helped maintain and move the department forward.

5.5 Description of actions taken as a result of this review, including instructional resource and practices, and curricular changes.

The current departmental survey, the use of the State of Illinois standards matrix to check our curricula goals and outcomes are actions taken as the result of the previous review and as this review was shaped. Curricula discussions are on going. Further, Professional Development Requirements were revised Fall 2003 as a way to further insure progressive readiness for student teaching through participation with children and in professional organizations, and attendance at a professional conference.

6.0 Outcome

6.1 Decision

___ **Program in Good Standing**

___ **Program flagged for Priority Review**

___ **Program Enrollment Suspended**

6.2 Explanation

13.1202 M.S. Ed. in Elementary Education

- 1. Reporting Institution Eastern Illinois University**
- 2. Program Reviewed 13.1202 Master of Science in Education**
- 3. Date: 1-15-04**
- 4. Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues/concerns**

Graduate Program

Overview:

The mission of the Elementary Education General Option/Middle School option is to prepare competent, caring teachers for diverse elementary and middle school children/youth. The newly adopted (Fall 2003) Graduate Mission Statement in its entirety is given in the appendix. The strengths of the program are apparent from the fact that the program was reaccredited with NCATE, and the satisfaction of alumni who are employed at an 87% rate according to a recent Career Survey. A departmental survey of students, cooperating teachers, and alumni indicate that all three groups felt the pre-service teachers were well prepared in all areas of the curriculum with a slight drop in the area of fine arts. Further, a university alumni survey indicates that of the 131 surveys

returned, 118 were employed and 106 were very positive about their attitude toward their majors and 85 felt very well or well prepared while an additional 25 felt they were adequately prepared. Test results are at the 99% for the Illinois Test of Basic Skills and content tests show students are well prepared to meet the certification requirements of the state of Illinois as well as the reciprocal license agreements for other states.

The program has a tradition of excellence in teacher education. Early field experiences and partnerships with area schools provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to link theory with practice. Special initiatives include the assignment of credit units for two faculty members as liaisons with Charleston and Mattoon schools. A program that has resulted from a partnership with the Carl Sandburg Elementary in Charleston, is project WOW. Project WOW enables students to partner with classrooms to create social studies lessons that integrate other areas of the curriculum culminating in multimedia presentations synthesizing the learning experiences of the students. In addition, a School Cohort Initiative Program (SCIP) is a pilot program begun with volunteers of pre-service teachers during their freshman year. As the pre-service teachers work in the elementary classrooms, they begin to build a community of learners of which they remain engaged during their field placements for the duration of their degree program. In service workshops for teachers at Mattoon have highlighted research and best practice. Other outreach includes the Adopt-a-Student volunteer program run through the Reading Center. University students are matched with elementary students for four weeks of tutoring. A program of mini-courses is run by the student organization of the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). Each Spring Semester university students create mini-courses in science, social studies, literacy, and fine arts for students in a local elementary school.

At present, the department is in the midst of a “sea change.” The chair of the past sixteen years retired in 2002 and two key faculty members retired in 2003. A new faculty member and a new chair were hired in 2002 and three new tenure-track faculty members were hired in 2003 with another search for a tenure-track position currently underway. In addition to personnel changes, outreach efforts continue at satellite locations in Danville and a new cohort program was launched in 2002, with classes offered in Kaskaskia Fall 2003. Although the hiring of the new personnel was and is needed the department had not been successful in replacing and retaining individuals in other tenure-track vacancies. Therefore the number of annually contracted faculty and adjunct instructors increased, creating the current almost 50-50 ratio of tenure track to annually contracted faculty. There are currently only five tenured faculty of the eighteen full-time faculty members. One of these is currently on medical leave. One faculty member is submitting a portfolio for tenure this year. There are four other tenure track faculty members, one in the second year and three in their first year of appointment. In addition a faculty member who both taught and served as the Director of the Reading Center is now directing a grant program through the office of the dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies. Another faculty member is serving as interim director of the Reading Center. Also, advising support staff have increased from one twelve-month advisor two twelve month positions as of Fall, 2003. However, as of Spring 2004, one of the full time advisors has become half time for the next eighteen months, as the other half

of the load is “on loan” to another department to enable the faculty member to teach for that department. Therefore, a new half time advisor has been hired to fill the vacancy. In addition, a new departmental secretary was hired January 2004 filling a vacancy left by a secretary who took another position after a brief return from a medical leave.

With the change in faculty, staff, and administration as well as changes in state and national initiatives, program review is on going. The Department completed a curriculum review during the 2003 academic year, to determine that the Illinois Content Standards were covered in the program. Curriculum alignment discussions continue in 2004. The use of PT3 grant money to enhance technology for the elementary program and our school partners was a large thrust of effort and energy for integrating technology tools for teachers. This grant will be completed in May 2004. Technology tools are more plentiful and used more appropriately in pre-service education and in partner classrooms as a result of the opportunities the grant provided. In addition, the departmental survey conducted Fall 2004 shows the program to be strong in the preparation of pre-service teachers in both content knowledge and performance. A mean of at least 4.0 in a scale of 1-5 as assessed by students, alumni, and cooperating teachers was fairly consistent. Areas that were less than 4.0 included all three areas of the fine arts, art, drama, and music. Cooperating teachers rated preparation for classroom management slightly less than 4.0 while students and alumni rated their preparation at 4.0. While alumni and cooperating teachers found preparation in history and social science at the 4.0 level in both content knowledge and performance current students felt slightly less prepared. English and language arts were the strongest areas with the area of grammar being perceived as slightly less prepared than written or oral communication and vocabulary. (See charts in the appendix.)

As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation to meet the needs of children are being explored. In addition, significant recruitment efforts to fill vacancies with excellent minority candidates are an on-going goal. One of the new faculty hired for 2003-2004 is African American.2002. The department also seeks to recruit more minority students. The 2003-2004 credit hour production is at 8764 with the cost per credit hour for the department at \$258.31. There are eighteen full-time faculty members. Students can complete the degree programs offered by the department in four years, except the early childhood special education track takes an additional semester.

To assist pre-service teachers in building an understanding of cultural diversity, a pilot experience in a cultural immersion option is available during intersession 2004. Students may enroll in a special section of the required second practicum. The program includes 25 hours in an Illinois school and 20 hours in schools on Andros Island in the Bahamas. The science methods course will also be offered in the natural laboratory of the island. Students who do not need these courses but want additional experience may sign for independent studies which are either school-based or community-based. Two tenure-track faculty members are teaching these courses. The department is also working on some additional study abroad opportunities that will allow pre-service teachers to broaden their horizons.

1. *Documenting the connection between curricula, national standards, and assessment remains a priority in the College of Education and Professional Studies. How is the department continuing to ensure that coursework and other program requirements support these standards and appropriate assessment?*

The Graduate Program is currently under review by the Departmental Graduate Committee. A new Mission Statement has been created. It is written, framed, and hung in the Departmental Office. The implementation of the mission is ongoing. Curriculum sequence is also being examined. The graduate program has relied on off-campus cohorts as well as on-campus random graduate course selection and attendance for its existence.

Admission standards and outcome expectations are under discussion. With the convening of the graduate committee during 2002-2003, a desire to increase exit standards led to the revamping of the colloquy and an increase in the numbers choosing to take the thesis option. Further revisions are under construction. The graduate program has fluctuated from 68 to approximately 200 graduate students in the last three years. A cohort completed summer 03 causing a decline in active graduate enrollment. A new cohort or possibly two off-campus groups are forming. Core graduate classes are offered on a regular basis with some offered every semester and others on a rotational basis. Additional course offerings are often requested by area schools for staff development and by teachers wanting to recertify or take courses in addition to their masters program.

As of this report, there are only nine terminally degreed faculty plus the chair who qualify for graduate faculty status. Graduate courses typically are smaller, at least closer to the 17/1 ratio the university espouses. Graduate faculty also teach undergraduate courses, as well. Therefore, if these faculty were only teaching graduate courses during semesters that are toward the 200 level, there would be a sufficient number of staff. However, staffing remains a critical issue due to the approximately 1200 undergraduate majors. Several graduate courses have had to be taught using Masters + faculty members. If graduate education is really "higher education" and not "more education" the research-base that terminally degreed personnel bring to their courses is needed.

2. *What unique, noteworthy activity is the department involved in that the IBHE/state of Illinois should be made aware of? (This activity may pertain to either the graduate or undergraduate program or both of them.)*

Internal review is conducted as the program engages in self-assessment. The effectiveness of our program is evidenced as graduate students progress through courses and as they present culminating colloquy projects or thesis papers. Panels of faculty from both within and without the department assess program completers during exit research presentations or thesis option presentations. External review by NCATE is another way the program is assessed.

Providing short-term international education experiences and/or exchanges with educators in very different regions of the USA is a goal of the department. Building bridges of understanding and looking at life through various lenses can help us understand ourselves and relationships with others on the planet.

The Andros Island experience has a track for graduate students to do an independent study that is either school-based or community-based.

5. Major Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Description and assessment of any major changes in the disciplinary context [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field; (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].

The Graduate program is closely linked to the undergraduate program with much of the same faculty teaching a both levels. As noted, the program is under review at this time.

5.2 Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.

Alumni who answered our survey as well as several of the cooperating teachers indicated that our students do well.

5.3 Description and assessment of any major program changes [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].

Additional assessment will come as we analyze comments from Purdue Course evaluations and comments from alumni and cooperating teachers who are often our graduate students well.

5.5 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes

Additional technology has been infused at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Graduate Committee has created a new mission statement. (See appendix.) Additional review of the program from admission to exit is under construction.

6 Outcome

6.1 Decision

___ **Program in Good Standing**

___ **Program flagged for Priority Review**

___ **Program Enrollment Suspended**

6.2 Explanation

13.1203 B.S. Ed. In Middle Level Education

- 1. Reporting Institution Eastern Illinois University**
- 2. Program Reviewed 13.1203 Bachelor of Science in Education**
- 3. Date 1-15-04**
- 4. Responses to Institution-assigned issues/concerns**
- 5. Major Findings and Recommendations**

The state of Illinois has withdrawn its support for this major. Students can get an endorsement at either the undergraduate or graduate level. The program is not offered at this time

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- 5.2 Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.
- 5.3 Description and assessment of any major program changes [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].
- 5.4 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes:
- 5.5 Description of actions taken as a result of this review, including instructional resource and practices, and curricular changes.

6.0 Outcome

6.1 Decision

- Program in Good Standing
- Program flagged for Priority Review
- Program Enrollment Suspended

6.2 Explanation

B.S. in Early Childhood

13.1204 B.S. Ed. In Early Childhood Education

- 1. Reporting Institution Eastern Illinois University**
- 2. Program Reviewed 13.1204 Bachelor of Science in Education**
- 3. Date 1-15-04**
- 3. Responses to Institution-assigned issues/concerns**

Overview

The over view for this program is the same as for the elementary program. The current search is for an Early Childhood educator who can also address early elementary which overlaps early childhood.

The mission of the Early Childhood program along with the Elementary Education General Option/Middle School option is to prepare competent, caring teachers for diverse elementary and middle school children/youth. The strengths of the program are apparent from the fact that the program was reaccredited with NCATE, and the satisfaction of alumni who are employed at an 87% rate according to a recent Career Survey. A departmental survey of students, cooperating teachers, and alumni indicate that all three groups felt the pre-service teachers were well prepared in all areas of the curriculum with a slight drop in the area of fine arts. Further a university alumni survey indicates that of the 131 surveys returned, 118 were employed and 106 were very positive about their attitude toward their majors and 85 felt very well or well prepared while an additional 25 felt they were adequately prepared. Test results are at the 99% for the Illinois Test of Basic Skills and content tests show students are well prepared to meet the certification requirements of the state of Illinois as well as the reciprocal license agreements for other states.

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With the change in faculty, staff, and administration as well as changes in state and national initiatives, program review is on going. The Department completed a curriculum review during the 2003 academic year, to determine that the Illinois Content Standards were covered in the program. Curriculum alignment discussions continue in 2004. The use of PT3 grant money to enhance technology for the elementary program and our school partners was a large thrust of effort and energy for integrating technology tools for teachers. This grant will be completed in May 2004. Technology tools are more plentiful and used more appropriately in pre-service education and in partner classrooms as a result of the opportunities the grant provided. In addition, the departmental survey conducted Fall 2004 shows the program to be strong in the preparation of pre-service teachers in both content knowledge and performance. A mean of at least 4.0 in a scale of 1-5 as assessed by students, alumni, and cooperating teachers was fairly consistent. Areas that were less than 4.0 included all three areas of the fine arts, art, drama, and music. Cooperating teachers rated preparation for classroom management slightly less

than 4.0 while students and alumni rated their preparation at 4.0. While alumni and cooperating teachers found preparation in history and social science at the 4.0 level in both content knowledge and performance current students felt slightly less prepared. English and language arts were the strongest areas with the area of grammar being perceived as slightly less prepared than written or oral communication and vocabulary. (See charts in the appendix.)

As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation to meet the needs of children are being explored. In addition, significant recruitment efforts to fill vacancies with excellent minority candidates is an on-going goal. One of the new faculty hired for 2003-2004 is African American.2002. The department also seeks to recruit more minority students. The 2003-2004 credit hour production is at 8764 with the cost per credit hour for the department at \$258.31. There are eighteen full-time faculty members. Students can complete the degree programs offered by the department in four years, except the early childhood special education track takes an additional semester.

To assist pre-service teachers in building an understanding of cultural diversity, a pilot experience in a cultural immersion option is available during intersession 2004. Students may enroll in a special section of the required second practicum. The program includes 25 hours in an Illinois school and 20 hours in schools on Andros Island in the Bahamas. The science methods course will also be offered in the natural laboratory of the island. Students who do not need these courses but want additional experience may sign for independent studies which are either school-based or community-based. Two tenure-track faculty members are teaching these courses. The department is also working on some additional study abroad opportunities that will allow pre-service teachers to broaden their horizons.

1. Please discuss the professional opportunities for which the B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education prepares its graduates. Does the current curriculum appropriately prepare students for these opportunities? If not, what curricular revisions is the department planning?

The professional opportunities for graduates of the B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education are growing. The collaborative program has two tracks: one with Family and Consumer Sciences and one with Special Education. Both prepare participants for licensure in schools from pre-K through grade three. In addition, quality child care centers need directors and “educarers” who are prepared to meet the needs of the developing child. New federal legislation requires Head Start Directors and Teachers to have additional education. At risk four year old programs are becoming common in schools as are more full-day kindergartens. The primary grades are seen as the special developmental level that they are. Schools that are K-3 need teachers with the Early Childhood degree.

The current curriculum gives the students the information and experience with children to prepare them for the jobs that are currently available and those that will most likely

become more available due to increased knowledge of the importance of these years and societal demands for quality preschools. Curricula revisions are just beginning to be discussed within the department and will be shaped in part by the assessment of students, alumni, and cooperating teacher survey results.

- 2. Documenting the connection between curricula, national standards, and assessment remains a priority in the College of Education and Professional Studies. How is the department continuing to ensure that coursework and other program requirements support these standards and appropriate assessment?*

During 2002-2003 a new full-time, terminally degreed and experienced faculty was member was hired to assist with the early childhood program. The new chair that hired also has a cognate in Early Childhood. However, a key early childhood faculty member also retired at the end of the academic year. A search is currently underway for another early childhood faculty member. Faculty who are current with the research and developments in this field ensure that the coursework and program requirements support these standards and provide multiple ongoing assessments in class and a very successful 99-100% pass rate on required tests.

- 3. What unique, noteworthy activity is the department involved in that the IBHE/state of Illinois should be made aware of?*

In addition to ongoing assessment and accreditation of the program, additional opportunities for students to have an international experience to visit exemplary early childhood research-based programs are under investigation. The early childhood faculty member is going to attend an international conference Spring 2004 to further her first-hand knowledge of the Reggio Emilia programs in Italy with the possibility of providing an international component to one or more of the early childhood courses.

5. Major Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Description and assessment of any major changes in the disciplinary context [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field; (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other].

The program is relatively new, but with the addition of another faculty member in the next year, some program revision will likely take place.

5.2 Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.

Early childhood majors test at the 98-99 percentile on the required standardized tests. The Career Services 2002 Annual Report indicates that

91% of the Early Childhood majors responding to the survey were employed.

5.3 Description and assessment of any major program changes [e.g., (a) in the discipline or field (b) student demand; (c) societal need; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; (f) other]..

A more definitive survey of the early childhood majors is needed.

5.4 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes:

An additional tenure track faculty member was hired in 2002-2003 and one retired. The current chair also hired in 2002-2003 has a cognate in this area. A current search for another individual with expertise in this area is underway.

5.5 Description of actions taken as a result of this review, including instructional resource and practices, and curricular changes.

New faculty hired do bring another aspect to the program.

6. Outcome

6.1 Decision

___ **Program in Good Standing**

___ **Program flagged for Priority Review**

___ **Program Enrollment Suspended**

6.2 Explanation