



Compliance Audit Report

Summer of 2009

Trinity University

Initial Teacher Certification Program

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), "An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff." Per TAC §228.1(c), "All educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title." The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code rules required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

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County/District Number:

Program Specialist, Sandra Jo Nix, conducted a Texas Education Agency Compliance Desk Audit of Trinity University. The focus of the compliance audit was the initial teacher certification program. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

SCOPE OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT:

The scope of the audit was restricted solely to verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227, §228, §229,

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency via Survey Monkey along with requested verifying documents. Because student records contain confidential information and could not be transmitted to TEA, student records were checked by the program using a check list supplied by TEA. In addition, electronic questionnaires developed by TEA were sent to Trinity University stakeholders. Seventy-four (74) stakeholders responded to the questionnaires. Among that number were: Four (4) advisory committee members; twenty-nine (29) student teachers, clinical teachers, interns; no field supervisors; three (3) principals; and twenty-four (24) cooperating teachers/mentors responded. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric aligned with Texas Administrative Code. After the review of the information, the program specialist arranged a telephone debrief to cover the

findings of the audit. The findings were incorporated into the original survey monkey form and sent to the program. This summary report provides the findings and recommendations resulting from the audit.

COMPONENT I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs- Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20

FINDINGS:

Trinity University has a creative and supportive Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee members confirmed through their questionnaire that they felt involved in the decision and policy making of Trinity University educator preparation program. It was noted that the Advisory Committee is aware of challenges of the program and is attempting to address them. It was also noted that the Advisory Committee is made up of members from Trinity University staff and staff from the three schools where it places teaching candidates. No members of the education service center, business or community interests participate. According to the report, the Advisory Committee membership changes annually. However, in the questionnaires from the advisory committee members, some indicated they had served on the Advisory Committee from four to six years. In addition, it was noted in this report that the Advisory Committee only meets once each academic year. This was confirmed in the document review and questionnaires. In light of this, Trinity University is not in compliance with TAC Section 228.20 because it did not meet the requirements of two Advisory Committee meetings per academic year. Agendas and minutes including members attending were available for the one meeting held.

Based on the evidence presented, Trinity University is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10

FINDINGS:

Trinity University has set high standards for its teaching candidates. The University has met and exceeded state requirements for admissions criteria. Trinity University exceeds the minimum grade point standards by requiring a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours. The program requires a score of 1000 on the GRE for post-bac students. In addition, students are required to file an application, submit a resume, complete an interview and dispositions for teaching, pass the PACT, secure pre-admission field placement, complete a transcript review, and submit letters of reference. Trinity University has developed several creative ways to recruit students into their program. According to their report, these recruiting methods are making a difference. The University is in compliance with records management.

Based on the evidence presented, Trinity University is in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.

COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30

FINDINGS:

Trinity University currently offers no online courses. However, they have adopted student outcomes in technology and secured a \$150,000 federal grant to create an Educators' Technology Teaching Lab. Trinity University's five-year teacher preparation program is standards-based and is aligned with state and national standards. There are six strands of study: curriculum and content; planning and pedagogy; teaching; creating and managing a classroom community; professional communication and collaboration; and reflective and professional practice. These strands spiral throughout the curriculum. Course content is defined by the Professional Teaching Standards (PTS) which have been identified by the faculty at Trinity University as essential. During the first four years of the Trinity program, teaching candidates mentor P-12 students, tutor, and participate in limited (supervised) teaching in the content area. Candidates in the fifth year develop and refine their pedagogical content knowledge. Trinity University has adequately incorporated the 17 identified curriculum topics in TAC 228.30 in their curriculum. However, in the mentor teacher questionnaire, it was suggested that more time be provided on classroom management and lesson planning cycle.

In reviewing the Faculty vitas that were submitted, the faculty are well qualified to provide instruction in this program. It was noted that a substantial portion of the faculty were certified Texas Teachers. It was noted in the self-report several times that the "Understanding for Design" for curriculum design was the preferred method of curriculum development. This would indicate that key outcomes would be the defining item in lesson presentation. However, in reviewing the faculty syllabi distributed to the students, no key outcomes for the courses were indicated. In addition, no instructional methodology was mentioned. The best way to teach prospective teachers is to model a variety of instructional methods and strategies for them. In the document review, the course feedback form refers to modeling instructional strategies by the faculty, but it would be hard for the students to identify the strategies unless they were prepared to observe specific ones. Courses EDUC 5350 and 5351 were indicated to provide information and instruction on the TEKS and TAKS. However, in reviewing these course syllabi, there was no consistent inclusion of these in the syllabi.

Based on evidence presented, Trinity University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

COMPONENT IV: Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training (TAC) §228.35

FINDINGS:

Trinity University students document 30 hours of field-based instruction by maintaining a log and by responding to the experience through a written response. In the Mentor Teacher questionnaire, it was suggested that the university increase the number of hours of required field-based experiences prior to internship. The University utilizes three professional development schools that have a diverse population for its field-based observations and internship. The total number of contact hours for the program is 450. The mentors are selected using the criteria of excellent references, disposition, willingness to have an intern, and a minimum of three years of classroom teaching experience. One of the professional development

schools has added the criteria of achieving the top benchmark for TAKS data as a requirement. Mentor teachers are provided scientifically-based training using material from the University of California-Santa Cruz New Teacher Center and Sharon Feimman-Nemser's research on mentors. The University provides continuous support to the mentors through documented mentor meetings and periodic mentor study group meetings. Training is often conducted during the school day and Trinity pays for the substitute teacher. Trinity utilizes its clinical faculty as field supervisors. They usually have a cohort of 8-15 interns. The clinical faculty utilizes conferences, outside training, and review of publications to remain effective in working with the interns. Trinity meets and exceeds the requirements for first contact, formal observations, and length of time of observations. Observations are detailed on a three-part carbon form. As explained in question 128, these are distributed to the teaching candidate, and mentor teacher, with one copy retained by the faculty. It was noted that the program does not provide a copy of the observation form to the Campus Administrator. According to TAC Section 228.35, a copy must be provided to the Campus Administrator. Excellent support is provided to struggling students through the university counseling center, faculty and mentor assistance. Because the program is small, personal attention can easily be provided.

Based on evidence presented, Trinity University is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – Program Delivery and On-Going Support.

COMPONENT V: Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40

FINDINGS:

Trinity University has four critical points benchmarks during the five year program. The benchmarks are mid-point portfolio assessment, fall end-of-semester conference, spring end-of-semester conference, and the exit portfolio evaluations. In addition, a Teacher Work Sample is submitted for evaluation. The Teacher Work Sample collects artifacts of students' learning and their teaching (lesson plans, students' written work, videotape of lesson, notes from their supervisor's observations, etc.) Program evaluation of the program and curriculum are conducted on an ongoing basis and involves a wide range of stakeholders and data. Trinity University was required to complete an Action Plan because of performance by one specific group's passing rate. A comprehensive plan was submitted in a timely manner. In reviewing the pass rates for 2009, it appears that the plan is having the desired effect. Steps are in place to evaluate and determine the intern's readiness to test for certification. A process is in place to address and resolve student concerns.

Based on evidence presented, Trinity University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency compliance audit. If the program is out of compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. General Recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: In order to meet requirements of Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs, the following recommendations must be implemented immediately:

TAC 228.20(b) - Governance of Educator Preparation Programs:

- "The approved educator preparation program shall approve the roles and responsibilities of each member of the advisory committee and shall meet a minimum of twice during each academic year." This must be implemented immediately.

TAC 228.35(f) - Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training:

- "Field Supervisor shall document instructional practices observed, provide written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidate, and provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate's campus administrator." This must be implemented immediately.

OTHER PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

None at this time.