



Compliance Visit Report 2009-2010 University of Houston – Clear Lake

According to 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 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 rules at www.tea.state.tx.us. for details contained in each rule.

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Sandra Nix, Program Specialist, and Dr. Phillip Eaglin, Program Specialist, conducted a Texas Education Agency continuing approval visit on March 9 and 10, 2010. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: November, 2009

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Findings:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) is in compliance with Texas Administration Code §228.20. The advisory committee represents a balanced membership of 23 voting members and 10 non-voting members from school districts, higher education, education service centers, and business and community. Meetings are held four times per year. Meetings were conducted on September 21st and November 2, 2009 and February 1, 2010. An additional advisory committee meeting was held on March 9, 2010 during the UHCL monitoring visit. Agendas, minutes and attendance records were available in the document review as evidence of advisory committee compliance.

Fifteen out of 23 advisory committee members responded to the advisory committee questionnaire. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the responding committee members indicated they had served on the advisory committee for more than five years. The members also indicated that they were well versed in their roles and responsibilities.

Based on responses from the advisory committee members have a direct impact on the program's policies, delivery and evaluation. The members reported that they participated in the design of the IMAX program which allows the students to take all four of their methods courses and Internship I simultaneously. In addition, the advisory committee approves all new professional development schools participating in the UHCL teacher education program. Approval of new certificates, all experimental programs dealing with teaching certification,

development of a standardized lesson plan, refinement of the field-based experiences, raising the THEA reading score for program admission, and reassessment of bylaws were also mentioned as functions of the advisory committee. The high level of advisory committee input and participation was confirmed through a review of the meeting minutes.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM. In light of the findings detailed above, University of Houston – Clear Lake is in compliance.

Commendations:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is commended for exceeding the state required minimum number of advisory committee meetings per year.

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is commended for the high level of involvement of the advisory committee in the teacher preparation program.

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

Findings:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-Admission Requirements.

Per their website, the University of Houston-Clear Lake is an upper-level university that offers junior and senior level courses and graduate studies only. Since two-thirds of their undergraduates come through the local community college systems, the University works closely with the counselors at these institutions to ensure that community college credits will transfer to UHCL. The University has articulation agreements with Alvin Community College, Brazosport College, College of the Mainland, Galveston College, Houston Community College, Kingwood College, Lee College, Montgomery College, Lone Star College, Pearland College Center, San Jacinto College-Central, San Jacinto College-North, San Jacinto College-South, Tomball College, and Wharton County Junior College. One-third of the UHCL undergraduates come from public and private universities.

According to the School of Education's Policy and Procedures Manual, self-report, and website, to be admitted into the Teacher Education Program, the candidate must receive passing scores on all three parts of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) with scores of reading-260, writing- 230, and mathematic-230. A grade of C- or better in a college-level public speaking course or submitting a Speech Competency form signed by a UHCL instructor who has observed the public speaking skills of the student is also required. The candidate must also have completed and received a grade of C- or better on the prerequisite courses: EDUC 4130/5130 Theories of Educational Psychology, SILC 4135/6030, Theories of American Pluralism, INST/TCED 3133 or TCED 6031, Survey of Instructional Technologies. In addition, candidates must have a 2.5 or greater grade point average in the last 60 semester hours, completed 12 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area, completed the non-

credit online “ABC Workshop,” and submit an application for admission to the Teacher Education Program for approval. A written essay is required on the application form and is evaluated by the Advising Staff. An application was available among the document review items. It was noted in the advisory committee questionnaire and minutes of the meetings that they had been involved in approving an increase in the THEA reading score to 260.

All students, regardless of immigration status, who are citizens of countries where English is not the native language must pass all three sections of the TOEFL prior to admission or file for an exemption.

The University of Houston-Clear Lake disseminates information to potential candidates through the advisory committee members, their website, university catalogue, career fairs, school and community college visits, brochures and various media outlets. In addition, they publish an “Educator” Newsletter and conduct open houses. The School of Education also utilizes the services of a marketing firm in order to ensure a consistent look among their various materials. Student recruitment uses the same methods mentioned above as well as through the Success through Education Programs (STEP) which recruits students from six area high schools and four area community colleges. In reviewing samples of recruiting information furnished in the document review, admission requirements are applied consistently to all students who might be interested in the UHCL educator preparation program.

UHCL indicated that no students were admitted under the 10% cohort rule. However, recorded in the minutes, the advisory council approved a motion to allow this rule to be used in extreme situations.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, the University of Houston – Clear Lake is in compliance.

COMPONENT III. CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Findings:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is in compliance with TAC §228.30 Educator Preparation Curriculum: For this monitoring visit, the Generalist EC-6 program was evaluated since 80% of the educator preparation program students are enrolled in this certification program.

The full time faculty consists of 9 professors, 12 associate professors, 17 assistant professors, and 13 lecturers. There are 111 adjunct professors and an administrative staff of 12. While not all full time faculty vitas were available, it was noted in a review of faculty credentials provided that 48 had doctor’s degrees and 8 had Master’s degrees. In addition, thirty-two were certified Texas teachers and 13 were certified teachers from other states.

One hundred percent of the student teachers indicated that they had been provided with a clear and concise course syllabus. In reviewing the available course syllabi, it was found that common components were included such as instructor and general course information, required

texts, course description, course objectives, TExES competencies, instructional methods, academic honesty policy, disability services statement, a disposition statement, and a Unit Assessment Statement. General policies such as dropping of a class, late work, course requirements, and grading systems were also included. Assignments for the duration of the course were available as well as a schedule of activities. In courses requiring field experiences, guidelines were provided.

While coverage of the 17 curriculum topics was confirmed through the self-report, student teacher/intern responses, and through the course correlation required by TEA, coverage of the topics were obvious in courses such as reading methods and special populations but not noted in other syllabi that were reviewed. It is recommended that instructors include the 17 TAC mandated curriculum topics in each syllabus where appropriate to make the curriculum items transparent to the teaching candidates.

In responding to the question of how effective the course content was, the student teachers/interns indicated that instruction in the following areas was extremely effective: theories of how people learn (96.6%); laws and standards regarding special education (97.8%); using TEKS in the content area (93%); how to develop a lesson (93%) and using a variety of instructional strategies (97%). Areas that student teachers/interns would like to see more emphasis placed were: teachers' responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills examination (43%); standards and teaching strategies for gifted and talented students (43%); standards and teaching strategies for students with limited English speaking proficiency (41%); and conducting parent conferences (43%). From their questionnaires, cooperating teachers/mentors would like to see more preparation in the area of classroom management and in the candidate's ability to use district provided materials such as teacher editions. It is recommended that the School of Education seek assistance through presentations from local school district testing coordinators or the education service center on the TAKS administration responsibilities.

A variety of professional development sessions and experiences on a wide variety of topics are presented for the students, student teachers/interns and past graduates of UHCL. It is suggested that the professional development sessions be continued at the high level of commitment which exists.

Preparation for the TExES exam is offered through a one hour credit course which offers 15 hours of test preparation. This course is required of all teaching candidates.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. In light of the findings detailed above, the University of Houston – Clear Lake in compliance.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING

Findings:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

The program is delivered primarily in a face-to-face format in cooperation with the 52 professional development schools (PDS) in 14 school districts. Two requirements necessary to be considered as a PDS site are that there is a diverse student population and there is access to technology for instruction. The University has one Professional Development Laboratory School, McWhirter Elementary, in Clear Creek ISD.

The total program hours for the educator preparation program are 1950 clock hours. There are 1680 clock hours of course work prior to student teaching.

Prior to acceptance into the teacher education program, a student must successfully complete three prerequisite courses. Once the candidate is accepted into the program, they must complete three courses which are primarily methodology courses prior to Internship I. Before Internship I, the candidate will have taught between 30 to 60 practice lessons to various peer groups. One strategy that is commonly used is to divide the class up into three groups. The teaching candidate then presents the lesson three times to each separate group. The candidate quickly becomes aware of audience differences and the need to modify material presentation for the groups.

During Internship I, the students are placed at a PDS site under the guidance of a mentor teacher once a week during the public school semester. The student will complete focused observations of the teaching environment and instruction for approximately 255 clock hours. In addition, the teaching candidate is required to sign-up as a substitute teacher for that district and to fulfill that responsibility as it arises.

The next stage of the teaching candidates development is to participate in Internship II. This is a student teaching assignment at a PDS site for the entire school district semester. The student teacher will have the opportunity to experience the opening or closing processes of the entire school year.

University of Houston-Clear Lake has 14 university/field supervisors and 17 district/field supervisors. The university/field supervisors are hired by the University and the district/field supervisors are employees of the participating PDS school districts. Each individual aforementioned groups is responsible for the student teaching experience including formal observations and feedback. It was noted in reviewing the credentials of the field supervisors that many are also adjunct professors. All field supervisors are certified teachers with many years of public school service. According to the cooperating teachers, principals, and intern/student teachers' questionnaire responses, the field supervisors are visible and extremely helpful.

Training for the field supervisors is provided yearly on topics such as mentoring and cognitive coaching techniques. Copies of the training materials, attendance records, and PowerPoint

materials were available for review. In addition, the field supervisors meet once a month with UHCL faculty and staff to discuss any issues which might have arisen.

Cooperating teacher/mentor training is provided frequently during the year. In some instances, the student teacher and mentor attended the same training sessions on a variety of topics such as mentoring techniques. A portion of the mentor training is provided online and a record of attendance is electronically recorded. Training material, PowerPoint presentations, and attendance records were verified in the document review.

Per responses from the student teachers and cooperating teachers, first contact is made by the field supervisors within the first three weeks. In reviewing the student folders, evidence of three formal observations was present as prescribed by TAC rule §228.35. Formal observations were at least 45 minutes in duration followed by an interactive conference with the candidate. The observation forms found in the student folders were signed by the candidate and the field supervisor. Per the principal and the field supervisor, a copy of the formal observation is provided to the campus administrator. The average field supervisor to student teacher ratio is 1 to 12.

An important component of the UHCL teacher preparation program is the student disposition assessment. This is a set of standards that outline the traits and characteristics necessary to be an effective teacher. If the student is rated a zero twice by any instructor, field supervisor or mentor teacher, the student is summoned by the Associate Dean to discuss this discrepancy. If improvement in student disposition is not noted, the student may be counseled out of the teacher preparation program.

Students who are struggling in the program are required to participate in conferences with the instructors, mentors, field supervisors, principals, or staff to determine remedial services to be offered. There is a wide array of university support services available to students.

Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, University of Houston – Clear Lake is in compliance.

Commendations:

University of Houston-Clear Lake is commended for the extensive, advanced, and ongoing training for its cooperating teachers and field supervisors.

University of Houston-Clear Lake is commended for requiring 255 clock hours of field experiences for their candidates during Internship I.

University of Houston-Clear Lake is commended for requiring a full school district semester of student teaching experience.

COMPONENT V. PROGRAM EVALUATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

Findings:

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

The UHCL maintains an extensive benchmarking system for Internship I and II portion of the program through checklists, unit assessments and observations. However, the benchmarks for the courses leading up to the internship phase of the program need to be established to confirm acquisition of skills by candidates as they grow as teachers. It is recommended that benchmarks of candidates' skills are established for the methodology courses and other required courses prior to the Internship phase of the program. This would provide the University with an ongoing developmental portrait of the teaching candidates.

The candidates' readiness to test for the content area and PPR is determined by the grades achieved on practice tests and the instructor's analysis of the student's performance during the one hour credit test preparation course.

Curriculum evaluation is an ongoing process. UHCL's plan for curriculum review requires all certification programs offered to be evaluated every six years on a rotating basis. Curriculum evaluation includes all stakeholders and pertinent data is gathered from a variety of sources such as ASEP data, and course/instructor evaluations by students. Internship I and II evaluations from teaching candidates provide critical information on the composition and execution of the Internship program. Checklists and survey instruments were verified in the document review.

Overall program evaluation is conducted annually with input from major stakeholders. Data is gathered from ASEP data, student, principals, faculty, field supervisors' surveys, retention data, results of TExES exams, and an outside evaluation service such as NCATE and SACS.

All evaluations involve the Dean of the School of Education, faculty/instructors, advisory committee members, cooperating teachers, and human resource personnel.

Records are kept for five years in a secure environment. Storage of student files is kept in a room where the folders are stored securely behind several lockable doors within the Associate Dean's office. The folders are kept in a rotating file cabinet that is controlled by a key pad that finds the shelf holding the requested folder. There is also a check out system that uses bar coding to record who, when, and where folders are located at any particular time.

The procedures for due process of grievances can be found in the Student Life Handbook. Seven members of the UHCL staff have been authorized to use the ASEP system and training has been received by key members in order to train others.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. In light of the findings detailed above, University of Houston – Clear Lake is in compliance.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A progress report will be required in one year on Compliance Recommendations.

General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Progress Report will be required in one year.

None at this time.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Align terminology with TAC definitions.
- Seek ways to improve benchmarks for students as they progress through their coursework prior to Internship I and II.
- Explore ways to improve mentor/cooperating teacher selection.
- Revise the curriculum syllabi to make instruction of the 17 curriculum topics more transparent for the teaching candidates.
- Secure presentations from local school district testing coordinators or the education service center on TAKS administration responsibilities for teaching candidates.
- Continue involving past graduates of your teacher preparation program in professional development opportunities.