

Technical Assistance Compliance Report 2011-2012

University of Phoenix at San Antonio Initial Educator Preparation Program

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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Accredited-Not Rated

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialist, Vanessa Alba, and Program Manager, Sandra Jo Nix, conducted a Texas Education Agency technical assistance compliance audit on November 30 to December 2, 2011, at the University of Phoenix in San Antonio (UOPX-SA), Texas, in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c). The University of Phoenix at San Antonio's Traditional Educator Preparation Program is the focus of this report.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means for this audit. A self-report submitted by the University of Phoenix to TEA on November 2, 2011, documents, syllabi, and curriculum correlation charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to the University of Phoenix at San Antonio's (UOPX-SA) educator preparation program stakeholders by TEA staff prior to the visit in November, 2011. Four members of the UOPX-SA advisory committee (out of 12 sent) responded to the questionnaires. Of 34 student teachers identified by UOPX to receive questionnaires, nine responded. Of the 12 cooperating teachers, five responded. Two of the seven principals identified by UOPX as having student teachers at their campuses responded. Two out of six UOPX-SA field supervisors responded to the questionnaires. Because of the limited responses, data from the questionnaires is not included in this report. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of data were used to evaluate the evidence reviewed for this audit. The program was evaluated using a rubric correlated to the Texas Administrative Code and by the required status report submitted on November 2, 2011.

Background Information

The University of Phoenix submitted a proposal to offer initial teacher certification in Texas to TEA in September, 2008. This proposal stated that the program would be delivered in San Antonio in a face-to-face format. Marla La Rue, then Dean of the UOPX College of Education, signed assurances on page 5 of the proposal that the University would 1) comply with and implement all rules of the Texas Administrative Code; 2) send appropriate personnel to training for the Texas Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP); 3) use the knowledge and skills identified by the standards and competencies of the State Board for Educator Certification in the curriculum; and 4) conduct on-going program evaluation for improvement.

A pre-approval review was held in San Antonio on January 28, 2009. That meeting was attended by UOPX administrators, including Dr. Sandra McCarty, and Dr. Marla La Rue, and TEA program specialists Dr. Mary S. Black and Mary Gawron. The University of Phoenix at San Antonio was approved to operate as an educator preparation program in Texas on February 6, 2009 by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). Generally a new program would have a one-year post approval review by TEA to ensure all necessary requirements had been implemented smoothly. Because of low enrollment however, this review was postponed until July 19-21, 2011.

The University of Phoenix submitted a self-report on their Texas educator certification program to TEA dated January 11, 2011. According to this report, only face-to-face candidates were enrolled in the San Antonio program. This self-report was also used as the basis for discussion of the five components of educator preparation governed by Texas Administrative Code at the January 25, 2011 interim meeting at TEA in Austin

An interim meeting between UOPX staff and TEA was conducted on January 25, 2011, in Austin. University of Phoenix personnel attending this meeting included Dr. Michael Phillips, Regional Director for the San Antonio office; Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell, Campus College Chair, College of Education, San Antonio; Dr. Deborah Cross, Associate Director of Academic Affairs; Dr. Jackie Mangiere, then College of Education Regional Assistant Dean; and Dr. Sandra McCarty, also Regional Assistant Dean, College of Education. Vanessa Alba and Sandra Nix, TEA Program Specialists. Dr. Janice Lopez, then TEA Director of Educator Standards and Tabita Gutierrez, then TEA Director of Certification, also stepped in to welcome them and answer any questions. Each representative from the University of Phoenix received a copy of the TEA "Rubric for Programs with Online/Hybrid Programs" and a copy of the "Initial Certification Audit Rubric" at that time.

A post-approval compliance audit was held on July 19-21, 2011, in San Antonio, Texas. At that time, the University of Phoenix was found to be out of compliance in Components 1: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs (TAC §228.20), Component 2: Admission Criteria (TAC §227), Component 3: Curriculum (TAC §228.30); Component 4: Program Delivery and On-Going Support (TAC §228.35), and Component 5: Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement (TAC §228.40). In light of the results of this post-approval visit, a Compliance Status Report was required and a technical assistance

visit was deemed necessary. The Compliance Status Report was submitted prior to the due date of December 2, 2011.

November 30, 2011 to December 2, 2011 Technical Assistance Compliance Audit

Opening and Closing Sessions:

The opening session of the TEA technical assistance compliance audit in San Antonio on December 1, 2011, was attended by 15 people, including the following administrators from the University of Phoenix: Dr. Sandra McCarty, Regional Associate Dean, College of Education; Dr. Ashley Norris, Regional Assistant Dean; Jayme Cross, Credentialing Analyst; Dr. Charity Jennings, College Campus Chair for Online; Becky Lodewyck, Associate Dean; Dr. Paul Cooper, San Antonio Campus Director of Operations; Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell, Campus College Chair, Dr. Jeanie Murphy, Director of Academic Affairs; Dr. Kathy Cook, Director of Curriculum/Advanced Programs; Ashley Bartley, Program Design Manager, Dr. Michael Phillips, Regional Director of Academic Affairs; Dr. Melanie Behunin, Regional Director of Regulatory Programs; Dr. Marla Kelsey, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs; and Dr. Wally Hedgecock, Vice-President and Director of the University of Phoenix San Antonio Campus.

During the opening session on December 1st, the University of Phoenix staff provided a demonstration of the learning platform, of the technology platform, and of student record keeping in TaskStream. The TEA program specialist explained since this visit was necessitated by the results of the July post-approval visit, the focus of the audit would be on the items that were found to be out-of-compliance and the remediated actions taken by the University of Phoenix.

The closing session for the audit was held on December 2, 2011. The following University of Phoenix staff attended: Dr. Mike Phillips, Dr. Marla Kelsey, Dr. Melanie Behunin, Dr. Sharon M. Chadwell, Dr. Ashley Norris, Dr. Becky Lodewyck, Dr. Paul Cooper, Dr. Jayme Cross, Dr. Charity Jennings, Dr. Meredith Curley, Dr. Jeanie Murphy, Ashley Bartley, Dr. Sandra McCarthy and Dr. Kathy Cook. TEA program specialists reviewed the compliance audit rubrics and provided recommendations for improvement.

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

Findings:

During the July post approval audit, because of: 1) lack of evidence that the advisory committee understood their roles and duties; 2) lack of evidence that the advisory committee discussed or approved field-based experience; and 3) insufficient support for the teacher education program by the University as demonstrated by inadequate computer infrastructure, the University of Phoenix at San Antonio was deemed out of compliance with TAC §228.20.

During this technical assistance visit, it was verified that the University of Phoenix had conducted two additional advisory committee meetings. The advisory committee meeting held on October 5, 2011, was via teleconference. The advisory committee was introduced and their roles on the committee were explained. Items discussed during this meeting were admission criteria, curriculum, program completion and institutional recommendations, assessment and evaluation. Advisory committee training was provided to all members. In addition the Educational Advisory Committee By-Laws were presented. Another advisory committee meeting was held on November 10, 2011. A list of advisory committee members present and discussion of topics were included in the minutes. Topics covered were an update on state and national accreditation efforts, program and curriculum evaluation, review of the principal preparation program operations, review of the initial educator preparation program operations, candidate mastery of content, input on field-based experiences and field supervision for this academic year and voting. The University of Phoenix – San Antonio has met the requirements of TAC §228.20(b) in providing advisory committee training and including them in program design, delivery and evaluation.

The University of Phoenix has provided evidence of program support in the last ninety days in the form of manpower and computer infrastructure. Numerous man hours are evident in the realignment of the curriculum to Texas standards, in the implementation of the TaskStream system, and development and piloting of the new learning platform. All of these systems were demonstrated during the opening session. The University of Phoenix – San Antonio has met the requirements of TAC §228.20(c) in providing adequate computer infrastructure support.

Based on the evidence presented above, University of Phoenix at San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

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

Findings:

During the July, 2011, post approval visit, the University of Phoenix at San Antonio was found to be out of compliance with TAC §227.10 because of: 1) lack of an admission's interview; 2) lack of any other admission's screening instrument for teacher certification; 3) lack of verifiability of screening for 24 semester hours of undergraduate work in the desired teaching area with 12 being upper division; 4) incorrect record keeping for admission to the Texas teacher certification program; 5) lack of a written policy concerning out-of-state/out-of-country admissions to the Texas program; and 6) lack of verifiable compliance with the 10% rule for low GPAs.

During the November 2011 technical assistance visit, concerning issue one and two, the program indicated that they were currently not admitting students into the teacher preparation

program. Pending the results of the technical visit, the program plans to evaluate the possibility of admitting candidates into the program on January 1, 2012, with classes to start in March. The required admission interview will be conducted in the Level I candidacy introductory course MTE 508 as part of the candidate presentation evaluated with a rubric which is also considered a screening filter. At the end of the presentation, standard questions will be asked of each candidate and scored using a rubric. The presentation and interview will be conducted via a Web 2.0 presentation on a split screen.

Concerning issue three, documents found during the candidate folder review indicated that the program has implemented a process for evaluating a candidate's transcript identifying and verifying the minimum of 12 hours and grade point average in a content area as well as evaluating the 24/12 requirement.

Concerning issue four, the review of the candidate folders indicated that all necessary documentation was present including a transcript, the THEA results (a requirement of the University), a transcript evaluation identifying program hours, GPA overall and in each individual content area, 30 clock-hours of field-based experience documentation, student teacher placement information, student teaching observations, and a signed ethics acknowledgement. While the candidate folders were presented in paper format, the University is transitioning to TaskStream where all records for a candidate with the exception of the observation information, will be housed. A demonstration of the TaskStream recording keeping system was provided during the technical visit.

Concerning issue five, The University has instituted a policy for out-of-country applicants and the program has also developed a policy where no candidate will be admitted into the teacher preparation program with a grade point average below 2.5 overall.

Based on the evidence presented above, University of Phoenix at San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - Admission Criteria

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

Findings:

During the July 2011 post-approval compliance audit, University of Phoenix was out of compliance because the curriculum did not reflect Texas standards, competencies, knowledge and skills in the curricula for all initial certification candidates. This included the testing framework standards for each certificate area and all 17 mandated topics prescribed in TAC §228.30.

During the technical assistance visit in November 2011, curriculum for Math 4-8, Math 8-12, Science 4-8 , Science 8-12, and Special Education was the focus. University of Phoenix at San Antonio submitted alignment charts correlating these certification areas to Texas standards for

educator certification, domains, and competencies and the 17 mandated curriculum topics. The Standards Correlation Charts for the Math 4-8, Math 8-12, and Special Education certificates have all standards correlated with UOPX courses, including standards that refer to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The Curriculum Correlation Chart for the 17 curriculum topics (TAC §228.30) for all certification fields also show all topics correlated with UOPX education courses.

In addition, during the technical assistance visit, a review of course syllabi for each of the certification fields revealed that Texas standards, domains, and competencies, as well as specific identification of the mandated 17 topics, were present in each syllabus. Dr. Charity Jennings, UOPX College Campus Chair and TEA staff reviewed curriculum for the initial teacher certification using the required sequence of courses for each certification area, syllabi, and correlation charts.

TEA staff requested online access to curriculum during the technical assistance visit. A University of Phoenix staff member provided assistance in viewing the learning platform showing Texas modifications. In review of the online presentation of the curriculum, it was found that a uniform platform is used to deliver the coursework. However, it must be noted that during the visit, the next iteration of the platform was demonstrated. Among other improvements, various methods of gathering real-time assessment data on the candidates were previewed. The new learning platform is currently being tested in two online courses and, based on refinement, will be activated as Texas candidates matriculate through the courses.

The candidate is provided an on-line course organizer for the entire course. The organizer explains readings, activities, discussion questions and a list of required supplemental videos for viewing in a week by week format. Texas standards, competencies and domains were evident as well as lesson planning including the TEKS and discussion questions pertinent to educational issues in Texas. Instruction is provided by Texas certified educators who are appropriately matched with selected courses. Instructor job descriptions and specific vitas of current instructors were reviewed and their credentials confirmed as appropriate for their teaching assignments.

Concerning issue two, six hours of test preparation is provided outside of the 300 clock-hours required by the program. This is completed in the form of individual on-line modules for the Generalist 4-8, Math 4-8, Math 8-12, Science 4-8, Science 8-12, Special Education EC-12, and the PPR EC-12. The on-line modules include two workshops that address the sample test results in each content area, readings, on-line discussion questions, and group work. The activities focus on identifying skills, concepts and vocabulary associated with each domain, identifying test-taking strategies, analyzing stress factors and methods of overcoming stress associated with testing, and determining personal strengths and weaknesses in all domains.

Based on the evidence presented, University of Phoenix at San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30– EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

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

Findings:

Issues of non-compliance at the July post-approval visit were: 1) the format of program delivery; 2) training for cooperative teachers; 3) training for the field supervisors; 4) three formal observations; 5) duration of the formal observations; 6) scheduling of student teacher contact and evaluations; 7) delivery of candidate's formal observation to the campus administrator; and 8) documentation of informal coaching or mentoring by the field supervisor.

Concerning issue one, the University of Phoenix at San Antonio's program is delivered in both a face-to-face and online format. Face-to-face classes are held at the University of Phoenix facility in San Antonio, Texas. In addition, online courses are available for those candidates who find it more convenient or where the face-to-face class size is too small to be cost effective. The online courses follow recognized standards for such courses from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL).

Concerning issue two and three, TAC §228.35 (e) requires that the educator preparation program train the cooperating teacher or document that such training was provided by the school district. At the November visit, a handbook was presented and reviewed that was created for the candidate, cooperating teacher, and field supervisor. Also, evidence of a previous workshop provided to the field supervisors was available for review. Since, there are no students currently in the student teaching portion of the program, there are no active cooperating teachers or field supervisors.

Concerning issues five, six, seven, and eight, records for past and current candidates were available to TEA during the technical assistance visit. It was noted that there were three student files reviewed who had completed student teaching on November 11, 2011. TAC §228.35 (f) requires three formal observations of the student teacher by the field supervisor. Observation records for these students were reviewed and observations were confirmed by an online acknowledgement by the candidate, by signature of the field supervisor, field supervisor log of conferencing, and by the signature of the campus administrator of delivery of observation information. From the evidence presented, it appears that current student teachers in the UOPX-SA program are receiving three formal observations by the field supervisor as required by rule and two observations by the cooperating teacher. A record of the start date of the student teaching assignment was found in the candidates' files and a record of first contact was presented in the form of a document provided by the University. Based on the field supervisor's log, there is a start and stop time noted for each observation reflecting evidence that each observation was a minimum of 45 minutes in duration as required by TAC §228.35(f). In addition, evidence that the first observation was completed during the first six weeks of a candidate's student teaching assignment [TAC §228.35 (f)(2)] was evident by dates on the

supervisor's log. Evidence of informal observations or coaching [TAC §228.35(f)] was also provided by dates on the field supervisor's log. The campus principal verified by signature on a form found in the candidate's file that written feedback of the candidate's progress was provided [TAC §228.35(f)].

Based on the evidence presented, University of Phoenix at San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING

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

Findings:

Component V areas of non-compliance found during the July visit included: 1) determining the candidate's readiness to test; 2) a comprehensive plan for curriculum review and program effectiveness.

In the November technical visit, it was verified that UOPX has determined criteria for identifying a candidate's readiness for certification testing which was issue one. The University offers numerous benchmarks for candidates as they progress through their program. Once the candidate is formally admitted into the teacher education program, they are required to complete benchmark assessments. These are evaluated in TaskStream by faculty members. Candidates must pass each course and benchmark assessment to progress toward certification testing. In addition, the candidate must provide evidence of six hours of test preparation outside of the required coursework. The University verifies that the candidate has completed all program requirements before granting the candidate permission to take the state examinations.

In addressing the second issue, the University presented several documents related to curriculum evaluation and program effectiveness. The University gathers data from alumni, employers, and faculty council members among other sources. The University compiles an annual academic report among a variety of other reports. In addition, documentation was presented of a College of Education Five Year Assessment Plan and a University of Phoenix Conceptual Framework for evaluation.

Based on the evidence presented, University of Phoenix at San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Post-Approval Compliance Audit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty days on compliance recommendations.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

All non-compliance issues have been resolved.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary. General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

- Ensure that the one person appointed director of the Texas teacher preparation program participates in all TEA training offered educator preparation programs in the state, such as the annual Deans and Directors Meeting, scheduled training webinars and hands-on training;
- Ensure that the director of the San Antonio program participates in the Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE), and the certification officer participates in the Texas Association for Certification Officers (TACO);
- Align program terminology with Texas Administrative Code definitions in order to avoid confusion in Texas;
- Enter all admitted candidates into the ASEP finisher list as “other enrolled”, “all but clinical”, or “finisher. This will provide an updated list of who is enrolled in the University of Phoenix Texas Program and in what certification area;
- Initiate an efficient way to document the 30 clock-hours of field-based experience and insist that candidates complete the reflections required in the documentation;
- Formulate a policy to avoid conflict of interest regarding the field supervisors who are hired by University of Phoenix at San Antonio and who are also under contract to a school district; and
- Prohibit field supervisors from supervising a candidate that is working in the school district where they are contracted.