



Compliance Audit Report 2009-2010 Abilene Christian University

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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Texas Education Agency (TEA) program specialists, Corrina Noriega and Mary Black, conducted a compliance audit on October 26-27, 2009. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: September 24, 2009

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code rules governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of documents, syllabi, and curriculum correlation charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition electronic surveys were sent to Abilene Christian University participants by TEA. A total of 103 responses to the surveys were received by TEA, including fourteen from interns/student teachers, eight from field supervisors, twenty-one from school principals, forty-one from campus mentors/cooperating teachers, and six from advisory committee members. A self-report was submitted to TEA. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence.

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

Findings:

Abilene Christian University is in compliance with TAC 228.20- Governance of Educator Preparation Programs. They meet or exceed all state requirements for Advisory Committee membership and responsibilities. They are members of the Big Country Teacher Center, a collaboration of area universities and public schools, which sets policy for student teaching and field experience. They also have a separate Visiting Committee which reviews curriculum and evaluates the program on a regular basis. All 21 campus principals returning surveys to TEA reported excellent relationships with ACU.

Based on the evidence presented above, Abilene Christian University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

Commendations:

1) Two-tiered advisory committee system with Big Country Teacher Center and ACU Visiting Committee 2) Pursuing accreditation through TEAC this coming year. 3) Strong partnerships with area schools.

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

Findings:

Abilene Christian University (ACU) is in compliance with TAC 227.10-Admission Criteria. ACU has higher admission requirements than mandated by the state. Taking the THEA is a required activity in ED 211, a required prerequisite for admission to the educator preparation program. The THEA passing standard is 240, higher than the state mandate, and a limited number of attempts is allowed. In addition, Abilene Christian University requires a 2.7 GPA for admission, which will rise to 2.75 in 2010. Students must pass ED 211 with a C or better, perform adequately on a writing sample assessment, and receive an adequate rating on the first Dispositions Assessment in order to be admitted to the program. Signed applications to the program were found in each of 20 randomly-selected student folders.

Based on the evidence presented above, Abilene Christian University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10 – Admission Criteria.

Commendations:

1) Admission requirements above state mandate reflect commitment to increased rigor. 2) GPA of 2.7 required for admission to program, which will rise to 2.75 in 2010. THEA writing section requires passing with a 240. 3) The design of Ed 211 which includes early field experiences, additional professional development, and the Dispositions Assessment.

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

Findings:

Abilene Christian University (ACU) is in compliance with TAC 228.30--Curriculum for Educator Preparation Programs. Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) topics are embedded in courses throughout the curriculum, as shown on an extensive chart correlating each class to individual PPR topics. A review of all syllabi revealed that each lists the mission, goals, standards, competencies, and domains of each course. The curriculum is well crafted to prepare candidates to pass TExES exams and become teacher leaders. The 14 student teacher surveys received by TEA indicate that students understand the structure and purpose of the curriculum. Technology is highly integrated into coursework. Students gain experience with various types of technology, and cooperating teachers indicated in the 41 surveys received by TEA that they were very satisfied with the level of technology training ACU student teachers demonstrated. A new program on campus gives an iphone to each freshman. Students are using iphone applications in many classes as part of their assigned coursework. In addition, ACU has created its own university iphone application, which all students and faculty use. All Generalist EC-6 candidates at ACU are also prepared to take the ESL Supplemental exam. Students also have the opportunity to take classes and teach in an English-speaking school in Uruguay or China. An initiative offering these similar opportunities in Africa will be available soon. Students taking these study-abroad courses gain multicultural competence as well as additional pre-service teaching experience. Many course assessments use faculty-constructed rubrics for grading. In addition the faculty created a rubric for Teacher Candidate Dispositions which scores effective communication, reflective practice, professionalism, emotional maturity, and integrity on a developmental and on-going basis throughout the student's years in the educator preparation program. Failure to demonstrate proficiency in an area of the integrity category may result in dismissal from the program.

Based on the evidence presented above, Abilene Christian University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Commendations:

1) Excellent syllabus design used by all faculty that includes mission, goals, standards, competencies, and domains for each class. 2) Opportunities for multicultural experiences abroad through coursework. 3) Rubrics created by the faculty for Teacher Disposition and many other areas of assessment. 4) Excellent integration of technology into coursework and teaching

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

Findings:

Abilene Christian University is in compliance with TAC 228.35-- Preparation Program Coursework and Training. Students must complete field experiences prior to student teaching ranging from 70 hours for EC-12 certifications to 157 hours for Generalist EC-6 candidates, much higher than the state mandated 30 hours. No professional development hours by a school or district are counted towards the required coursework hours. Professional development points are required to be earned by students, however, for attending workshops, lectures, etc. on education topics from outside agencies or other areas of the university. These points are embedded in coursework so they can be easily monitored. Field Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers are all trained in various ways by the university, and have many years of teaching experience. Thirty-nine per cent (39%) of cooperating teachers revealed in the 41 surveys returned to TEA that they have over 21 years teaching experience. Another 22% indicated they had from 16-20 years experience. In addition the August Experience requires student teachers to start school earlier than other ACU students in order to participate in professional development at the school where they will student teach and complete a variety of reflection assignments for the university.

The Summer Institute for Beginning Teachers is three-days of professional development and mentoring for ACU alumni teachers, which started in 2007. The university pays all expenses for participants. Alumni teachers return to campus each summer for the first five years of their teaching careers to refresh and enhance pedagogical skills. Finally, the university gives course release time to education faculty to conduct research, teach field-based classes, and mentor classroom teachers. ACU supports its novice teachers in many ways that build teaching strength and resilience. The university overall has targeted the College of Education for funding, which allows for outstanding training and induction into the teaching profession

Based on the evidence presented above, Abilene Christian University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training

Commendations:

1) Ongoing training and support in the truest sense--The Summer Institute for Beginning Teachers, and the August Experience prior to student teaching. 2) Course release time for faculty to be in the public schools teaching, mentoring, consulting. 3) Multiple, diverse, structured field experiences throughout the university experience. 4) Professional Development points earned in various classes for attending outside events. 5) Structured induction period for new teachers. 6) University support for the College of Education and the profession of teaching in general.

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

Findings:

Abilene Christian University is in compliance with TAC 228.40--Program Evaluation. The curriculum and overall program are evaluated regularly by both the Big Country Teacher Center and the Visiting Committee using various types of data. Program revisions are based on these assessments. The program is applying for accreditation from TEAC next year, in addition to SACS accreditation currently held. Students are continually assessed for fitness to teach and progress through the program. The Teacher Candidate Dispositions assessment and rubric was created by the faculty to evaluate students as they develop in the program.

Based on the evidence presented above, Abilene Christian University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency 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.

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.

Abilene Christian University is in compliance with all sections of Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- We encourage ACU's integration of technology, multicultural efforts, and overall support for education and teacher training.

Reformatted from the Survey Monkey report on 1/17/2013 in order to post on Consumer Information.