

Compliance Report for Monitoring Visits 2009-2010 University of the Incarnate Word Teacher Preparation Program

Summary

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A continuing approval visit was conducted on January 27-29, 2010 by Texas Education Agency Program Specialist, Dr. Phillip Eaglin, and Manager, Mr. David Carmody.

Self-Report submitted: January 4, 2010

The following is an summary of the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

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

Findings:

The University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance with TAC §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

The University conducts two Advisory Committee meetings per academic year. An Advisory Committee meeting was held on November 4, 2009. The spring 2010 Advisory Committee meeting is being scheduled at this time for May 2010. Agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets were available to substantiate that the Advisory Committee meetings were held in November. The current Advisory Committee consists of twenty-two (22) members from local school districts, education service centers, higher education, and community/business interests. Evidence exists that the Advisory Committee is involved in program policy decisions, program design, and long-term planning. For example, the Advisory Committee recommended and provided feedback on a graduate degree in Teacher Leadership that would support teachers seeking a leadership role in districts.

The self-report indicated that Advisory Committee members do not participate in the analysis of program performance, improvement, and field based experiences. This was supported by the self-report responses to questions 152 and 156. However, in light of clarification of the self-report and Advisory Committee meeting minutes provided during the visit, Advisory Committee members have been involved in providing feedback on the program's strategic plans and on identifying and securing field-based experiences based on staff presentations of data regarding availability of schools.

Fifty percent (50%) of Advisory Committee members responded on their survey that they do not evaluate data and plan for the implementation of an improvement plan. Since the membership of the Advisory Committee may not be familiar with their roles in the analysis of program planning, evaluation, and design, it is recommended that a handbook be developed and yearly training be provided for the members as to their roles and responsibilities as cited in TAC rule. It is also recommended that the minutes of the Advisory Committee reflect the participation of members in the analysis of program design, evaluation, performance, improvement, and field-based experiences. Records of the yearly committee training should be retained in the Advisory Committee records for future compliance audits. Committee members should be provided with state and federal reports so that overall program evaluation can be conducted. Curriculum structures should be discussed with members for the purpose of determining a better fit with the needs and requirements in the field. It is also strongly recommended that committee members receive training regarding the new Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229 so that parameters of recommendations can be clear and measurable.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM. In light of the findings detailed above, the University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance.

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

Findings:

The University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance with TAC §227.10 – Admission Criteria. The University requires a signed application and a 2.75 minimum cumulative GPA or on the last 60 semester hours of coursework. In addition, the University requires the minimum state mandated score on the TASP/THEA and the Nelson Denny Reading Comprehension Test to determine basic skill proficiency prior to admission. The TOEFL is used to determine English proficiency for non-native English speakers. Applicants participate in an admission interview conducted by a panel as well as submit a writing sample for which a scoring rubric is used. Two letters of recommendation are also required. A review of the student folders confirmed admission criteria.

In the document review, it was discovered that recruitment for the program is conducted through Advisory Committee members, the website, and catalog, brochure, school and community college visits, media outlets (newspaper, radio, TV, billboards) and by word-of-mouth.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, the University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance.

Commendations:

The University of the Incarnate Word is commended for requiring higher standards than state required on grade point average

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

Findings:

The University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance with TAC § 228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum. The faculty consists of 24 instructors and five (5) field supervisors. Seven faculty members have PhDs, five have EdDs, and 18 have Master degrees. Almost all are Texas certified and have many years of experience in the public school environment.

The University recently added a new course, Culturally Responsive Teaching, to assist teachers in understanding students' backgrounds, cultural perspectives, and individual needs to increase motivation and optimize learning, especially for English Language Learners. Candidates are often asked to reflect on artifacts/assignments from courses and participate in coursework on implementing summative and formative evaluation and various assessment strategies.

Documentation supporting the instruction of the 17 mandated curriculum topics was present. The self-report indicated that all candidates are offered instruction in reading across the content areas with a specific reading course provided for elementary candidates.

It is recommended that opportunities for micro-practice of teaching subject content be embedded into program courses for critique by other teacher candidates and faculty. Explore the possibility of videotaping the micro-practice lessons so that candidates may critique themselves and reflect on changes and growth in their teaching performance over time.

It is recommended that technology instruction be reviewed as to placement in the instructional continuum and a needs assessment be conducted early in the program to determine which students may need more intensive preparation in integrating instructional technology. The Star Chart, which can be found on the Texas Education Agency website, would be a useful tool in identifying the technology competency of each candidate and the campus on which they are working.

The program clearly specifies where the six hours of test preparations are embedded. A clicker response system is used in the review sessions to collect and provide timely evaluation and feedback on knowledge of the PPR competencies.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. In light of the findings detailed above, the University of the Incarnate Word is 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 the Incarnate Word is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

The program reported 400 clock hours for field-based experiences for elementary candidates in both urban and suburban settings, as well as in partnership with private schools. Coursework throughout the program requires field experiences; Eighty-five percent (85%) of all education courses have a field experience requirement. Secondary/all-level candidates complete a minimum of 60 hours of field experience prior to student teaching.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the field supervisors and 71% of the cooperating teachers reported that they conference together to help the student teacher's performance. The field supervisors are all Texas certified. The field supervisors' questionnaire reflected that they were provided training and a Student Teaching Handbook from the University which outlines their responsibilities in detail.

The field supervisors conducted a minimum of three formal observations of more than 45 minutes in duration with the first observation conducted within the first six weeks of placement. An interactive feedback session was held after each observation to provide the candidate validation of teaching strengths and suggest ways to improve weaknesses. The self-report stated that a copy of the formal observation was provided to the campus administrator. However, in the field supervisor questionnaire, 75% of the field supervisors reported that they do not supply this information to the campus administrator. Sixty-six point seven percent (66.7%) of the school principals indicated in their survey that the field supervisor has not shared written or verbal feedback about the student teacher with them. Incarnate Word does provide observation forms at the end of the spring and fall semesters. However, after the field supervisor observes and provides feedback to the student teacher, a completed formal observation form needs to be provided to the administrator.

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

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

Findings:

The University of the Incarnate Word is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

The program's curriculum design and delivery is evaluated based on performance data once every 12 months. ASEP scores have remained relatively the same for the past three years with passing rates between 88% for initial rates and 100% for final rates.

The syllabi mentioned the numeric grading system along with performance assessments being utilized. However, no developmental benchmarks were available that measure student's professional growth within and across courses at specific intervals. It is recommended that teaching benchmarks and performance assessments for candidates be developed. It is possible that indicators contained in the PDAS and/or PPR competencies be the nucleus for the development of core knowledge for the teaching and performance assessments benchmarks.

Per TAC Rule §228.20 (b), it is recommended that Advisory Committee members be more involved in the evaluation of the program. Committee members can evaluate and provide feedback based on the distribution of ASEP data, qualitative evaluations from candidates, campus administrators, faculty personnel, mentors, field supervisors, program staff, and student retention information.

Student records are maintained in paper format in a safe and secure environment for five years as mandated by rule.

Student grievance procedures are outlined in the University catalogue.

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

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency's Continuing Approval Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and 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. No progress report is required.

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

Provide a copy of the formal observation form to the campus administrator as required by TAC §228.35(f) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support. Actions to correct this must be implemented immediately.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop a handbook which outlines the full roles and responsibilities of Advisory Committee members;
- Conduct yearly training for Advisory Committee members;

- Provide students with opportunities to practice their teaching and incorporating technology into their lesson plans prior to student teaching;
- Explore means of videotaping students presenting micro lessons for feedback from faculty and other teaching candidates;
- Improve the developmental benchmark process within and across courses by developing benchmark statements aligned to the PPR skills that will be measured at regular intervals throughout the program;
- Develop aligned assessments of candidates teaching performance and analytic rubrics that provide feedback on strengths and indicate areas for growth;
- Increase communication with Advisory Committee members regarding how their feedback impacts and benefits the program design, evaluation, performance, improvement, and field-based experiences;
- Improve the involvement of the Advisory Committee in the evaluation of the program.