

# Compliance Report for Monitoring Visit 2009-2010 University of Houston-Downtown

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](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details contained in each rule.

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TEA Identification Number: 101512

A continuing approval visit was conducted by Texas Education Agency Program Specialists Sandra Jo Nix and Annabel Pena on February 2 and 3, 2010. The following is a summary of their findings.

Date Self-Report Submitted: December 17, 2009

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

### **Findings:**

The University of Houston - Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is in compliance with (TAC) §228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS. The Advisory Committee is composed of forty-four (44) members and represents a balanced membership from school districts, business and community, the regional education service center, and members of the University of Houston-Downtown faculty and staff. Ninety percent (90%) of the advisory committee members responding to the questionnaire indicated that they had served on the committee for more than one year. The advisory committee operates under bylaws which provides for eligibility of membership, term of membership, voting, regular meetings, quorum, and duties and responsibilities. In addition, the bylaws specify the composition of the executive committee, powers and duties, and a schedule of executive committee meetings. Provisions for changes to the bylaws are included.

According to the document review, advisory committee and program staff questionnaire, it was verified that the advisory committee meets at least twice each academic year. It was indicated in the self-report that the committee met in November electronically. However, in the document review, no agenda, attendance records, or minutes of the meeting were presented. However, email notifications of date and time were provided. The meeting scheduled for early January has been postponed until February. The last advisory committee meeting for this academic year is planned for May. It is strongly suggested that agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes to reflect the advisory committee's involvement in design, delivery, policy decisions, and program evaluations be maintained and archived for future audits.

The self-report indicated that the advisory committee members did not participate in program evaluation. However, seventy-five percent (75%) of the advisory committee members responding indicated that they participated in program evaluation once every 12 months and twenty-five percent (25%) indicated that they participated in evaluation activities more than once every 12 months.

It was noted that advisory committee training was not conducted. While not mandated by rule, it is recommended that advisory committee training be provided at least once every academic year in order to keep all members aware of their roles, responsibilities, and the importance of their participation. Since committee membership tends to be somewhat fluid, a handbook would also be beneficial.

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

**Commendations:**

The University of Houston-Downtown's, Department of Urban Education's Advisory Committee is commended for establishing bylaws and for the election of officers.

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

**Findings:**

The University of Houston-Downtown is in compliance with (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. The self-report and the University of Houston-Downtown website indicated that a candidate must have a minimum 2.5 overall grade point average, 30 semester credit hours of course work, obtain passing scores on all three sections of the THEA exam (Mathematics, Reading, and Writing) to be admitted into the educator preparation program. In addition, the candidate must be in good standing with the University, complete necessary developmental courses, successfully complete English 1301, 1302 and Mathematics 1301 or above. Finally, the candidate must declare a major, submit a formal application to the educator preparation program, and have an official updated transcript on file. Admission requirements were confirmed through the student folder review.

In reviewing the provided material, it was noted that the program does not use an interview process or other formal screening device for potential candidates. It is recommended that the University develop an interview process with standardized questions and/or investigate the use of software that identifies the candidate's propensities to teach. The University indicated in the self-report that they determine the English proficiency of non-native English speakers by successful completion of English 1301 and 1302. In addition, non-native English speaking students must obtain passing scores on all three sections of the THEA exam. The program does not accept any students under the 10% cohort rule.

The University utilizes appropriate strategies to make potential candidates aware of their education program. A list of recruitment strategies used by the department such as brochures,

fliers, and announcements was available in the document review. In the opening presentation, it was stressed that the outreach activities of the educator preparation program were instrumental in recruiting potential candidates. The HISD/UHD Writing Exhibition involves K-12 public school students who create a composition. These compositions are critiqued by UHD teaching candidates. Both the composition and critique are displayed together in an exhibit. The culmination of the event is an evening of celebration for students, parents, school personnel and teaching candidates. Another project is the Family Literacy Nights. Public school students and parents are invited to attend. The faculty at UHD teaches parents how to teach literacy skills and encourage reading while student teachers read stories, dress up as story book characters and present puppet shows for the children. Numerous other outreach programs are utilized to reach potential teaching candidates.

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

#### **Commendations:**

The University of Houston- Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is commended for its community outreach program as a means of recruiting new teacher candidates.

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

#### **Findings:**

The University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is in compliance with (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. The faculty consists of twenty-nine (29) faculty members and one program staff person. A credential review of the faculty revealed twenty-eight (28) doctoral degrees and one master's degree. Twenty-five faculty members are Texas certified teachers and one is certified in another state.

The University employs twenty-three (23) adjunct professors. In order to ensure the quality and integrity of the curriculum that is delivered, an adjunct professor is paired with a full time UHD faculty member who will be teaching the same course(s). The two will work together to maintain consistency of content and product expectations.

Review of the faculty vitas indicated many years of teaching and public school experience. Fifty-two (52%) of the respondents to the faculty questionnaire indicated that they had been teaching in the educator preparation program at the University of Houston-Downtown for more than four years.

The University utilizes a standard format for the course syllabi. Each syllabus includes instructor information, course description, objectives, grading criteria, a statement on academic honesty, and a statement of accommodations for students with disabilities. In addition, assignments, required texts and materials, daily requirements, and support services are explained. One hundred percent (100%) of the responding faculty indicated that class discussion was the primary method of content delivery to teacher candidates. Other instructional strategies included cooperative learning projects, modeling and practice of instructional strategies. The faculty indicated a wide use of technology in their course presentation and in products completed by the teaching candidates.

Degree plans for Generalist Bilingual EC-6 - Spanish, Generalist 4-8, and Generalist EC-6 were available on the website and in the document review. These plans outlined the requirements for admission into the teacher education program, general education core courses necessary, preparatory requirements, academic major, and Block I, II, and III requirements. In addition to content, Block I and II require students to complete a minimum of 60 hours of field experience. Block III includes both content courses and student teaching. In reviewing the degree plans, reading instruction was present in all certification areas. The other 16 mandated curriculum topics were documented in the self-report, course correlations, and syllabi. Students compile an electronic portfolio to collect artifacts throughout their program to document their professional growth. Interest was expressed by the faculty in expanding the role of the portfolio to include a teacher toolkit component.

Responding student teachers reported high praise for instruction in: reading strategies across the curriculum for all grade levels (100%); Texas Code of Ethics (100%); child and adolescent development (100%); theories on how people learn (100%); and differentiating instruction to meet the individual student's needs (100%). However, students indicated that they would like more instruction in: conducting parent conferences (32%); teacher's responsibilities for administering the TAKS test (37%); and standards and teaching practices for gifted and talented students (47%).

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the responding cooperating teachers felt that UHD student teachers were well prepared in the area of technology. Cooperating teachers indicated that students would benefit from more instruction and practice in classroom management.

Since 50% or more of their program is not presented online, the online courses were not reviewed in this report.

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

**Commendations:**

The University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is commended for utilizing interactive methods, such as cooperative learning, as a primary method of presenting content.

The University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is commended for its block structure utilizing 60 hours of focused field experiences in Block I and II.

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

**Findings:**

The University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is in compliance with (TAC) § 228.35 - PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. Through articulation agreements with Lone Star College-Cy-Fair and Lone Star College – Kingwood, classes are delivered from University of Houston-Downtown at these sites. According to the website, the University has partnerships with nine urban school districts: Aldine ISD, Alief ISD, Cy-Fair ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Galena Park ISD, Houston ISD, Humble ISD, Spring Branch ISD

and Stafford Municipal School District. Instruction is presented in a face-to-face format with students completing work electronically. Candidates experience several levels of coursework both during day and night classes. The Pre-Block Courses are traditional education courses taught at the downtown campus. Block I and II are taught at the partner Lone Star College sites as well as the UHD campus. Candidates are required to complete 60 hours of field experience each semester with accompanying assignments. Field experience activities are specific and prescribed by the University. During Block I and II, the candidates are expected to teach two formal lessons which are observed with feedback from a University/field supervisor. During Block III, the students participate in a traditional student teaching experience of 15 weeks. Through these experiences, the candidates are able to experience working with a diverse, urban student population. The program requires over 300 clock hours of training/coursework.

It was noted that the term used by the University for the field supervisor was University supervisor. It is recommended that all terminology be aligned with TAC definitions. There are twenty-seven (27) university/field supervisors in the UHD program. One hundred percent (100%) of the University/field supervisors reported that they had Texas teacher certification and a minimum of five years classroom teaching experience. Eighty-nine percent (89%) indicated that they possessed a Texas administrator certificate. The self-report and the University/field supervisors reported that they received training from UHD annually which included operational procedures, coaching and mentoring techniques. Training was verified by the presence of training agendas, PowerPoint presentations, and attendance records. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the responding University/field supervisors indicated they had more than three years of field supervision experience. In addition, they reported frequent communication with the student teachers and cooperating teachers. The field contact, observation schedule, and feedback are in accordance with rule and appropriately documented. Two observations are conducted during Block I and II prior to student teaching and two formal observations and one summative conference are conducted during the student teaching period. A three-way conference with the student teacher, cooperating teachers, and field supervisor is conducted after each formal observation and at the culmination of the student teaching experience. It is recommended that three formal student teacher observations be completed in Block III.

The University/field supervisor ratio to student teacher facilitates quality interaction. According to the self-report and the principal questionnaire, a copy of the observation written feedback is not provided to the campus administrator. It is recommended that this information be provided to the campus administrator as soon as possible since this is required in rule TAC §228.35(f). One hundred percent (100%) of the student teachers responding to their questionnaire felt that the field supervision was effective or very effective.

Training for the cooperating teachers is provided by University of Houston-Downtown and was verified by agendas, PowerPoint presentations, and training materials. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the cooperating teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated that they had more than seven years of teaching experience. Seventy one percent (71%) of the cooperating teachers also indicated they have worked with more than two student teachers.

As an addition to UHD's comprehensive training program, principals of the partnering campuses are also provided training. Topics of discussion included student teaching requirements, student teacher expectations, code of ethics, and teaching schedule. A PowerPoint presentation and attendance records were available for inspection.

**Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, the educator preparation program (EPP) is in compliance.**

### **Commendations:**

The University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is commended for providing training to the principals who will have student teachers on their campuses.

## **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 - Downtown, Department of Urban Education, is in compliance with (TAC) §228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. The University has developed a "Comprehensive Departmental Assessment" instrument encompassing years 2006-2012. The instrument contains six learning outcomes and specific items are identified as assessment indicators. Assessment items include, among others, electronic portfolio contents, hiring information, and retention data. The faculty and advisory committee members in their respective questionnaires confirmed their participation in overall program and curriculum evaluation. They also confirmed that evaluations occurred more than once every 12 months. A variety of other internal and external data including student surveys, testing attempts and results, qualitative evaluations by faculty members and University/field supervisors is identified and utilized for program and curriculum evaluation. Cooperating teachers complete a survey on the effectiveness of the field supervision program. Even though the evaluation process is extensive, it is recommended that input from the principal and cooperating teachers be considered in overall program and curriculum evaluation.

Student benchmarks are present and appropriate for the program. The following benchmark's and structured assessments are used to monitor candidates progress throughout the program: diagnostic tests (pre and post); UHD-CPDT Teacher Candidate Criteria for Field Work Component; UHD-CPDT Professional Attributes for Teacher Candidates completed by the cooperating teacher and University/field supervisor; formal and informal observations for field based experiences; admission to field based experiences; monitored GPA; student teaching applications for block entry; case by case decisions regarding student progress and diagnostic experience results. Candidates who are struggling in the program are monitored closely and assigned a specific faculty member who is responsible for providing additional tutoring and support.

Students are identified as ready for testing upon successful completion of the appropriate field based experiences. The student submits a checklist and request for testing to the department. The ASEP data over the past three years reflect an increasing pass rate.

According to the self-report, and the program staff questionnaire, University of Houston-Downtown keeps records in both paper and electronic format for five years in a locked secure environment. The University has a schedule of document retention.

Four staff members have been trained and have access to the TEA database.

The process for addressing student grievances can be found 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, the educator preparation program (EPP) is in compliance.**

**Commendations:**

The University of Houston-Downtown is commended for involving cooperating teachers in evaluation of the field supervision process.

## **PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

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.

Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement. No progress report is required.

**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Provide a copy of the student teacher's written feedback to the campus administrator as per TAC §280.30(f). Actions to correct this should be initiated immediately.

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Provide advisory committee training annually.
- Create a handbook for advisory committee members.
- Maintaining agendas, attendance records, and minutes of all advisory committee meetings.
- Align terminology with TAC definitions.
- Investigate developing an interview process utilizing a standard set of questions.
- Investigate the use of screening software that identifies the candidate's propensities to teach.
- Improve communication with cooperating teachers and campus administrators.
- Expand the program evaluation process to include principals and cooperating teachers.