

**Texas Education Agency Division of Educator Standards
Post Approval Site Visit
Texas Christian University
2800 S. University Drive, Ft. Worth, TX
February 26-27, 2009**

Visit Conducted by TEA Staff: Tabita Gutierrez and Corrina Noriega, Program Specialists

This post-approval site visit for the traditional undergraduate program at Texas Christian University was conducted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Team in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10 – Approval Process.

Background Information

Texas Christian University (TCU) was founded as the AddRan Male and Female Academy in Thorp Spring, Texas. According to TCU's website, there was a Bible and Teachers' Department in 1873, the first year of AddRan Academy. In 1875, a separate Normal Department for the preparation of aspiring teachers was created. Additional highlights in the development of TCU's College of Education (COE) are as follows:

- The Trustees approved the development of a preparation program in 1892 that would be designed to meet certificate requirements of the Texas State Department of Education.
- In 1893, the Texas State Department of Education recognized the institution's teacher preparation program.
- In 1958, the Bailey Building, named in honor of Mary Ann and Robert Bailey, was assigned to the College of Education.
- During the 2007-2008 school year, TCU experienced the opening of the new J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation Education Complex consisting of the Betsy and Steve Palko Hall and the restored Bailey Building.

Although the official name for the College of Education has changed several times, its mission has remained largely focused upon the preparation of aspiring and practicing educators. In keeping with its mission, the COE promotes professionalism, service, and leadership as well as a "passion for learning." There is also an emphasis on the integration of research, theory, and experience. TCU faculty members share a common field-based philosophy; thus, educator candidates participate in numerous structured field-based experiences and service projects in diverse educational settings.

Prior to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) visit, the TCU COE submitted a self-report which addressed all five components. The program also ensured that the documents for the required document review were in order.

Forty-eight individuals attended the opening session of the TCU Post-Approval Site Visit. Among the participants were university personnel as well as administrators from surrounding districts and members of the Board of Visitors. Dr. Nowell Donovan, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, provided the welcome. Dr. Mary M. Patton, Interim Dean, introduced the audience participants. Dr. Ranae Stetson, associate professor, provided a PowerPoint presentation about the College of Education's history and goals.

Fifty individuals were interviewed during the post-approval site visit. Those interviewed included the following: 7 Advisory Council and partnership members, 11 Cooperating Teachers, 10 Directors/Deans/Faculty, 5 Field Supervisors, 4 Principals, 1 Program Staff, and 12 Student Teachers.

I. Entity Commitment and Collaboration

The Self-Report provides information about commitment and collaboration offered through a tiered level of committees. Separate committees also advise four funded institutes and centers. Outside the formal advisory committee structure, there is also extensive collaboration between the University and the K-12 public and private campuses in the surrounding districts.

Findings

The primary advisory committee for the TCU College of Education is called the Board of Visitors. It is comprised of 17 members representing the following categories: 6 from the public and private schools, 2 from institutions of higher education, 7 from the community, and 2 from business entities. Missing from the categories listed on TAC Rule §228.20 is the representative from the education service center.

Agendas and minutes indicated that the committee had two formal scheduled meetings and also met at other times, as needed. Established to reflect the current goals of the College of Education by helping to define "who we are and what we do," the COE Board of Visitors provides feedback and support to advance the College's goals.

As per its website, Board of Visitors committee members are charged with identifying issues, setting annual benchmarks, and submitting recommendations to the dean. They identify key challenges for the program, promote program image and visibility, identify community leaders to join, and identify resources for the program. The committee also participates in the development of good relations between the College and the community at large. It works with the dean to raise funds to insure that the College meets its goals and objectives.

In addition, a tiered level of university-based committees work in concert with the Board of Visitors to revise, review, evaluate, and manage the education preparation program.

They impact policy decisions, including program design, delivery, evaluation and support. These committees serve the following funded institutes and centers:

- Neeley Special Institute
- The Center for Urban Education
- The Andrews Institute of Mathematics, Science & Technology (with an Education Service Center Region 11 individual on its board)

TCU is also the only teacher preparation program in the United States that operates two fully accredited laboratory schools in special education located on campus. Starpoint is for students with learning differences, ages 6-12 years. KinderFrogs provides developmentally appropriate educator for preschool children ages 18 months – 6 years with Down syndrome and other developmental delays. Operating these two laboratory schools demonstrates the strong commitment and extensive collaboration that the university has with its community.

The Texas Christian University College of Education is in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20(b) – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

Commendations

The TCU COE is commended for the extra tier of collaboration and commitment it has created for specialized content areas. Its spirit of commitment and passion for students is evident in the creation of two laboratory schools to promote success for special needs students. These schools also allow a closer overview of the effectiveness of the educator preparation program candidates as they work in the laboratory schools.

TCU is commended for its community collaboration and participation. Its commitment is evident through the collaboration noted in advisory committee goals and minutes.

II. Admission Criteria

Admission to the TCU College of Education is competitive. Educator candidates who plan to major in education or acquire a teaching certificate are required to apply for admission to the teacher education program.

Findings

According to the TCU Self-Report and the university's website and publications, the following minimum admission requirements include both qualitative and quantitative measures:

- Complete at least 54 semester hours of undergraduate coursework
- Attain an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.5 with at least 12 hours at TCU

- Complete courses with a “C” or better in speech, Critical Investigation: Teaching and Learning, all content area course related to the certificate sought, and all education courses taken prior to and after admission to the COE
- Submit to and pass a current criminal record check
- Show competence in basic skills by exceeding cut off scores on one of the following:
 - THEA: Reading-260, Math-230, Writing-220
 - SAT: Reading-500, Math-500, Writing -500 or Composite-1570
 - ACT: Reading-19, Math-19, Composite-23

Meeting the required minimum admission criteria does not ensure admission to the College of Education. As per the Self-Report, the Admission Committee considers qualitative measures such as student behavior including professional attitude, demeanor, and interpersonal skills. Because professors who teach the required preliminary courses serve on the Admissions Committee, candidate interviews are not part of the selection process.

Interviews supported information included in the self-report. It was noted that in an effort to ensure consistent background knowledge and skills and to decrease potential compromises in the quality of program completers, TCU does not currently offer undergraduate teacher certification to post-baccalaureate students who did not graduate from TCU. In addition, in 2006, in order to ensure compliance with the COE admission criteria and alignment with the Texas Administrative Code 227.10, the “conditional admit” was removed as an option for admitting undergraduate students. Once students met the requirements, they could re-apply.

Recruitment strategies include career fairs, themed fairs to target aspiring candidates, Mondays at TCU, and the following activities:

- Local school collaboration by individual professors
- Go Center
- Absolute Excellence (It targets Latinos, but not exclusive.)
- Financial Aid Seminars
- Scholarships that target diversity (racial, social economic status, etc.)
- Word of Mouth (Of 11,400 applicants, 1200 were accepted.)
- Parents’ Meetings
- Summer Camps

The student folders, filed in alphabetical order, are located in the office overseen by the Director of Teacher Certification, Diana Woolsey. The policy for retention is five years; thus, folders are moved from year to year to corresponding cabinets and storage, as appropriate.

Student file folders are extremely well organized in locked cabinets and in a secured office. Student teacher files are also kept in the office of the Director of Teacher Certification. Official transcripts and student records are available electronically. The

electronic database tracks the candidate's progress and provides the opportunity for early identification of struggling educator candidates and, thus, early intervention.

It is the certification officer's responsibility to confirm that the educator candidate has met all requirements for certification and to recommend the student on behalf of TCU. It is evident that Ms. Woolsey implements meticulous steps to ensure accuracy of all records. Detailed audit checks are made at the end of each semester, and communication with appropriate university staff occurs, if necessary.

The Texas Christian University College of Education is in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code §227.10 – Admission Criteria.

Commendations

The TCU COE is commended for its Admissions Committee procedures. This committee goes beyond the admissions criteria and considers qualitative measures of applicants.

The TCU COE is commended for its electronic database that keeps track of students' progress and allows early intervention. Although early intervention is expected, the electronic database enhances the process.

The TCU COE is commended for its outreach efforts for diversity through its recruitment process. Scholarship programs with local schools encourage diversity.

III. Curriculum

Students in the College of Education learn their profession through a curriculum rich in technology, centered on people, and grounded in data-based theories and practices. Graduates of the TCU teacher education program are highly sought after, resulting in 100% job placement.

Findings

Faculty members in the College of Education are recognized for their contributions to educational research and program development. As a result, graduates have expertise in content, pedagogy, and technology with specializations in urban education, special education, mathematics and science education. Students, via interviews, credited their professors with establishing close personal working relationships. As a result, faculty members and students work collaboratively with surrounding school districts.

The TCU COE undergraduate program offers Generalist EC-4, Grades 4-8, Grades 8-12, and All Level certificates. According to the Self-Report, the curricula for all certificate programs were developed with input from primary stakeholders, including Arts and Sciences faculty, and designed to comply with state educator standards, tests frameworks, and new certification areas.

Thus, professors are asked to include the following in their syllabi:

- Course name & number
- Contact info, office hours
- Catalog course description
- Rational for course
- Course assignments
- Grading & evaluation policies
- ADA statement
- List of textbooks
- Standard, Domains, Competencies, TEKS
- Most also include eCollege assignments

Students interested in Generalist EC-4 must also choose one of the three options: English as a Second Language (ESL), Special Education, or Bilingual Generalist EC-4. To be recommended to take the TExES certification exam, students must pass the Professional Practice Seminar. Those not receiving credit in the Seminar are not considered program completers and, thus, will not be recommended to take the TExES examination.

TCU's vision is that its graduates fulfill the mission "to prepare effective and ethical leaders." Thus, faculty members concerned about a student's performance and/or professionalism can initiate the Academic Performance and Professionalism Warning (APPW – "Yellow Flag") process to indicate need for intervention.

The Texas Christian University College of Education is in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code §228.30 (a) and (b) – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Commendations

The TCU COE is commended for its extensive syllabi format that includes standard criteria and depicts alignment with State Board for Educator Certification Standards (SBEC).

The TCU COE is commended for its Professional Practice Seminars to assist with test preparation and promote candidates' success in this area.

The TCU COE is commended for requiring students enrolled in Generalist EC-4 to also choose one of the three options: ESL, Special Education, or Bilingual Generalist EC-4.

IV. Program Delivery and Evaluation

In all certificate programs, educator candidates work in field-based school settings appropriate to their certification area sought. All TCU candidates are placed in diverse

educational settings and have sustained personal engagement with children, including those with diverse and special needs. The College of Education continues to evaluate the teacher preparation program to ensure systems are in place.

Findings

Educator candidates are exposed to extensive field-based school settings prior to student teaching placements. Interviews indicated that candidates felt their experiences in urban public and private schools provided exposure to diverse student populations. They particularly recognized that the two laboratory schools on campus, Starpoint and KinderFrogs, afforded them the unique opportunity to work in high quality educational programs for special needs students.

Before acceptance into the COE, students must have completed the following courses:

- Critical Investigations of Teaching & Learning in Today's Schools
- Speech Communication
- Educational Technology
- Child & Adolescent Development

Critical Investigations of Teaching & Learning in Today's Schools requires an extensive field-based experience which provides a careful and systematic exploration of teaching in public schools and a better understanding of the variety of student learning demands that teachers face. The student teaching component is twelve weeks in length. The requirement for educator candidates enrolled in All-Level Certification includes placements in elementary and secondary schools, with four weeks at each level: elementary, middle school, and high school.

Interviews revealed that field supervisors had consistent communication with student teachers and cooperating teachers. Interviews indicated that, in most cases, field supervisors attempted to communicate on a weekly basis and to visit the student teachers' classrooms every other week. Although field supervisors were required to conduct formal observations at least four times each semester, interviews revealed that some candidates had not yet been observed. Thus, while field supervisors communicated frequently with both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, documentation of formal observations was not consistent. The COE is encouraged to develop observation documentation processes to ensure that required formal observations are completed in a timely manner. Students participating in the international student teaching component were not back on campus yet; thus, their observation reports were forthcoming.

The TCU COE promotes the university's "Go Green" philosophy. It utilizes web enhanced technologies and offers online undergraduate courses through eCollege. Besides modeling the use and integration of technology, eCollege courses also reduce travel to the campus and offer more options that are environmentally friendly.

TCU's current accountability status is "accredited." The average pass rate on the TExES Certification Exams is 98% for the past three academic years. Formative and summative assessments are utilized to document, monitor, and share intern progress. Feedback and evaluations are provided by both the field supervisors and cooperating teachers. Overall program evaluation is provided through surveys by students, cooperating teachers, university field supervisors, schools, alumni, and school district employers.

The Texas Christian University College of Education is in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training and with the Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

Commendations

The TCU COE is commended for exposing educator candidates to various grade levels and diverse student populations through their structured field-based experiences and student teaching component.

The TCU COE is commended for its creation and support of the two laboratory schools on campus which afford educator candidates the opportunity to work with special needs students under a structured and supervised environment.

The TCU COE is commended for its "Go Green" philosophy and its eCollege online component. It provides delivery of instruction in diverse ways.

V. On-Going Support

All student teachers are required to attend a four-day orientation/seminar before beginning their field placement(s). It is at this time that they become familiar with the Student Teacher & Cooperating Teacher Handbook that outlines their duties and responsibilities. Students participating in the international experience component attend four weeks in one of nine countries and the remaining eight weeks in Texas. Throughout the student teaching experience, candidates receive ongoing support and supervision from the university field supervisor, cooperating teachers, and campus administrators. The College of Education faculty and staff also provide additional support and encouragement.

Findings

Training of cooperating teachers and field supervisors was evident but not consistent. Interviews revealed that some received training, but others did not. It is recommended that the program review the training component for appropriate personnel in order to enhance the quality and increase consistency.

A Student Teaching Syllabus has also been developed for all certification programs. It provides a guide so that all mentors and supervisors are aware of guidelines and expectations. The COE has developed a plan to implement a more authoritative reporting system from the university supervisors. They will be required to submit to the Director of Student Teaching a schedule of visitations and reports every two weeks. The COE will be investigating the feasibility of moving to an electronic version of reporting all aspects of the student teaching component. The electronic reporting process will also be implemented for All Level Students in Music, Art, and Physical Education. In essence, the electronic format will allow instantaneous access to the progress of all student teachers and will facilitate intervention for those having difficulties.

The TCU COE Teaching Fellows program is a professional development seminar series for cooperating teachers who wish to become exemplary mentors. Those who participate may opt to receive Continuous Professional Education (CPE) credits.

TCU focuses participation in international education through its International Student Teaching component. As per publications, website information, and the memorandum of February 27, 2009, from Dr. Mary Patton, Interim Dean, TCU was selected to be a member of the European Teacher Education network (ETEN) in 2002. TCU is one of only five universities in the United States invited to join. ETEN membership is comprised of universities in Europe with teacher accredited certification programs. Four of the twelve weeks of Student Teaching may include placement in a country outside the United States. According to TCU records and the aforementioned memorandum, which is enclosed with this report, TCU has been given permission to conduct up to one-half of the student teaching component outside the United States.

As per TAC §228.35(d)(2)(a) and §228.2(17), student teaching is a 12-week full-day teaching practicum in a program provided by an accredited university at a public school accredited by the TEA or a TEA-recognized private school that may lead to completion of a standard certificate. Thus, the International Student Teaching component must be reviewed once again to ensure adherence to rule.

Interviews indicated that the TCU COE works closely with principals and Human Resources Departments of the surrounding school districts. Relationships with these personnel promote strong mentorship programs. Interviews of student teachers revealed that availability of faculty, field supervisors, and directors contributes to the student teachers' success.

Student teachers as well as graduates consistently talked about the connections with their professors and TCU personnel. They noted that the caring and passion demonstrated by TCU faculty and staff impacted their success in the classroom.

The Texas Christian University College of Education is in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code §228.35(a) Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training, but needs to enhance compliance with TAC §228.35 (e) and (f), which

describes the required mentoring training and TAC §228.35 (d)(2)(A) as defined in TAC §228.2(17) Student Teaching.

Commendations

The TCU COE is commended for its supervised and structured Student Teaching experience. Interviews revealed that this component prepares students for diverse classroom settings.

Program Recommendations

- Consider inviting a member of the Education Service Center Region 11 to the Board of Visitors to include recommended membership of the advisory committee as stated in Texas Administrative Code §228.20(b).
- Adhere to Texas Administrative Codes §228.35(d)(2)(A) and §228.2 in regards to the Student Teaching component defining student teaching as placement in a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency or a TEA-recognized private school as amended to be effective December 14, 2008. Thus, submit a letter of commitment ensuring adherence by the fall semester of 2010.
- Revisit Student Teaching component to ascertain how the study abroad may continue and still ensure adherence to rule.
- Require timely submission of documentation of field supervision contacts to assure that initial contact occurs within the first three weeks and that the first formal observation occurs within the first six weeks.
- Continue to enhance recruitment efforts by intentionally encouraging admission of a diverse student population within the College of Education.