



Pre-Approval Site Visit Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 Texas A&M University at Central Texas Traditional Initial Certification Program

According to TAC §228.10(b) An entity seeking initial approval to deliver an educator preparation program shall submit an application and proposal with evidence indicating the ability to comply with the provisions of this chapter and Chapter 227 of this title (relating to Provisions for Educator Preparation Candidates). The proposal shall include the following program approval components: entity commitment to adequate preparation of certification candidates, program standards, and community collaboration; criteria for admission to an educator preparation program; curriculum; program delivery and evaluation; and a plan for ongoing support of the candidates. The proposal must also identify the certificates proposed to be offered by the entity and meet applicable federal statutes or regulations. The proposal will be reviewed by the TEA staff and a pre-approval site visit will be conducted. The TEA staff shall recommend to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBECE) whether the entity should be approved. 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.

Contact: Dr. Jeff Kirk, Head of Division of Education

County-District Number: Not yet assigned.

Texas Education Agency (TEA) program specialists, Dr. Mary S. Black and Vanessa Alba, conducted a pre-approval site visit compliance audit on August 9, 2011. The purpose of the visit was to verify that all components of Texas Administrative Code (TAC) that govern educator preparation are in place for a new educator preparation program. Texas A&M University at Central Texas (TAMU-CT) will implement traditional initial educator certification preparation under a legislative mandate.

Qualitative methods of gathering and analyzing data were used by TEA program specialists in order to write this report. Prior to the visit, TAMU-CT submitted a self-report to TEA, which will be used as baseline data concerning the program. The university also prepared documents, including course syllabi, which were reviewed by the program specialists during the audit. TEA program specialists spoke with Dr. Kellie Cude, Director of Teacher Education, and Dr. Dorleen Hooten, Certification Officer, during the visit in order to clarify documentation. Content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence for this report.

Texas A&M University at Central Texas offers a unique “warranty” on the teachers it plans to produce in the future. As stated in the online catalog for the School of Education:

TAMU-CT WARRANTY FOR FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Because TAMU-CT believes that teacher education is a collaborative process between the University and public schools, and because this University is dedicated to achieving excellence in teacher education, the teaching performance of all TAMU-CT graduates is warranted by the University. Should a graduate of TAMU-CT’s Teacher Education Program receive a Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) domain (I-IV) rating that is less than “satisfactory” on his/her annual appraisal, the University will provide additional professional development aimed at remediating deficiencies at no additional cost to the individual or district.

Twenty people attended the Opening Session of the pre-approval visit, including the President of the University, Dr. Marc A. Nigliazzo, the Provost Dr. Peg Gray-Vickery, and the Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Tracy Teaff. Dr. Jeff Kirk, Head of the Division of Education, Dr. Kellie Cude, Director of Teacher Education, and Dr. Dorleen Hooten, Certification Officer, were also present. Members of the Texas A&M University at Central Texas faculty and advisory committee rounded out the attendees.

Dr. Kellie Cude presented an overview of the proposed educator preparation program. From 1998 to 2009, the institution was affiliated with Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. Since 2009, Texas A&M University at Central Texas (TAMU-CT) has been establishing various parts of the university as an independent entity. Initial teacher preparation for certification at TAMU-CT was mandated by the 82nd Legislature, and that was the focus of the pre-approval compliance visit. The first cohort of TAMU-CT teacher preparation students will begin in fall 2011. At this point TAMU-CT only offers upper division courses, so all students transfer in from other universities or community colleges. TAMU-CT is located in Killeen, Texas, just outside Ft. Hood Army Post, and has a significant role in upper division education for Army personnel and families.

The School of Education is currently housed in a building leased from Killeen Independent School District, but anticipates moving to a new campus in about two years. The current building houses a special teacher education library with a complete collection of state-approved K-12 textbooks, several computer labs for students, and classrooms with interactive white boards and other technology.

This report focuses on how TAMU-CT plans to implement TAC rules governing educator preparation.

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

Findings:

Component I concerns governance of educator preparation programs, or the advisory committee. Support for the program was voiced by President Nigliazzo and Provost Gray-Vickery during the Opening Session. The university has planned for this transition to an independent status for several years, and has the fiscal resources necessary to implement traditional initial teacher certification. The facilities are adequate for the purpose, and include specific library materials and appropriate technology.

The advisory committee demonstrates broad representation from public and private schools, Region 12 Education Service Center, business and community interests, and institutions of higher education. The committee has 14 members and more are expected to join in the fall. TEA program specialist Mary Black gave brief training on advisory committee duties and responsibilities to the members who were present at the Opening Session, and left a copy of the PowerPoint with Dr. Cude for later use. According to the self-report, the advisory committee is

expected to participate in design, delivery, policy decisions, and program evaluation for teacher preparation. Two meetings for the advisory committee have been scheduled for October 4, 2011, and April 10, 2012. Dr. Cude intends to keep minutes, agendas and sign-in sheets for these meetings.

Based on the evidence presented, the proposed entity, Texas A&M University at Central Texas, 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:

Component II concerns admission criteria for traditional initial teacher preparation. Texas A&M University at Central Texas meets or exceeds all rules regarding admission in Texas Administrative Code. All candidates accepted for admission must have a 2.6 GPA, with no exceptions, according to Dr. Cude. If any applicant has a lower GPA, they will be put on a growth plan to bring the GPA up before they can be admitted. All candidates will have 12 or more semester hours of coursework in the required content areas and will have THEA scores recorded on their transcripts. Admission criteria will be published on the university website.

All applicants must have a successful, structured oral English interview with a faculty member, that will be scored with a rubric. There is also a written component to the application process which requires two-hours of writing on a specific prompt. Again, the writing sample will be evaluated with a rubric. Separate application is required for admission to teacher preparation, and documents will be kept for a minimum of five years in locked file cabinets. The university has an adequate process in place for exiting candidates, should that become necessary. In the advent of any out-of-country applicants, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) will be required along with the appropriate transcript evaluation.

Based on the evidence presented, the proposed entity, Texas A&M University at Central Texas, 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:

Component III concerns the curriculum for educator certification preparation. The university submitted curriculum correlation charts and syllabi to TEA that show alignment of coursework with standards, competencies, TEKS, and the 17 topics mandated by TAC §228.30. Assessments covering the 17 topics are present in the syllabi. The syllabi used by Tarleton State University for spring 2010 are online, and the syllabi for TAMU-CT for fall 2011 mimic

these in most details. As the program grows, changes in curriculum are anticipated. TAMU-CT also submitted a vita for each TAMU-CT faculty member in the School of Education documenting their knowledge and experience.

The TAMU-CT program requires each candidate to take seven courses in reading across the curriculum, at least one of which contains information on dyslexia, as required by the 82nd Legislature.

Based on the evidence presented, the proposed entity, Texas A&M University at Central Texas 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:

Component IV regards program hours, mode of delivery, field experiences, and field supervision and mentoring. All coursework will be delivered face-to-face at TAMU-CT. Candidates will participate in a two-hour instructional technology lab for 16 weeks and find instructional technology assignments woven throughout each class. Total clock hours of coursework and training for initial teacher certification will be 676. This includes six hours of test preparation, 130 hours of field-based experience prior to student teaching, and 540 hours of coursework. Student teaching is a 14-week, full day experience.

Each student teacher will have a cooperating teacher assigned in collaboration with the local school district. Each cooperating teacher is required to attend TXBESS training through the district or with a trainer from TAMU-CT. They are also given a hard copy of materials from the field supervisor. Each student teacher will have two placements, often in the same school, to experience both the lower grades and upper grades of their certification field.

Field supervisors will be trained by Dr. Dorleen Hooten each semester. At present there are three field supervisors with six student teachers each. The university intends to maintain this ratio in order to provide intensive supervision. The field supervisors and student teachers first meet on the TAMU-CT campus at a student teaching orientation. Field supervisors are then required to meet on the K-12 campus within the first three weeks of the student teaching assignment. Each field supervisor will make four formal observations with evaluations of the student teacher each semester. Observation forms indicating date and time in/time out have been developed. TEA program specialists advised Dr. Cude and Dr. Hooten to add space for the campus administrator's designee to sign off when copies are left with the principal.

The university has a grievance policy which will be followed in case of any disagreement between student teacher and field supervisor.

Based on the evidence presented, the proposed entity, Texas A&M University at Central Texas 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 concerns the evaluation of candidates for certification and overall curriculum and program effectiveness. TAMU-CT will monitor student progress each semester through coursework grades, GPAs, and professional dispositions. Candidates must meet with faculty advisors and apply for various Block classes and student teaching. Candidates will take the representative forms of various certification exams and the six hours of test preparation prior to determination of readiness to test for certification. The six hour online T-Cert Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities review will also be required. TAMU-CT will keep the T-Cert certificates of completion in student files.

TAMU-CT plans to evaluate its overall program effectiveness once every 12 months with the participation of the advisory committee. Qualitative evaluations of coursework and faculty from candidates will be used as well as evaluations from field supervisors, cooperating teachers and campus principals. Data from the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) concerns pass rates on certification exams will also be used in the evaluation process. Curriculum will also be evaluated annually, with revisions made as faculty sees appropriate and to respond to any changes in Texas Administrative Code. All student records will be maintained for a minimum of five years.

Based on the evidence presented, the proposed entity, Texas A&M University at Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

These suggestions from TEA do not review a compliance status report.

- Include members from Copperas Cove ISD on the advisory committee.
- Use T-Cert for PPR review.