

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Adams State College
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: December 5-6, 2005

The Summary of the Case is written by the auditors and approved by program faculty. The Summary reflects the auditors' understanding of the case the faculty are making for accreditation.

Authorship and Approval of the *Inquiry Brief*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by Mary R. Valerio, Deborah Blake, and Lillian Gomez, and was approved by the faculty of the Department of Teacher Education on November 11, 2004.

Introduction:

Adams State College was founded in 1921 as a normal school, and although the institution offers a number of non-teaching degree programs today, teacher preparation continues to be a significant component of the college, with 14% of its students enrolled in the teacher education program. Adams State is the primary provider of teachers for the local San Luis Valley, and it serves additional rural areas of southern Colorado by providing undergraduate program instruction through the Rural Education Access Program (REAP) in two off-campus sites, and through graduate-level instruction at seven off-campus sites. The majority of students are from the San Luis Valley, which includes six of Colorado's poorest counties and is politically, geographically, culturally, and economically isolated from the rest of the state. Adams State is also a Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI), with its 28% Hispanic population exceeding the 25% minimum required for the designation.

The Department of Teacher Education (TED) offers both undergraduate and graduate program options.

Undergraduate options include:

- *Elementary education*, leading to initial licensure in elementary education with emphases in literacy, art, PE, and social studies; and minors in math, science, music and foreign language;
- *Secondary education*, leading to initial licensure in history, mathematics, science, social studies, language arts (with emphasis in English or theater), business, and Spanish; and
- *K-12 education*, leading to initial licensure in art, music, and physical education.

Graduate options include:

- *Masters degree* leading to endorsement in educational technology, linguistically diverse, special education—moderate needs, special

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education—moderate needs with linguistically diverse, reading teacher, and educational leadership/principalship;

- *Curriculum*, not leading to endorsement or licensure, which prepares students to assist their districts with curriculum writing or to become curriculum specialists; and
- *Masters Plus*, leading to initial licensure in secondary education.

Program claims:

The Adams State College Department of Teacher Education (TED) claims that they prepare candidates who:

1. Possess comprehensive student-centered subject matter concepts and knowledge in their specific licensure area,
2. Develop instructional practices that will enhance their students' cognitive, social, and affective development,
3. Respond to the needs and experiences of all their students as they plan, implement and adapt their instruction,
4. Integrate available technologies into classroom instruction to enhance student learning, and
5. Design classroom instruction based on curricular alignment to Colorado State Standards.

Evidence supporting the claims:

For Claim 1 (candidates possess comprehensive student-centered subject matter concepts and knowledge in their specific licensure area)—

Measures used for *undergraduate students* are:

- Admission Interview score
- PLACE/PRAXIS scores
- Cumulative GPA of 2.75 or above
- GPA of 2.0 or above in Secondary Education content area
- Proficiency log scores of 3.0 or above

Measures used for *graduate students* are:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above
- PLACE scores

For Claim 2 (candidates develop instructional practices that will enhance their students' cognitive, social, and affective development)—

Measures used for *undergraduate students* are:

- GPA of 2.75 or above in Educational Psychology course and methods course
- PLACE/PRAXIS scores
- Proficiency log scores of 3.0 or above
- Career Interview scores
- Student Teaching grades

Measures used for *graduate students* are:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above
- Comprehensive Exam or Cumulating Academic Review (CAR) scores
- Internship grades

For Claim 3 (candidates respond to the needs and experiences of all their students as they plan, implement and adapt their instruction)—

Measures used for *undergraduate students* are:

- Career Interview scores
- Cumulative GPA of 2.75 or above
- PLACE/PRAXIS scores
- Proficiency Log scores of 3.0 or above
- Student Teaching grades

Measures used for *graduate students* are:

- Internship grades
- PLACE scores

For Claim 4 (candidates integrate available technologies into classroom instruction to enhance student learning)—

Measures used for *undergraduate students* are:

- Technology Exam score /Technology Course grade
- Proficiency Log scores of 3.0 or above

Measures used for *graduate students* are:

- Technology Course grade
- Comprehensive Exam or Cumulating Academic Review (CAR) scores

For Claim 5 (candidates design classroom instruction based on curricular alignment to Colorado State Standards)—

Measures used for *undergraduate students* are:

- Proficiency Log scores of 3.0 or above
- Cumulative GPA
- PLACE/PRAXIS scores
- Student Teaching grades

Measures used for *graduate students* are:

- PLACE scores
- Comprehensive Exam or Cumulating Academic Review (CAR) scores
- Internship grades

Reliability and validity of measures:

The measures fall into seven categories, which are listed below along with the reliability and validity data put forth in the Inquiry Brief:

1. Graduate Program Capstone Exam/Review (Comprehensive Exam, CAR) *Claims 2, 4, 5*

The Comprehensive Exam, which has been phased out, featured three raters (faculty members) as an assurance of reliability. The CAR, which replaces the Comprehensive Exam, also features three raters (faculty members/instructors), as well as a rubric to assure consistency of ratings. The Inquiry Brief authors describe the CAR as a performance-based assessment, thus establishing validity through authenticity.

2. Technology Exam/Technology Course Grade *Claim 4*

The Inquiry Brief authors provide no specific evidence of reliability or validity for either the exam or either of the possible courses, although descriptions for both listed courses (CSI 100 and BUS 120) indicate that the course objective is computer proficiency.

3. Field Grades (Student Teaching, Internship) *Claims 2, 3, 5*

Field grades are assigned according to a checklist and score of portfolio items. Reliability of scoring is assured through the use of a rubric. The validity of the grades rests on the congruence of the portfolio items to the claims, which include performance artifacts, evidence of reflection, and evidence of appropriate time spent in the field.

4. GPA *Claims 1, 2, 3, 5*

The Inquiry Brief authors provide no specific information about the reliability or validity of grades, although all GPA requirements but one (the requirement of a

GPA of 2.0 in Secondary Education content area) exceeds a C average, which is generally considered to imply adequacy.

5. Interviews (Admission, Career)

Claims 1, 2, 3

The interviews feature multiple raters (both faculty members and local school practitioners) as well as a rating rubric as assurances of reliability. The validity of the interviews rests on the congruence of the three categories on which the students are rated (communication skills, professional demeanor, and professional awareness) to the claims.

6. Proficiency Log scores

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Proficiency Log scores are graded according to a checklist that includes all 45 proficiencies included in the Colorado State Department of Education Performance-Based Standards. Multiple raters provide assurance of reliability. Validity of the grades rests on the congruence of the Colorado Standards to the claims.

7. Standardized Tests (PLACE, PRAXIS)

Claims 1, 2, 3, 5

The Inquiry Brief authors indicate that no validity or reliability data is provided for the PLACE exams by the designer, National Evaluations Systems; while Educational Testing Service, designer of the PRAXIS exams, reports an internal consistency reliability of greater than 0.90. The authors do note, however, that the correlation between final GPA and PLACE scores for graduate students was 0.50 (significant at the 0.01 level), which lends some assurance of validity to the exam scores at least at the graduate level.

Methods and results:

The faculty chose a sample of students from the 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004 academic years. Their sample included 75 on-campus undergraduate students, 76 off-campus undergraduate students (from REAP, the college's rural delivery system for off-campus undergraduate students), and 231 on-campus and off-campus graduate students (from the Department of Teacher Education's own off-campus graduate programs). The sample included proportionate numbers of males and females, all licensure areas, and diverse ethnic groups.

For Claim 1 (candidates possess comprehensive student-centered subject matter concepts and knowledge in their specific licensure area): Data for the undergraduate students revealed that Admission Interview pass rates were 96% or above for off-campus cohorts and 60% or above for on-campus cohorts; and for all cohorts, the mean PLACE/PRAXIS exam scores were above passing; the mean cumulative GPA's were 3.27 or above, and the mean Proficiency Log scores were 3.46 or above. The mean Secondary Education content area GPA

was not reported. Data for the graduate students revealed that the mean cumulative GPA's were 3.19 or above and that the mean PLACE scores were above passing for all cohorts.

For Claim 2 (candidates develop instructional practices that will enhance their students' cognitive, social, and affective development): Data for the undergraduate students revealed that for all cohorts, the mean PLACE/PRAXIS exam scores were above passing, the mean Proficiency Log scores were 3.46 or above, Career Interview pass rates were 88% or above, and Student Teaching pass rates were 100%. The mean Educational Psychology/methods course GPA was not reported. Data for the graduate students revealed that for all cohorts, the mean cumulative GPA was 3.19 or above, Comprehensive Exam/CAR pass rates were 98% or above, and Internship pass rates were 100%.

For Claim 3 (candidates respond to the needs and experiences of all their students as they plan, implement and adapt their instruction): Data for the undergraduate students revealed that for all cohorts, Career Interview pass rates were 88% or above, the mean cumulative GPA's were 3.27 or above, the mean PLACE/PRAXIS exam scores were above passing, the mean Proficiency Log scores were 3.46 or above, and Student Teaching pass rates were 100%. Data for the graduate student revealed that Internship pass rates were 100% and that the mean PLACE scores were above passing for all cohorts.

For Claim 4 (candidates integrate available technologies into classroom instruction to enhance student learning): Data for the undergraduate students revealed that for all cohorts for which the technology proficiency was required, pass rates on either the Technology Exam or the Technology Course were 72% or above; and the mean Proficiency Log scores were 3.46 or above for all cohorts. Data for the graduate students revealed that for all cohorts, pass rates on the Technology Exam or the Technology Course were 100%, and pass rates for the Comprehensive Exam/CAR were 98% or above.

For Claim 5 (candidates design classroom instruction based on curricular alignment to Colorado State Standards): Data for the undergraduate students revealed that the mean Proficiency Log scores were 3.46 or above, the mean cumulative GPA's were 3.27 or above, the mean PLACE/PRAXIS exam scores were above passing, and Student Teaching pass rates were 100%. Data for the graduate students revealed that the mean PLACE scores were above passing, pass rates for the Comprehensive Exam/CAR were 98%, and Internship pass rates were 100% or above for all cohorts.

Internal audit:

Six of the program faculty conducted an internal audit by randomly selecting one on-campus undergraduate and one on-campus graduate student, and examined elements of the quality control system relating to these students. Off-campus

students would have resulted in different findings pertaining to 4.2 due to the fact that many adjunct faculty (rather than tenure-track faculty) teach off- campus.

Their findings indicated that the intended quality control mechanisms are adequate, but that the consistent application of those mechanisms is lacking. They recommended several actions that they felt would strengthen the seven capacity components, including acquiring and analyzing data, creating plans for improvement, and requesting college resources.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

The faculty has made a case for institutional commitment to the education program, and capacity to provide a quality program. They expressed some concern about staffing issues (the student-teacher ratio in TED is slightly higher than the ratio for the institution), and budgetary issue (the per-student budget amount is the lowest on campus) and facilities issues (most classrooms have not been remodeled since the 1970s), but they feel that new budgetary policies will address the per-student disparity, and that funds can be leveraged to remodel more of the classrooms.

¹ **The program includes options in the following areas and Colorado, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program’s graduates:**

Undergraduate:

- Elementary Education, leading to initial licensure in elementary education with emphases in literacy, art, PE, and social studies; and minors in math, science, music, and foreign language
- Secondary Education, leading to initial licensure in history, mathematics, science, social studies, language arts (with an emphasis in English or theater), business, and Spanish
- K-12 Education, leading to initial licensure in art, music, and physical education

Graduate:

- Masters degree leading to endorsement in educational technology, linguistically diverse, special education—moderate needs, special education—moderate needs with linguistically diverse, reading teacher, and educational leadership/principalship;
- Curriculum, not leading to endorsement or licensure, which prepares students to assist their districts with curriculum writing or to become curriculum specialists
- Masters Plus, leading to initial licensure in secondary education