

Summary of the Case (From the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Bethel University
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: March 6-8, 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 Proposal*:

The *Inquiry Brief Proposal* was written by Louise Wilson, and Sandi Horn in consultation with the other faculty members in the Education Department. The final *Inquiry Brief Proposal* was approved on September 28, 2004 by the 18 full-time members of the Education Department.

Introduction:

Bethel College is a private university, located in Arden Hills, Minnesota, north of the city of Saint Paul, Minnesota. It enrolls more than 4,000 students from 26 countries in The Seminary, the College of Arts and Sciences (which houses the Education Department), the College of Professional Studies, and the Graduate School. Until 1996 Bethel was owned and operated by the Baptist denomination, but in August 1996, it became a separate Minnesota not-for-profit corporation, an action coinciding with a reorganization of the Baptist General Conference.

At this time the Department of Education seeks preaccreditation status for only its undergraduate education program preferring to seek accreditation for its graduate program areas at a later date. The undergraduate program has four options leading to licensure in:

1. Elementary education (K-6) with a pre-primary specialty (ages 3-5)
2. Elementary education (K-6) with a middle level specialty (grades 5-8) in social studies, communication arts and literature, science, mathematics, or world languages and culture (French, German, or Spanish)
3. Education grades K-12 in instrumental and vocal music, physical education, visual arts, world languages and culture (French or Spanish); teaching English as a second language.
4. Education for grades 5-12 in communication arts and literature, social studies, mathematics, science, (chemistry, life science, or physics), and health.

About 700 students are enrolled in the program, 72% female and 97% white. The Department has 18 full-time faculty, 3 administrative support

staff, and 15 part-time faculty members whose gender and race proportions are similar to the student body's.

Program's Claims:

Minnesota has ten standards for the practices of effective teachers (MNSEPT), which are based upon the INTASC standards. The program faculty finds that these ten standards align perfectly with the components of TEAC's *Quality Principle I* and with the five-part mission and goal the program has for its Christian learning community. They have elected, as a result, to make the case that their graduates are competent, caring, and qualified solely in terms of their claim that their graduates satisfy the ten MNSEPT standards. They propose to assemble a persuasive body of evidence to demonstrate that their graduates understand the following:

1. The central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines they will teach
2. How students learn and develop
3. How students differ in their approaches to learning
4. A variety of instructional strategies and how to use them to develop critical thinking & problem solving, to make subject matter meaningful for students, and how to adapt them for students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities.
5. Individual and group motivation and behavior and how to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation for the student's intellectual, social, and personal development.
6. How to use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. How to plan and manage instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. How to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the student.
9. How to reflect on their teaching practice, to continually evaluate the effects of choices and actions on students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community, and how to seek out opportunities for professional growth.
10. How to integrate their Christian faith into every dimension of their professional work.

Evidence Supporting the Claims:

The program faculty plan to support these ten claims with evidence from multiple sources. The following 13 sources with special emphasis on those

marked with an asterisk (*) are identified in the proposal:

1. Standardized tests (Praxis I and Praxis II)*
2. Course grades in education courses (none lower than a C)*.
3. Course grades in liberal arts/general education courses.*
4. Overall grade point index (no lower than 2.5)*
5. Autobiographical essay that shows potential for a teaching career
6. Interviews of students by education and arts & science faculty
7. Surveys of graduates' job satisfaction and professional growth*.
8. Evaluations by faculty and cooperating teachers of graduates practicum and student teaching performance.*
9. Faculty assessments of a portfolio, which documents over the course of the program the student's mastery of the ten MNSEPT standards, a rationale for professional choices and decisions made, connections between theory and practice, and reflections on the student's professional growth and plans.*
10. Surveys of employer and supervisors' judgments of graduates teaching effectiveness*
11. Surveys of graduates to determine the number who are teaching, how long they have been teaching, and their professional accomplishments*.
12. Elementary math pretest (score of 80%)
13. Case studies and commentary of student practicum and student teaching performance

Some of these sources have been used for some time, some are being piloted, and some are being developed.

Preliminary results:

Virtually 100% of the students who take the tests pass Praxis I (PPST) and Praxis II, whose new passing scores have only been used for the 2002-2003 graduates. Had the prior students been required to satisfy the new cut score all but one would have passed the tests.

Students in the program earn slightly higher grades (3.6) than other students in the University (3.2) and their scores in student teaching average 3.8/4.0 overall.

Program research:

The program faculty members are proposing an ambitious line of inquiry into the correlational relationships among the various measures with the hope that they may uncover which might be used to predict which and to test whether the components of the program form a coherent whole and

interact in meaningful ways.

Internal Audit:

The program's quality control system was audited by inspecting the records of four randomly selected students, one from each program option, with regard to the dimensions of TEAC's capacity standards that were appropriate to the student records. The selection of each student led the internal auditors to the random selection of an education course in which each student was enrolled for the 2002-2003 academic year and to their examination of the ways quality was monitored in the hiring and promotion of the course's instructor, in the assignment of classroom facilities, in the approval of the course, and in the student evaluations of the course. The internal auditors generally found that the system functioned as designed, but it did uncover one gap with regard to course approval information for some courses.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

The faculty undertook an extensive analysis of the parity between their program and the institution overall. Of the 22 data points they evaluated, they found the program was slightly above the institutional norms in 10 instances, at the norm in 9 instances, and slightly below in 3 instances. The faculty concluded, on the bases of this analysis, that Bethel University is fully committed to the support and enhancement of the program.

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

Undergraduate level leading to licensure options in the following areas: Elementary education (K-6) with a pre-primary specialty (ages 3-5), Elementary education (K-6) with a middle level specialty (grades 5-8) in social studies, communication arts and literature, science, mathematics, or world languages and culture (French, German, or Spanish), Education grades K-12 in instrumental and vocal music, physical education, visual arts, world languages and culture (French or Spanish); teaching English as a second language, Education for grades 5-12 in communication arts and literature, social studies, mathematics, science, (chemistry, life science, or physics), and health.