

Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

**Summary of the Case
Bethel University
Graduate Education Program¹
Audit Dates: Apr 20–Apr 22, 2010**

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 is making for accreditation.

Authorship and approval of the Proposal:

The proposal was prepared by Judith Landrum in collaboration with Jay Rasmussen, Gail Jordan, Katie Bonawitz, Louise Wilson, and Lynda VanDriel. The final report was approved on December 18, 2009 by the Program Directors Committee.

Introduction:

Bethel University is a private, Christian, liberal arts institution located in Arden Hills, Minnesota, north of the city of Saint Paul. It offers a traditional undergraduate Christian liberal arts program, adult undergraduate degree completion programs, and graduate programs at the masters and doctorate levels.

Bethel was founded to serve its sponsoring denomination, the Swedish Baptist General Conference, now known as the Baptist General Conference, headquartered in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and the College grew out of previous educational institutions: a seminary (established 1871) and an academy (established in 1905). Until 1996, Bethel College & Seminary was owned and operated by the denomination. In August 1996, Bethel College & Seminary became a Minnesota not-for-profit corporation, an action coinciding with a reorganization of the Baptist General Conference. They are now “twin” corporations. The Bethel Corporation is governed by a board of trustees whose members are elected or confirmed by delegates from the churches of the Baptist General Conference meeting in annual session. The seminary, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Professional Studies (CAPS), and Graduate School (GS) form a single institution under a president and a single board of trustees. The university employs 210 full-time and 224 part-time faculty, and serves 2700 students.

Bethel's Education Department offers a program of study to undergraduate and graduate students seeking degrees in elementary and secondary education. The Education Department's stated mission is “as part of a Christian learning community at Bethel ...to prepare educational leaders for service in public and private schools.” Licensure programs are offered at undergraduate and graduate levels in K-12 education, elementary education, secondary education, special education, and reading.

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The program offers five options: Special Education, Master of Arts of Teaching, Masters in Literacy, Master of Arts in Education, and the Work-based Learning Coordinator Endorsement. Each licensure option is built around State licensure standards: the portfolio, the courses, and the assignments within courses all address Minnesota licensure standards. Bethel's graduate programs operate on a cohort-formed, adult learning model. When a student begins one of the graduate education options, s/he enters into a specific cohort. Each cohort member takes all the same classes together from the beginning to the end of the program, with a few exceptions, so that the cohort model builds community.

The Graduate Teacher Education Program at Bethel University serves 320 students (2008-2009 figures) with 17 full time faculty members as of March, 2009. The entire Graduate School enrolls 1257 students who are served by 33 full time faculty. (It is not clear if these figures represent simply headcounts or full time equivalents.)

Program claim:

The program faculty makes a single claim for its case for accreditation, an holistic focus framed as a question that prompts wondering and inquiry. The primary question guiding the faculty's inquiry is: *Are Bethel graduate students competent, caring, and qualified when they have successfully completed their licensure requirements (as evidenced by meeting the standards) and/or their Master's degree requirements?*

Evidence supporting the claim:

The program faculty is proposing a number of sources of evidence that speak to the main components of TEAC Quality Principle I. The measures include PRAXIS exams, undergraduate transcripts, grades in specific courses, professional portfolios, and admission requirements. The reliability and validity of each measure are discussed in the proposal.

Internal audit:

After conducting a self-audit that involved a large number of faculty and administrators in its planning and interpretation, the program was convinced that the quality control system was operating as it was designed. The self-audit drew four students at random—one student from each option within the program. The students' names guided the self-audit through an inspection of TEAC's capacity standards—including courses, faculty, facilities, equipment, student complaints, and so on.

Plans for program improvement:

An incomplete list of program improvements underway include: a) revising the focus of portfolios; enhancing the depth of portfolio evaluations; strengthening the "working with cultural diversity" components of some options; and improving the evaluation of candidates placed in the reading clinic practicum.

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Statement regarding commitment and capacity:

The self-audit also concluded that the resources available to the program were sufficient to carry out its mission and that the University at large was committed to the program.

¹ Program options include:

Option Name	Level	Number of completers in previous academic year (2008-2009)	Number of students enrolled in current academic year (2009-2010)
Special Education	Masters	161	180
Master's of Arts in Teaching (MAT)	Masters	95	103
Literacy's Masters	Masters	34	29
Master of Arts in Education: K-12	Masters	48	49
Work-based Learning Coordinator Endorsement: Teacher Coordinator of Work Based Learning Licensure (TC-WBL)	Masters	8	7