

**Summary of the Case  
Bethel University  
Undergraduate Education Program<sup>1</sup>  
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 *Inquiry Brief*:**

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by Louise Wilson, Gail Jordan, Sandi Horn, Education Department Contributors, and was approved by the Education Department faculty on February, 2010.

**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.

The Department of Education is an integral part of Bethel University's mission, with education the second-largest major. The Undergraduate Education Program is closely aligned with the ten standards of the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers. Bethel offers undergraduate options leading to licensure for elementary/pre-primary (ages 3 to grade 6), plus elementary/middle (kindergarten to grade 8), K-12, and 5-12 in several subject areas. In 2008-2009 the program graduated 103 students—25 in elementary/pre-primary, 30 in elementary/middle, 30 in K-12, and 18 in 5-12.

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### Program claims:

Completers of Bethel's undergraduate elementary and secondary education programs are competent, caring and qualified as evidenced by meeting the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (MSEPT) and the TEAC quality principles of subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and caring teaching skill.

The MSEPT categories include:

1. Subject Matter
2. Student Learning
3. Diverse Learners
4. Instructional Strategies
5. Learning Environment
6. Communication
7. Planning Instruction
8. Assessment
9. Reflection and Professional Development
10. Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships

### Evidence supporting the claims

- **Course Grades and GPAs** (*subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, teaching skill, learning how to learn, multicultural perspectives, technology*)

The faculty report overall GPAs, content GPAs, and diversity course grades. Grades are considered by the faculty to be valid and reliable because both beginning and current GPAs correlate significantly with PPST scores, Praxis scores, ACT subscores, and with each other, and also because courses have been approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching. Mean overall GPAs, disaggregated by grade level and subject area, ranged from 2.98 to 3.95 over a three-year period. Mean content GPAs for secondary students ranged from 3.1 to 4.0, and mean grades for the Understanding Diversity course over the past three years is 3.59.

- **Student Teaching Evaluations** (*subject matter knowledge, teaching skill, multicultural perspectives, technology*)

Bethel students are evaluated by their cooperating teachers at the conclusion of each of two seven-week student teaching placements, by an instrument aligned with the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice with items in the areas of knowledge of subject matter, planning, instruction, classroom management, and personal/professional qualities. The faculty have investigated the reliability of the evaluations by comparing them to Bethel supervisor ratings for each student, and have examined validity by comparing results to alumni surveys and cooperating teacher program evaluations. Overall means for all items ranged between 3.51 and 3.95 on a scale of 1

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(seldom) to 4 (consistently) over the past three years, with lowest-rated items in aspects of classroom management and lesson design, and highest in communication skills and interaction qualities (respectfulness, ethicality, sensitivity, dependability), with little difference in the overall evaluation across licensure area.

- **Portfolio** (*subject matter knowledge, teaching skill, multicultural perspectives, technology*)

Candidates assemble portfolios of work they have done in the program showing achievement with respect to each of the ten Minnesota standards, along with an analysis of why each artifact was chosen. The faculty have informally assessed the reliability of the portfolio, and have also recently made changes in the process to make portfolio assessment clearer to both students and raters. Overall means for each standard for a random sample of students ranged from 3.29 to 3.48 on a scale of 1 (emerging) to 4 (exemplary).

- **Alumni Survey** (*subject matter knowledge, teaching skill, technology*)

The faculty recently sent surveys to 860 graduates and received 188 responses. Alumni indicated at rates of 86% to 97% that they were adequately or well-prepared in the areas of content knowledge, instructional theory, pedagogical practice, classroom management, and assessment strategies.

- **Cooperating Teacher Survey** (*teaching skill, technology*)

At the end of every semester, cooperating teachers are asked to rate and comment on the students' level of preparation, knowledge of content, and caring attitude. The results of this program assessment converge with those of other measures, with over 90% of teachers agreeing that Bethel teachers were adequately prepared in content, methodology, and were caring.

- **Praxis scores** (*subject matter knowledge, learning how to learn, multicultural perspectives, technology*)

Candidates must pass both the Praxis I and Praxis II tests for Minnesota licensure. The tests have been aligned with the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice. Pass rates on the Praxis I ranged from 98% to 100% on each of the three subsets over the past three years. Pass rates on the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching test ranged from 93% to 100% for each of three grade levels over the past three years. The overall pass rate for all subject areas on the Praxis II content tests increased over three years from 93% to 96%, with a significant problem only in the Spanish cohort in the first year that was ameliorated in subsequent years.

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### Internal audit:

Four members of the Bethel faculty and staff conducted the audit, using a stratified random sample of four students from each of the four undergraduate program option areas (preK-6, K-8, K-12, and 5-12) chosen from the Educational Psychology course. The audit team traced the records of these students through the Educational Psychology course to explore implementation of the quality control system. The team found that in large part the system was working as designed, although they did discover some inconsistencies in record-keeping.

### Plans for program improvement

The faculty have identified several areas for improvement, including:

- revision of Student Teaching Evaluations
- improving student preparation in the areas of special education and English language learners
- considering new specialties for elementary education majors
- continue to develop the portfolio assessment
- using predictive data more effectively
- initiating the use of advisory groups

### Statement regarding commitment and capacity:

The faculty concluded that Bethel University is committed to the Undergraduate Education Program and that there is sufficient capacity to offer a quality program.

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<sup>1</sup> Program options include:

Option Name	Level	Number of students enrolled in current academic year (2009-2010)	Number of completers in previous academic year (2008-2009)
Elementary pre-primary (age 3-grade 6)	Undergraduate	79	25
K-8 Social studies	Undergraduate	17	5
K-8 Communication arts & literature	Undergraduate	22	8
K-8 Science	Undergraduate	13	6
K-8 Mathematics	Undergraduate	18	6
K-8 World languages & culture (French, German, Spanish)	Undergraduate	15	6
K-12 Instrumental & vocal music	Undergraduate	10	6
K-12 Visual arts	Undergraduate	11	2
K-12 Physical education	Undergraduate	24	9
K-12 World languages & culture (French and Spanish)	Undergraduate	20	4

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K-12 Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)	Undergraduate	28	10
5-12 Communication arts & literature	Undergraduate	22	9
5-12 Social studies	Undergraduate	28	15
5-12 Science (chemistry, life science, physics)	Undergraduate	6	3
5-12 Mathematics	Undergraduate	22	3
5-12 Health	Undergraduate	12	1
5-12 Business	Undergraduate	3	0