

Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

**Summary of the Case  
Dixie State College  
Department of Education<sup>1</sup>  
Audit Dates: March 24-25, 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 Tracey L. Wheeler, and was approved by the Department of Education faculty in February, 2010.

**Introduction:**

Dixie State College, located in the rural southern Utah community of St. George, was founded in 1911 by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It has been a public institution since 1933, for many years operating as a junior college, but in 2000 the state legislature granted Dixie State baccalaureate degree status. The college has undergone significant changes over the past ten years during its transition to a four-year institution, balancing its increasing focus on baccalaureate programs and the resources and faculty to support them with its abiding commitment to the local community and open-door policy for many of its programs.

Among the earliest baccalaureate degrees approved was Elementary Education with ESL Endorsement. More recently, the program has initiated options for secondary students, with current options for undergraduate degrees in the areas of English Education, Biology Education, and Biology Education/Integrated Science Endorsement, and a post-baccalaureate option for those with undergraduate degrees in content areas approved by the Utah State Office of Education to earn a teaching certificate. In 2009, the program enrolled 55 elementary students, along with 8 secondary students preparing to teach in the areas of English, business, and Spanish. The students are served by nineteen faculty members, including seven full-time tenure track, and two staff members.

**Program claims:**

The program faculty have aligned their claims with their conceptual framework known by the acronym D.E.S.E.R.T.—**D**iversity, **E**ffective Pedagogy, **S**ubject Matter, **E**nvironment, **R**eflective, **T**eaching Dispositions.

**Claim 1: Diversity**—Teacher candidates understand that diversity differences (i.e., race, gender, ethnicity, culture, exceptionalities, individual differences, etc.) affect learning and, know how to provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of all students (aligned with the TEAC cross-cutting theme of multicultural perspectives).

**Claim 2: Effective Pedagogy**—Teacher candidates can create effective and meaningful instruction and assessments for all students based on required subject matter knowledge, state content standards, curriculum goals, and use

## Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

of technology (aligned with the TEAC component pedagogical knowledge and the TEAC cross-cutting theme of technology).

**Claim 3: Subject Matter**—Teacher candidates have a strong knowledge of the subject matter they will teach and can facilitate the acquisition of that knowledge in their students (aligned with the TEAC component of subject matter knowledge).

**Claim 4: Environment**—Teacher candidates can create physically and emotionally safe classroom environments that encourage active learning, self-motivation, and cooperative interaction among students (aligned with the TEAC component of teaching skill).

**Claim 5: Reflective**—Teacher candidates will be active learners and reflective practitioners, individually and with their colleagues (aligned with the TEAC cross-cutting theme of learning how to learn).

**Claim 6: Teaching Dispositions**—Teacher candidates will foster a caring and professional relationship with students that focus on acceptance and their educational needs (aligned with the TEAC component of teaching skill).

### Evidence supporting the claims

#### ***Student Teaching Field Scores (All Claims)***

The Student Teaching Field Scores are the average final evaluation of student teachers by the clinical supervisor (who observes the student six times throughout the placement) and the mentor teacher. The Student Teaching Evaluation includes 12 items for secondary students, 13 for elementary, each aligned with one of the six D.E.S.E.R.T. claims. All overall mean scores were above 4 on a scale of 1 (not acceptable) to 5 (distinguished), although mean score for the 55 elementary students on the Reflective claim was 3.93, and mean scores for the 8 secondary students on the Diversity and Environment claims were each 3.81. Interrater analysis for a sample of 31 of these 63 students indicated that mentor teachers and clinical supervisors were within 1 point of each other 94% of the time, and within half a point 42% of the time.

#### ***Teacher Work Sample (Claim 2, Claim 4, Claim 5, Claim 6)***

Students must complete a Teacher Work Sample (TWS), which measures their abilities to implement a curriculum unit, during their student teaching semester. The Effective Pedagogy, Environment, and Reflective, claims are each associated with a section of the TWS, which is used as evidence for the corresponding claim, while the total TWS score is used as evidence for the Teaching Dispositions claim. Overall mean scores were above 3.9 on a scale of 1 (not acceptable) to 5 (distinguished). Each TWS is scored by two professors, plus a third when disagreement was more than two points on the five-point scale. Percent agreement increased over the three semesters analyzed from 53% to 88%.

#### ***Eportfolio (Claim 2)***

## Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

Students begin developing an eportfolio in their educational technology class and complete it during their student teaching semester. The scoring rubric and its use are being reviewed—originally, eportfolios were assessed through a 15-minute presentation. Overall mean scores are between 90% and 94% proficiency.

### ***Grade Point Averages and Course Grades (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3)***

The program uses GPAs and specific course grades to support the Diversity (EDUC 2400: Multicultural Education/ESL), Effective Pedagogy (methods courses GPA, EDUC 4500/2500 Education Technology), and Subject Matter (major GPA for elementary, overall GPA for elementary and secondary students) claims. The average of the major GPA was 3.28, average overall GPA was 3.59, and individual course grades fell into the 3.7-3.8 range.

### ***Praxis II Test Scores (Claim 3)***

Teacher candidates take the appropriate Praxis II content test before their student teaching semester and must achieve the Utah passing scores in order to receive non-conditional certification. Average scores overall, and for both elementary and secondary, were 10% to 11% above the Utah passing scores.

### **Internal audit:**

A committee of faculty and staff reviewed a set of 15 randomly-selected student files, representing 10% of students enrolled between 2004 and 2008, against a list of checklist items and probes designed to investigate the quality control processes relating to the program, to students, and to faculty. The committee found the quality control system in large part to be working as designed, although the audit resulted in recommendations for improving quality and/or quality control, including several recommendations for better documentation and communication.

### **Plans for program improvement**

Based on the data collection and analysis the program has done thus far, the faculty have targeted several aspects of the assessment system for improvement, including the revision of assessment instruments and rubrics.

### **Statement regarding commitment and capacity:**

The faculty concluded that Dixie State College is committed to the Department of Education and that there is sufficient capacity to offer a quality program.

---

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

Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

---

<b>Option Name</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Number of completers in previous academic year (Spring and Fall 2009)</b>
Elementary Education	Undergraduate	55
Secondary English Education	Undergraduate	6
Secondary Biology Education	Undergraduate	0
Secondary Biology Education/ Integrated Science Endorsement	Undergraduate	0
Secondary in Utah State Office of Education-approved content area	Post-baccalaureate	2