

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Master of Arts in Educational Leadership Program¹
Audit Dates: October 22-24, 2007

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 Jane Epstein, Marlene Rosenbaum, Carl Schavio, and Vicki Cohen, and was approved by the School of Education faculty on July 12, 2007.

Introduction:

Fairleigh Dickinson University, founded in 1942 as a small junior college, is the currently largest private university in New Jersey, offering locally and nationally recognized programs at two local campuses in Teaneck and Madison, two international campuses, and local community college partner campuses. FDU offers teacher education programs through its University College at the Teaneck (Metropolitan), Madison (Florham), and community college partner campuses.

Candidates in the Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program hold at least a baccalaureate degree and have worked as professionals in schools. The program is a 36-credit hour course including 9 hours of internship, with a non-elective curriculum aligned to the intent of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards. The program is currently in transition, having undergone a year of redesign in 2005-06 during which time no new candidates were admitted. The redesign included a relaxation of the cohort model in order to provide greater flexibility, and a consolidation of program offerings at three regional sites rather than at multiple school sites. Prior to 2005-06, between 125 and 162 students were enrolled in the program annually; in 2005-06 only 87 were enrolled, and current enrollment is rising but not yet at pre-2005 levels.

Program Claims:

With reference to TEAC Component 1.1 (**professional knowledge**), the faculty claim that graduates are qualified to serve as educational leaders (Claim 1).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.2 (**strategic decision-making**), the faculty claim that graduates are competent in decision making as educational leaders (Claim 2).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.3 (**caring leadership skills**), the faculty claim that graduates are caring educational leaders (Claim 3).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, the faculty assert that graduates can think critically, conduct research, self-assess for professional growth and work with all members of the school community.

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, the faculty assert that graduates are sensitive to the needs of a diverse population and promote the success of all students.

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, the faculty assert that graduates are technologically competent and know how to use current technology to enhance the educational process.

Planned evidence to support the claims:

• **Admission Documentation** (Claim 1)

The faculty note that admission standards serve to insure that accepted candidates are successful school professionals with leadership potential. The faculty believe that the combination of appropriate undergraduate coursework, undergraduate GPAs of 2.75 or more, passing Praxis scores, evidence of career success and potential, and a satisfactory writing sample have predictive validity with respect to program performance. The faculty describe a plan to correlate admissions GPA with final program GPA in order to test validity of this admission requirement.

• **GPA and Candidates' Grades** (Claim 1)

The faculty note that the curriculum is aligned with ISLLC standards, and grades indicate progress through the curriculum. The faculty are working to establish educational leader performances, and also plan to correlate final GPAs with SLLA scores.

• **Internship Logs** (Claim 1)

Interns in the program must log their time involved in each of 12 categories of administrative experience. The faculty have aligned the internship expectations with ISLLC standards, and have commissioned an external review to confirm their alignment. The faculty plan that both mentors and mentees will be trained in the use of the internship logs.

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- **PRAXIS for Administration and Supervision** (Claim 1, Claim 2)
 The PRAXIS Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision test is a standardized assessment administered by the Educational Testing Service and is designed to measure job-related knowledge for an educational administrator. All program graduates are encouraged to take this exam, but only those seeking principal certification are required to do so.
- **School Leaders Licensure Assessment** (Claim 1, Claim 2)
 The SLLA is a standardized assessment administered by the Educational Testing Service and closely aligns with the ISLLC (NJPSSL) Standards, which in turn align with the faculty's claims. All program graduates are encouraged to take this exam, but only those seeking principal certification are required to do so.
- **Selected student performance tasks** (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3)
 Performance tasks are open-ended course assignments linked to particular ISLLC standards. The faculty analyzed several performance tasks for reflection of the following three elements: (1) student learning as central purpose, (2) collegial/collaborative environment for effective education, and (3) high expectations for all. The faculty have aligned the performance task expectations with ISLLC standards, and have commissioned an external review to confirm their alignment.
- **Intern Performance Evaluation Form** (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3)
 The IPEF is a locally-constructed instrument aligned to ISLLC standards, with 4-7 items for each standard. The faculty indicate that they will revise the IPEF in response to external review regarding the alignment of the IPEF with ISLLC standards. The faculty plan to train IPEF raters in the use of the instrument.

Internal Audit:

The faculty audited the quality control system using the folders of 30 QUEST, MAT, and TSD students who represented the range of program sites as points of entry. They found that the quality control system was working well overall—in particular, that student advisement was well-coordinated, that faculty were appropriately hired, reviewed, and mentored, and that technology was integrated into the curriculum. The faculty also identified areas in which they felt the quality control system could be strengthened, including increased gathering of data from candidates at specified points during and beyond the program, and institution of external review on a five-year cycle.

Plan for program improvement:

The faculty's proposed improvements related to the internship, including adding a seminar in order to increase candidates' interaction with faculty and peers about their experiences and placing candidates exclusively in their home districts in order to better facilitate faculty monitoring and to enhance benefit to the candidate and his/her district.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

The faculty provided the following evidence:

- (4.1) The curricular requirements meet state and institutional standards, and credit-hour requirements for the MAT are comparable to those of other masters degree programs at Fairleigh Dickinson.
- (4.2) The School of Education faculty approved and contributed to the Inquiry Brief Proposal. All are qualified for the courses they teach. The SOE faculty tend to have lower ranks and salaries than their counterparts elsewhere on campus, although this is due in part to the fact that many are new. The coverage of SOE courses by full-time faculty is markedly less than that of almost all other Fairleigh Dickinson programs and is well short of the strategic plan goal percentages.
- (4.3) The School of Education has access to library, technology, and budgetary support. Facilities on the Metropolitan campus are sufficient, but facilities on the Florham Park campus are inadequate.
- (4.4) The university is in a sound financial position. School of Education faculty have access to the same travel and technology resources as other faculty at Fairleigh Dickinson. Because of the way faculty is assigned and students are counted, the SOE at the Florham Park campus contributes more to overhead (65% as compared to 50%) than is required by the Board of Trustees.
- (4.5) All Fairleigh Dickinson have the same access to a variety of student support services.
- (4.6) Campus-wide admissions policies encourage diversity, and the SOE is engaged in an initiative to specifically recruit more diverse education students, who are currently predominantly white and non-Hispanic. Published materials are consistent with the Inquiry Brief Proposal.
- (4.7) All Fairleigh Dickinson students have access to the same grievance procedure. Grievances from education students are comparable to those in other programs.

The faculty concluded that Fairleigh Dickinson University is committed to the teacher education program.

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

MA in Educational Leadership candidates matriculated into the Educational Leadership Program seek a master's degree in educational leadership. These candidates complete the full 36-credit program, which includes a 9-credit internship. At the completion of the program these candidates are qualified to seek both New Jersey Department of Education certificate of eligibility for principal and the supervisor endorsement.