

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Georgian Court University
Teacher Education Program ¹
Audit Dates: September 15-17, 2008

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 Jacqueline Kress, Mary Lee Batesko, Barbara Cordasco, Lynn DeCapua, and Joanne Kenny, and was unanimously approved by the School of Education faculty at a special meeting of the faculty on April 17, 2008.

Introduction:

Georgian Court University, located in Lakewood, NJ near the Jersey shore, was founded by the Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey as a Roman Catholic women's liberal arts college, originally called Mount St. Mary's until the college moved in 1924 to the George Jay Gould property in Lakewood and took the name of the estate. Today Georgian Court serves 3000 students, including nearly 2000 undergraduates, and offers coeducational programs while maintaining a special focus on women.

The mission of the School of Education references the Mercy core values of justice, respect, compassion, integrity, and service, and emphasizes inclusive education as evidenced by the requirement that all teacher education students earn an endorsement in Teaching Students With Disabilities (TSWD). The SOE, which became a separate unit of the university in 2000, has seen a number of organizational and personnel changes in recent years. The SOE administration, has been structured in a number of ways in its short history. The current dean is the third in three years, and fifteen of the twenty-six education faculty members have been hired since 2004. At the time the Inquiry Brief Proposal was written, the SOE administration consisted of a dean and two chairs. It currently has a dean and one chair.

During the academic year of 2007-08, the program served 1212 students pursuing initial teacher certification at the undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, or graduate level, including 154 in two off-campus locations. Program options include:

- Elementary Teacher (K-5) with TSWD Endorsement
- Elementary Teacher (K-5) with TSWD Endorsement and Endorsement to teach a Specific Subject in Grades 5-8 (language arts/literacy, social studies, mathematics, Spanish, science)

- Teacher of a Specific Subject K-12 (art, biological science, English, mathematics, music, physical science, social studies, Spanish) with TSWD Endorsement
- Teacher of English as a Second Language and Elementary Teacher (K-5) with TSWD Endorsement
- Teacher of English as a Second Language and Elementary Teacher (K-5) with TSWD Endorsement and a Teacher of a Specific Subject in Grades 5-8 (Spanish)
- Teacher of English as a Second Language and as a Teacher of a Specific Subject K-12 (art, biological science, English, mathematics, music, physical science, social studies, Spanish) with TSWD Endorsement

Program claims:

With reference to TEAC Component 1.1 (**subject matter knowledge**), the faculty claim that program completers acquire content knowledge (Claim 1).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.2 (**pedagogical knowledge**) and the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, the faculty claim that program completers create effective learning environments (Claim 3).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.3 (**teaching skill**) and the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, the faculty claim that program completers focus on learners (Claim 2).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, the faculty assert that program completers become professionals who can link their practice to educational theory and can use resources to enhance their teaching (Claim 4).

Evidence supporting the claims:

- **Basic Skills Examinations (Claim 1)**

Students must demonstrate proficiency in basic skills through the passage of standardized tests (Praxis I, Accuplacer), or documentation from a previous institution that they were not required to take remedial courses. Evidence of basic skills was present for 86% of a random sample of 59 program completers.

- **Praxis II Content Knowledge Examinations (Claim 1)**

Praxis II examinations are the Educational Testing Service content-area examinations for teachers. Over the past three years, 901 Georgian Court program completers have taken Praxis II with a 99% pass rate.

- **Complete Content Requirements in General Education and Major (Claim 1)**

Students are required to take a minimum of 60 credit hours combined of general education and content major requirements. The faculty note that the

liberal arts foundation established through these courses “helps student integrate and apply knowledge from multiple perspectives, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, and develop critical thinking skills.” Evidence of completion of these requirements was identified for 97% of a random sample of 59 program completers.

- **Course Grades (Claims 2, 3, 4)**
Students must take courses in three areas (child and adolescent psychology, educational psychology, and multicultural relations) whose goals align with Claim 2, and they must take ED3100: Instructional Technology, whose goals align with Claim 3 and Claim 4. Average course grades for the sample of 59 students ranged from 3.44 to 3.52.
- **Ratings of Student Teaching (Claims 1, 2, 3, 4)**
At end of the 15-week student teaching placement, cooperating teachers and clinical supervisors rate students on one to five items aligned with each of the four claims. Average ratings for approximately 200 students over three semesters mostly fell between 3 (highly proficient) and 4 (exemplary).
- **Ratings of Course-Embedded Artifacts (Claims 2, 3, 4)**
The faculty have identified between one and three course artifacts that align with Claims 2, 3, and 4. Average ratings of these artifacts by course instructors, using a common rubric, exceeded 3.5 on a scale in which 3 signifies highly proficient and 4 signifies exemplary.
- **Post-program Survey (Claims 1, 2, 3, 4)**
The faculty plan to survey students about their preparation for teaching a year after program completion, with one to four survey items associated with each of the four claims. This survey had not been implemented at the time the IBP was written.

Internal audit:

Four faculty members tested the quality control system, using a 20% random sample of 59 2006-07 program completers and 20 randomly-selected courses, looking at requirements at three gateways as well as grades for four specific courses:

- 4.1 Curriculum:** The internal audit found documentation of state approval for all new program curricula, and were able to verify approval for old-code curricula online. Most full-time faculty and about a third of adjunct faculty had course syllabi on file, and the faculty plans to communicate the syllabus policy more clearly in the future. Most curricular requirements at each gateway could be verified for the sampled students.
- 4.2 Faculty:** All sampled full-time faculty held doctorates and all sampled adjunct faculty held at least masters degrees in relevant areas. In a sample of 20 courses offered, 6 were taught by full-time faculty and 14 by adjunct faculty, which upon investigation the faculty found to be a higher adjunct-taught proportion than institutional research data indicates had been the case in 2006.

- 4.3 Facilities:** The audit found that 55% of education classes were assigned to original estate buildings, which offer limited instructional equipment relative to other GCU classrooms.
- 4.4 Fiscal & Administrative Capacity:** Development and travel funds are available to both full-time and adjunct faculty, as evidenced by the inclusion of adjunct faculty in recent TaskStream training.
- 4.5 Student Support Services:** Campus-wide services are available to Lakewood students, and advising is available to program students in off-campus sites.
- 4.6 Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading and advertising:** Most sampled students met the GPA standard upon admission, and all students met the standard by the end of Phase I of their program. The faculty identified two issues of inconsistency between SOE and GCU policies and will work to resolve them.
- 4.7 Student Feedback:** GCU faculty are required to submit evaluations for some, but not all, courses. The internal audit found evaluations for 5 of 20 sampled sections, but could not determine whether evaluation policies were followed.

Plan for program improvement:

The faculty identified areas for program improvement, and plan to do the following:

- Use admission recommendations and candidate interviews to gather pre-program data on candidates' beliefs and dispositions.
- Solicit information from content area faculty at application.
- Revise performance tasks and assessment instruments to be more representative of the professional knowledge or skill of interest.
- Revise performance task rubrics to better discriminate among proficiency levels.
- Train raters on the use of the assessment instruments and measure inter-rater reliability.
- Monitor number of attempts to pass Praxis II in addition to monitoring pass rates.
- Analyze Praxis II subtest scores and share areas of concern with content area faculty.
- Implement annual program completer survey.

Evidence of commitment:

- 4.1 Curriculum:** The total number of credit hours required for a degree meets or exceeds those for GCU degrees in general.
- 4.2 Faculty:** The SOE has a more even gender balance and a similar ethnic balance to the GCU faculty as a whole. A greater percentage of SOE faculty hold doctorates, although fewer are tenured due in part to the high number of recent hires.

4.3 Facilities: The SOE space is non-contiguous and isolated from the rest of the GCU campus, and SOE buildings are old and unlikely to be renovated. University administration is aware of these issues and will develop strategies to address them.

4.4 Fiscal & Administrative Capacity: The SOE operating budget is on par with those of other units relative to student credit hour contribution, but a large portion of the budgeted funds are used for the special expenses of the program including cooperating teacher stipends and supervisor travel funds, limiting resources for general operations of the programs..

4.5 Student Support Services: SOE are eligible for all GCU student services, although evening students have limited access.

4.6 Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading and advertising: SOE students are subject to the same admission and grading policies and academic schedule as all GCU students, and the SOE is represented in and supported by university publications such as the academic catalog and the website.

4.7 Student Feedback: The Academic Standards Committee report indicates no significant problems among SOE students.

The faculty concluded that Georgian Court 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:

- Elementary Teacher (K-5) with TSWD Endorsement
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