

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Houghton College
**The Undergraduate Teacher Education Program in elementary,
secondary, music and physical education¹**
Audit Dates: January 31- February 2, 2005

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*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by Drs. Mark LaCelle-Peterson and Daniel Woolsey in collaboration with Houghton College Teacher Education Program faculty. The faculty in the Department of Education and the Houghton College Teacher Education Committee endorsed the penultimate draft of the *Inquiry Brief* on June 7, 2004. Associate Professor of Education, Dr. LaCelle-Peterson and Professor of Education, Dr. Woolsey organized and analyzed the data of the internal audit, and revisions were completed to the *Inquiry Brief* on December 10, 2004 in response to TEAC comments.

Introduction:

Houghton College is a four-year, residential Christian college of liberal arts and sciences located in western New York State. Currently, 220 of the College's over 1200 students (approximately 18%) are preparing for careers as elementary, secondary, music, or physical education teachers. The mission of the Houghton Teacher Education Program (HCTEP) is to equip teachers for transformative learning and service. Graduates of the HCTEP are recommended for New York State Teacher Certification in Childhood Education, Adolescence Education, Music Education or Physical Education. These four strands within the HCTEP correspond to these certification areas. Houghton College regards its Teacher Education Program as one entity in the TEAC context; per regulatory requirement, each program strand is registered as a separate program (or programs, in the case of Adolescence Education) with New York State. The HCTEP is coordinated by the Teacher Education Committee, which is comprised of all members of the Education Department and Houghton College faculty from other departments who are responsible for regularly teaching courses and/or supervising student teachers in any of the four program strands. This committee is led by the Chair of the Education Department.

The HCTEP is structured around the College's commitments to academic excellence and Christian service by organizing six key principles for its four strands: the liberal arts are fundamental, specialized scholarship is central, foundational perspectives in education are essential, professional components

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are rigorously grounded in theory and research, service and field experiences enrich study, and performance is continuously monitored.

Six of the ten HCTEP core faculty members hold earned doctorates; two more are within a year of completion of the PhD. Nine of the ten HCTEP core faculty members hold tenure track positions, and four have already achieved tenure.

Claims for Student Learning and *Quality Principle I:*

The program faculty members make three overall claims about their students: that they are competent scholars (Goal 1), reflective teachers (Goal 2), and caring professionals (Goal 3). These overall claims are further defined with the following ten claims about the Houghton preservice teachers in their program:

Competent Scholars:

1. They demonstrate a breadth and depth of subject matter knowledge and facility with the intellectual tools of the liberal arts.
2. They articulate a personal philosophy of education based on their knowledge of the cultural, historical, philosophical, and psychological foundations of education that informs and gives coherence to their teaching.
3. They demonstrate the desire and means to pursue life long growth as learners and educators.

Reflective Teachers:

4. They understand and foster students' cognitive, psychological, social and moral development.
5. They integrate the knowledge and intellectual tools of the liberal arts with pedagogical knowledge to create instruction and assessment practices that meet the varied learning needs of diverse students.
6. They apply pedagogical knowledge and understanding of diverse learners to develop learning environments that nurture and value each student.
7. They work in partnership with students, educational professionals, parents, and community members to foster students' learning and development.

Caring Professionals:

8. They respect cultural diversity in their school contexts, and develop culturally relevant learning communities that strengthen students' sense of self and promote community development.

9. They consider the variety of institutions and community settings in which they might teach, including rural, urban, and suburban; public and private; American and International.

10. They develop and critique educational thought and practice in light of Christian faith, and demonstrate ethical and moral integrity in their personal and professional behavior.

These ten claims are also linked and aligned with the New York State requirements for programs leading to the initial teaching certificate, the INTASC Standards, the components of TEAC's overall goal, the components of TEAC's *Quality Principle I*, and three to five categories of evidence for each claim.

Evidence Supporting the Claims:

The HCTEP program faculty members rely on multiple methods of assessment for evidence regarding the veracity of its claims. These assessments are enhanced by the faculty's intimate knowledge of its students owing the relatively small size of the College and the HCTEP. Evidence is collected from current students as well as from program graduates, from program-embedded sources as well as from externally administered standardized measures and in direct observations from the perspective of the HCTEP faculty. The sources of evidence for each claim are combinations of the following:

1. HCTEP Student Portfolios of two artifacts for each of the ten claims, a rationale for the artifacts, the students' assessments their value and meaning, and all evaluated before and after student teaching.
2. Field placement evaluations by the faculty and cooperating teachers
3. Three New York Teacher Certification Examination scores (NYSTCEs) -- (Liberal Arts & Science Test, Content Specialty Test and Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written)
4. Two surveys (program graduates and their employers) on 20 items related to the ten claims
5. Selected Course grades that are related to the ten claims

The HCTEP assessment framework is designed to provide trustworthy evidence regarding the ten program claims. The framework ensures that every student is assessed continuously throughout her or his participation in the program, that multiple faculty members and K-12 partners take part in the assessment at various stages and checkpoints, and that the evidence considered includes both program-embedded and externally developed direct and indirect measures that yield both quantitative and qualitative data.

Findings:

The HCTEP faculty addressed their concerns and claims for the reliability and validity of each of the five categories of evidence they employed and reported a reasonable basis for concluding that their assessments were reliable and valid. The evidence for each of the three overall claims was disaggregated for the four program strands and was comparable in nearly all instances.

With regard to each measure, the magnitude of the scores were sufficiently high in absolute and relative terms that the faculty concluded that there was ample evidence to support their overall claims that their students are competent scholars and that they will be reflective and caring teachers and that each of the ten subsidiary claims was individually supported as well.

In particular, the portfolio scores were on average no less than 14/16 for each related claim, the overall cooperating teachers ratings of the students were at least 90/100 on each overall claim, between 97% and 99% of the students passed the state certification tests (compared to 70% in the average NYS program) at magnitudes that consistently exceeded the state means in all program strands, the graduates and their employers felt the students were *well* or *very well* prepared in nearly all areas of the claims, and the mean course grades in nearly all instances related to the program claims were above 3.0/4.0.

Internal Audit:

HCTEP conducted an internal audit during the first week of June 2004 to test the program's Quality Control System. The actual internal audit was conducted by LaCelle-Peterson and Woolsey with the assistance of the personnel in the Office of the Academic Dean, the Office of Academic Records, and the Office of Student Financial Services who provided specific data upon request. Twenty-six HCTEP students were selected from the four strands of HCTEP. Different probes were framed in order to examine the extent of the quality control system that related to all seven of the quality control dimensions. The number of students selected was proportionate to the relative size of the four programs, representing at least 11% of the population in each strand. With a few minor exceptions, the internal audit showed that the system functioned as it was intended to function.

Evidence of capacity:

The faculty undertook an extensive analysis of commitment (parity) and found the program was generally well-supported by Houghton College in each of the seven capacity dimensions. One insight that has been gained through this process is that HCTEP library allotments are fairly modest given the number of hours sold to students and the number of FTE faculty members connected to the department. The faculty concluded, on the bases of this analysis in Chapter 4 of the *Inquiry Brief* that Houghton College is fully committed to the

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teacher education program and that it has the capacity to offer a teacher education program in a fashion that leads to high quality programs, faculty and students.

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

Childhood Education, Adolescence Education (these first two offered through the Education Department), Music Education (offered through the School of Music), and Physical Education (offered through the Department of Physical Education/Exercise Studies and Recreation/Leisure)