

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Lesley University
Professional Development Masters Program in Education¹
Audit Dates: April 24 – 25, 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*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by William Stokes, Gene Diaz, and in collaboration with David Haselkorn and Linda Pursley of Lesley University. The faculty approved engagement in the TEAC process in May 2005.

Introduction and program demographics:

Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts was founded in 1909 as a teacher training institute and today it is comprised of four schools: the School of Education, which enrolls over 60% of its students, the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, the Art Institute of Boston, and Lesley College. It has 178 core faculty members in Cambridge.

The University is seeking accreditation for its professional development masters degree program, called the PDMED, which is offered nationally to 3,900 students at 150 off-campus sites in 23 states as an intensive two weekend activity of 46 total contact hours by 346 faculty members (42 from Cambridge, 24 from around the nation who teach at least five courses a year, and 280 local adjuncts). The program is designed for current teachers who want specialized training in technology, integrated teaching through the arts, or literacy instruction and curriculum in a cohort based program that emphasizes progressive and constructivist values, multiculturalism, inclusion, social justice and an action research application of theory in practice.

Program Claims:

The faculty members make five basic claims about their program. With regard to their area of specialization, the graduates:

1. Understand the relevant content, standards, and research.
2. Can create instructional and assessment strategies that are developmentally appropriate.
3. Can create equitable and inclusive learning environments that respect and value differences in race, class, language, and ability.
4. Can enhance their teaching with multimedia technologies.
5. Can reflect on their effectiveness as teachers and leaders and advance collaboratively the practices of the profession.

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Assessments and Results:

The faculty relies on three categories of evidence to support its claims – the self-assessments of samples of program’s students and assessments of samples of students by the faculty and employers. By and large these assessments show the following:

1. An overall GPA of 3.9/4.0 for the program’s students
2. Average ratings of 3.40+/5.00 by forty-five faculty members who evaluated 507 samples of student work from 131 courses by a common rubric (1-5) on 20 factors associated with each claim.
3. High percentages (60-90%) of positive responses from 2,185 program completers in 2004-06 on Exit Surveys to questions about the enhancement of their teaching skills in various areas related to the claims.
4. Average ratings in the 4.45+/5.00 range by 2,174 students on the strength of their agreement with one key overall statement on the course evaluation assessment (*The course enriched my understanding of the subject...*).
5. High percentages (75-90+%) of agreement, and high average ratings (4.00+/5.00), from 283 alumni (9% of the 3,020 program alumni) to statements related the claims with regard to their development and enrichment in the program.
6. High percentages (80+-90+%) of 56 employers responded affirmatively to the graduates having increased student learning in various ways

On the whole, the faculty found small, but statistically significant, differences among the scores (all in the 3.21-3.84/5.00 range) of the students in the three program options, which could be attributed to differences in the three faculty groups or to true differences in the students’ accomplishments. The ratings from the “integrated teaching through the arts program option” were usually higher for each claim, but appropriately the technology in education option students scored higher on claim 4 (technology).

The faculty examined the inter-rater reliability of their evaluation of samples of student work by having pairs of faculty rate 170 samples and they reported an overall correlation of .78 between raters 1 and 2 and high percentages of agreement (90%) on some rating decisions (e.g., when there was no evidence for a claim).

Program Improvement Plan:

The faculty concluded, based on the convergence of the evidence, that its claims were supported satisfactorily. Nevertheless, they felt a number of areas still merit further exploration – lack of uniformity in data retention, more precise alignment of courses, assessments and claims, more attention to the social justice assessment, and better mentoring of the adjunct faculty. The faculty

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sees the need to explore their graduates' impact on their own classroom performance as a next step in the support of their claims and also to extend the benefits of their work sample quality review (APAR) to all Lesley programs.

Internal Audit:

Lesley's inquiry into its program is led by a Steering Committee of 18 members (faculty and administrators) who have roles in the Lesley quality control system. An internal audit team of eleven faculty and administrators drew 12 students' names at random (four from each program option) as the start of a systematic 28 step probe of the system, which revealed concerns in seven areas. On the whole the system, given its complexity across 150 sites, is operating successfully. The weaknesses that were identified seem to have technological solutions which are being implemented.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

The faculty concluded that the institution was committed to the program. They based their conclusion of the fact that there was comparability and parity between the institutional core faculty and the core program faculty and that policies and practices were otherwise uniform across the program and institution. The National Operations Group, for example, ensures that the off-campus sites are comparable and adhere to uniform requirements.

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

The program submitted by Lesley University's Professional Development Masters Degree Program is granted Initial Accreditations. The three post-licensure options included in the program are Technology in Education, Integrated Teaching through the Arts, and Curriculum and Instruction: Literacy.