

Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

**Summary of the Case
Montana State University
Educational Leadership Program¹
Audit Dates: February 28 – March 3, 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.

Inquiry Brief Authors:

The program faculty of the educational leadership program wrote the *Brief* and approved it on December 4, 2009.

Introduction:

Montana State University, located in the Rocky Mountains of Bozeman, Montana, was founded to improve the lives of Montanans and in 1893 became the state's land-grant institution with a presence in each of Montana's 56 counties and 7 Indian reservations. Its nearly 800 full time faculty serve approximately 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students in eight colleges, which confer about 2300 undergraduate and graduate degrees annually (1800 bachelor's, 430 master's and 50 doctoral).

The educational leadership program¹ is offered annually to approximately 160 students by five core and five adjunct faculty members of the College of Education, Health, and Human Development, which houses the program. The college overall serves approximately 1400 students, excluding secondary education majors and minors. The program is designed around a three-point framework—*rigor, relevancy, and relationships* – which refer to both the nature of the program and the students' accomplishments. The program claims to be rigorous, relevant to today's problems, and built on relationships of trust and accountability, and it claims also that its graduates' knowledge is rigorous, relevant and embedded in the network of relationships required for successful leadership of today's schools.

The program is designed to prepare students to be school principals and district superintendents and is organized in five cohorts (an M.Ed. on-line cohort with summer face-to-face sessions, a Native American school leaders cohort, a M.Ed. rural schools cohort, cohorts by geographic regions of Montana, and an Ed.D. cohort).

Program Claims

The program claims are based on the principles contained in the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC) standards, which the faculty members have organized as three overall claims, aligned also with TEAC's quality principles for educational leadership.

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The faculty members claim that their students --

1. Have acquired the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students and that this knowledge enables them to articulate a vision of schooling, apply best practices, and to manage effectively.
2. Know how to make effective and ethical leadership decisions based on their acquired knowledge.
3. Can create a socially just and caring professional learning community that meets the needs of all students, can respond to community needs, act with integrity and fairness, and secure the larger community's support for education.

Proposed Evidence Supporting the Claims:

The faculty members propose to rely on ten categories of evidence to support their claims.

1. Admission standards based on prior grades, GRE or MAT scores (only students in the doctoral option), and an admission rubric based on ratings from three faculty members of the materials required for admission (viz., letters of reference, candidate statement, teaching experience, and professional appearance of the application).
2. Course grades that are linked to specific claims
3. A portfolio, scored by each of its four sections, linked to the claims (Section 1: the candidates' beliefs about leadership linked to concrete examples in practice, Section 2: professional growth plan, Section 3: artifacts, and Section 4: reflections on best practice).
4. A comprehensive examination (written & oral), scored in two parts – leadership and research methodology (only the Ed.D. degree option).
5. An oral defense of the portfolio (only the M.Ed option).
6. The Leadership Performance Inventory (LPI), a 360 degree evaluation of the candidate by the candidate him/herself and by five on-site raters (only in the doctoral option).
7. A school or district supervisor rating of the candidate during field experience.
8. An exit survey about the graduate's self-efficacy and quality of the program
9. A follow-up survey of graduates in their subsequent positions about the quality of the program

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10. Grades on *signature assignments* in certain courses graded by all faculty who teach the course and linked to certain claims.

The few results that are available are encouraging insofar as mean course grades range from 2.99 to 3.97 (sd=.27) and a follow-up survey of 108 graduates shows ratings in the 6 to 7 point range (out of nine) for the quality of the faculty and their instruction. Ratings of the field and internship experiences were below 5.00, however. Until now the scores from the other measures were pass/fail or not recorded.

Internal Audit:

The faculty sampled 20 students from the prior four years (1 doctoral student and 19 masters' students). The faculty checked approximately 60 indicators in their quality control system and found all but three were satisfied by the sample. They found, for example, that 95% of students admitted to the program met 100% of the admissions criteria and that although every student had a field supervisor, only 39% (7) of the site supervisor evaluations were found with student files. They found that enrollments in their courses met the program standard of 20 for master's level and 15 for doctoral level about 84% of the time.

Commitment

With regard to parity, the faculty compared itself to the college's counseling program because it was the only other graduate program in the college requiring accreditation and licensure. On the whole, there was parity which led the faculty to conclude that Montana State University is committed to educational leadership program and that there is sufficient capacity to offer a quality program.

¹ The program has options for graduate study for the principal's license (M.Ed degree) for elementary, secondary, and K-12 schools. It has three additional options that lead to a superintendent's license (certification only, Ed. Specialist degree and the Ed.D degree).

The state of Montana, at its discretion, offers administrative licenses to program completers in these the option areas.