

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Teacher Education and Certification Program¹
Audit Dates: November 16-17, 2006

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 Dr. Alexander Urbiel and approved by the Teacher Education and Certification Program Faculty on April 26, 2006, and revised and submitted on August 16, 2006.

Introduction

Ramapo College of New Jersey is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to promoting teaching and learning within a strong liberal arts-based curriculum. Included in this emphasis are the liberal arts and sciences, social sciences, fine and performing arts and professional programs.

Ramapo identifies four pillars of excellence:

- interdisciplinary curriculum
- international education
- intercultural understanding
- experiential learning.

These pillars are communicated locally as well as globally with partnerships in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and several Native American tribal communities.

Through its nearly one-hundred student organizations, intramural sports and collegiate athletics, and by partnering with area communities, corporations, schools, service organizations and governmental entities, Ramapo College provides a rich living and educational climate for students.

The Teacher Education and Certification Program is housed in the School of Social Science and Human Services (SSHS), with the Director of Teacher Education reporting to the Dean of SSHS. In Fall 2005, 469 students were pursuing certification, which represents 11% of the undergraduate student population. Compared to the college population as a whole, females are overrepresented and minority students are underrepresented in Teacher Education.

The distinctiveness of the program is its integration of its activities into the life of the college at large, wherein teacher education faculty regularly participate in other college programs, faculty from outside teacher education contribute to the training and support of teacher education students, and all program students maintain academic majors. The program is currently undergoing dramatic change, prompted by alignment of the program with New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, the college-wide Curriculum Enhancement Plan which reduces the number of courses but expands individual course content, and preparation for TEAC accreditation.

With nine full-time faculty, seven part-time faculty, and one staff member teaching classes, the College offers the following endorsements, each of which is offered at either the undergraduate or the post-graduate level, that are being considered for accreditation:

Endorsement

(offered at either undergraduate or post-graduate level)

- Elementary Education
- Art
- Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physical Science, Physics)
- Languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish)
- Business Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Music
- Psychology
- Social Studies
- Speech Arts and Dramatic Arts

Program claims and proposed supporting evidence

The faculty claim the following with reference to TEAC Component 1.1 **(subject matter knowledge)** :

- *Ramapo College program completers understand the subject matter they will be teaching.*

The faculty claim the following with reference to TEAC Component 1.2 **(pedagogical knowledge)** :

- *Ramapo College program completers understand pedagogy and can convert subject matter knowledge into compelling lessons that meet the needs of diverse learners.*

The faculty claim the following with reference to TEAC Component 1.3 (**teaching skill**):

- *Ramapo College program completers are caring and competent beginning professionals.*

In addition to these claims, the faculty assert that:

- With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, program completers know and understand the evolving nature of the discipline or the subject matter knowledge and the need for keeping abreast of new ideas and understanding of the discipline.
- With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, program completers explore diversity and how it impacts education structures and practices.
- With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, candidates know and understand a variety of instructional approaches and the use of various technologies to promote thinking and understanding. Teachers engage in activities and materials, incorporating a wide range of community and technology resources to promote achievement and lesson objectives.

The faculty report the following as evidence to support their claims

- Scores on the Praxis I and Praxis II (*Claim 1*)
- Grade point averages (*Claim 1*)
- Grades in specific courses (cross-cutting themes)
- Ratings of student teaching from cooperating teachers and college supervisors (*Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3*, cross-cutting themes)
- Portfolios ratings (*Claim 2*, cross-cutting themes)
- Behaviors of Caring Pre-Professionals (BCPP) dispositions rubric (*Claim 3*)

Reliability and validity measures

Measures that address reliability and validity reported in the *Inquiry BriefProposal* are listed herein:

- Praxis I and Praxis II

The faculty note that Praxis validity is based on nationally recognized methods of job analysis that the Praxis program uses to define its assessments, although further research on the appropriateness of the minimum scores required for program admission is warranted.

- Grade point averages

Minimum GPAs required for teaching certification is determined by the state and the cutoff levels are supported by research, although further research on predictive validity of GPAs is warranted.

- Grades in specific courses

Validity of these grades is based on their alignment with the relevant cross-cutting themes.

- Ratings of student teaching from cooperating teachers and college supervisors

The faculty note that while cooperating teachers have a comprehensive view of student teachers and college supervisors get a “snapshot” view, correlations between the two sets of raters are high.

- Portfolios ratings

The faculty assert that portfolios have face validity, and that threats to portfolio rating validity are minimized by the low stakes for individual students and the small number of students. Faculty members have undergone training to assure reliability of portfolio ratings.

- Behaviors of Caring Pre-Professionals (BCPP) dispositions ratings

The faculty have aligned the BCPP with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teaching, and have refined the instrument according to critical thinking literature and feedback from students and from faculty from sister institutions.

Results

The authors note that since the program is new and there is little data from which to draw, most of the results will be speculative. However, they do report some preliminary data:

- Mean scores on the Praxis I and Praxis II were above passing in all subject areas
- Grade point averages for program completers were overall higher than those of non-program completers at Ramapo College
- Mean grades in specific courses were 3.26 or above
- Mean ratings of student teaching from cooperating teachers and college supervisors were between 2 (sufficient) and 3 (exemplary).
- The portfolios rating procedures are being developed

- The Behaviors of Caring Pre-Professionals (BCPP) dispositions rating procedures are being developed

Internal audit

The Internal Audit was conducted by one program faculty and the coordinator for the College's Provisional Teacher Program on April 18, 2006. The audit team reviewed six arbitrarily-selected student files, all courses in the curriculum, hiring procedures for three recently-advertised positions, faculty offices all classrooms used for education courses in Spring 2006, budget reports, and a sample of course evaluation forms, and found the following:

- All curricular courses complied with the prescribed guidelines.
- All procedures for recruitment, hiring, development and promotion of faculty articulated with contracts with the State and the American Federation of Teachers.
- All classrooms used during the Spring 2006 semester were appropriate to the course that were taught in them. Additionally, office space for faculty was comparable with office space for other departments.
- The level of funding was equitable between the Teacher Education and Certification area and other areas of the College, although there was some difficulty in following the lines of impact directly since many of the funds are co-mingled with the parent group of Teacher Education and Certification, the School of Social Sciences and Human Services.
- Student services were adequate and equitable throughout the entire College. The team also examined seven student folders and found them all to be in order with regard to entries reflective of student services.
- Recruiting and admissions for all those examined were in concert with the declared policies for recruiting and admitting students, particularly with reference to the inclusion of scores on the Praxis exams.
- Students had the opportunity to offer feedback, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The program also plans future internal audits conducted by (a) Ramapo College faculty members who are not part of the Teacher Education and Certification Program, and (b) faculty members from another teacher education program in New Jersey.

Evidence of commitment and capacity

The authors reported the following:

- The Teacher Education and Certification Program requires the same number of credits for certification as do majors in other areas of the College;

- The percentage of faculty with terminal degrees in Teacher Education and Certification is slightly more than that of the faculty college-wide;
- Facilities, supplies and equipment are adequate for the program;
- The College has adequate resources and distributes them appropriately;
- Student support services are available and are used;
- Admission and mentoring policies are maintained throughout the entire College, including the Teacher Education and Certification area;
- Student feedback is in evidence as identified in various documents.

The authors of the *Inquiry Brief Proposal* conclude that Ramapo College is committed to the Teacher Education and Certification 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 Education
- Art
- Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physical Science, Physics)
- Languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish)
- Business Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Music
- Psychology
- Social Studies
- Speech Arts and Dramatic Arts