

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Randolph-Macon College
Teacher Preparation Program¹
Audit Dates: May 14-16, 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 Brenda G. Gilman and Brenda M. Davis, and was approved by all Education Department full-time members of the faculty on February 29, 2008.

Introduction:

Randolph-Macon College, founded in 1830 by the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church, is today an independent co-educational undergraduate institution located in Ashland, Virginia. Randolph-Macon's 1140-member student body, over half of whom are female and most of whom are white, come from 30 states as well as several foreign countries, is guided by 90 full-time and 62 part-time or adjunct faculty members. The college mission emphasizes the liberal arts and maintains the Methodist tradition of caring, social change, and personal accountability.

The Teacher Preparation Program is staffed by two full-time faculty members, one part-time and three adjunct faculty members, and a faculty secretary shared with 15 other departments. Direction for the program is provided by the Teacher Preparation Committee, a standing College committee composed of education department faculty members, faculty from each department associated with a secondary major endorsement and from the psychology and sociology departments which offer the most commonly-taken major for elementary candidates, Career and Counseling Services representatives, and professionals from the Hanover County Public Schools, with whom the Teacher Preparation Program has a longstanding partnership agreement.

The program offers options leading to elementary (preK-6) or middle/secondary (6-12) initial licensure for teaching in Virginia. Candidates minor in education. Elementary candidates may choose any academic major and secondary candidates major in their intended endorsement area of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, French, German, Spanish, Latin, or English, or they major in history or political science in preparation for an endorsement in History and Social Science.

Distinguishing features of the Randolph-Macon Teacher Preparation Program include emphasis on the liberal arts, with candidates completing the college-wide liberal arts curriculum as well as an academic major, and extensive practicum experiences, with field work components in all required courses in the program.

Program claims:

With respect to TEAC Component 1.1 (**subject matter knowledge**), the faculty claim that program completers are competent in general and subject matter content (Claim 1).

With respect to TEAC Component 1.2 (**pedagogical knowledge**) and to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, the faculty claim that program completers have pedagogical knowledge and skills to deliver instruction and to utilize instructional technology (Claim 2).

With respect to TEAC Component 1.3 (**teaching skill**), the faculty claim that program completers have the appropriate caring dispositions for teaching and conduct themselves as professional educators (Claim 3).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, the faculty claim that program completers transfer skills and knowledge to solve new and different problems/issues in subsequent learning situations and embrace learning as a life-long aspiration.

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, the faculty claim that program completers understand the implications of confirmed scholarship on gender, race, individual differences, and ethnic and cultural perspectives for educational practice.

Evidence supporting the claims:

- **GPA, Grades** (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3, cross-cutting themes)
The faculty report overall, major, and minor GPAs as well as grades from methods courses, senior seminar (which is based in part on electronic portfolios), and Survey of Exceptional Children. The faculty are mindful of reliability and validity issues involving grades, and thus use them primarily to establish minimum proficiency.

The mean overall GPA was 3.3, the mean major GPA was 3.2, and the mean minor GPA 3.8. The average methods course grade was 93%,

average senior seminar grade was 3.8, and average Survey of Exceptional Children grade for the 7 required to take it was 3.6.

- **Alumni and Employer surveys** (Claim 2, Claim 3, cross-cutting themes)
The program solicits ratings from first-year teachers on their application of learning theories, and from their employers on the teachers' demonstrating of caring attitudes. The alumni use a scale of 3 (agree) to 1 (disagree), and the employers use a scale of 1 (very effective) to 4 (not effective).

Among the alumni, 14 agreed, 7 somewhat agreed, and 0 disagreed that they understood the application of learning theories. Additionally, 20 disagreed and 0 agreed or somewhat agreed that they did *not* differentiate instruction (this one item was stated in the negative in order to assure that responders were actually reading the survey items). Among the employers, 15 rated the teachers as effective or very effective at using appropriate instructional strategies, assessing and evaluating learning, having content knowledge, demonstrating professional behaviors and communications, and having caring attitudes; and all but one of the 15 rated teachers as effective or very effective in managing learning environments and using instructional technology.

- **Praxis exams** (Claim 1)
The Praxis series exams are teacher licensure tests constructed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The Praxis I assesses competency in reading, writing, and mathematics, while the Praxis II assesses content knowledge. The faculty note that validity and reliability information is provided by ETS.

Mean Praxis I subscores for Randolph-Macon candidates were slightly above state passing scores, and mean Praxis II content test scores were in most cases 10 or more points above the state passing scores.

- **Major Department Rating of Suitability for Teaching** (Claim 1)
Faculty from each candidate's major department collectively complete an evaluation indicating their assessment of the candidate's suitability for teaching.

All 38 program completers were rated as Outstanding or Above Average.

- **Student Teaching Evaluation** (Claim 2)
Cooperating teachers use a locally-constructed assessment instrument to rate student teachers effectiveness in their use of instructional strategies on a scale of 1 (exceeds expectation) to 3 (below expectation). The

faculty note that the instrument is aligned with course objectives and program ideals, and evaluates areas identified as relevant by education professionals.

Mean ratings for 6 students for whom data was available were as follows: content knowledge, 1.19; pedagogy, 1.24; dispositions, 1.20.

Internal audit:

The two full-time faculty conducted the internal audit, based largely on documentation provided by the faculty secretary, the Provost Office, the Registrar, and the *College Fact Book*.

- 4.1 Curriculum:** Reviewed syllabi included the TEAC cross-cutting themes, competencies required for Virginia teacher licensure, and connections to the Virginia Standards of Learning.
- 4.2 Faculty:** Faculty are recruited, hired, reviewed, and promoted according to college guidelines.
- 4.3 Facilities:** Faculty and students are allotted office and workroom space, but on a limited basis. College administrators and program faculty are discussing a move to a larger space.
- 4.4 Fiscal & Administrative Capacity:** The College is financially stable and sound. Administrative support is limited.
- 4.5 Student Support Services:** Student satisfaction with support services is measured through the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- 4.6 Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading and advertising:** Reviewed curriculum matrices and student admission documents were comprehensive and complete.
- 4.7 Student Feedback:** Students indicate a high level of satisfaction with the program through course evaluations and graduate surveys.

Plan for program improvement:

The faculty identified aspects of the assessment system in need of improvement, including inconsistent items and categories across assessment instruments, inconsistent rating scales, and missing or inaccessible items.

Evidence of commitment:

- 4.1 Curriculum:** Teacher preparation program candidates meet or exceed graduation requirements for all Randolph-Macon College students.
- 4.2 Faculty:** Full- and part-time faculty are well qualified, and teacher preparation faculty salaries are comparable to those in other departments on campus.

- 4.3 Facilities:** Program students have access to a variety of resources and financial support. Program faculty members and students have some space constraints, but college administrators and program faculty are discussing a move to a larger space.
- 4.4 Fiscal & Administrative Capacity:** Program faculty are supported through salary and professional development opportunities at comparable levels to college faculty overall.
- 4.5 Student Support Services:** Teacher preparation students receive the same services available to other students at Randolph-Macon, and maintain an active chapter of the Student Virginia Education Association.
- 4.6 Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading and advertising:** Publications are accurate, recruitment is done in conjunction with the college, and grading policies are consistent with college policies.
- 4.7 Student Feedback:** Program students have access to the same grievance and feedback procedures as other students in the college, but have registered few complaints.

The faculty concluded that Randolph-Macon College is committed to the teacher preparation program.

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

Randolph-Macon College's Teacher Preparation Program includes options in elementary (preK-6) or middle / secondary (6-12) and the state, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program's graduates.