

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Seton Hill University
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: April 2-5, 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 Proposal*:

The *Inquiry Brief Proposal* was written by Audrey M. Quinlan, and was approved by the faculty on October 10, 2006.

Introduction:

Seton Hill University, originally founded as a women's college by the Sisters of Charity in 1918, now offers more than 30 undergraduate and graduate programs to men and women. From the early days of the university, teacher education has been central to its mission of educating students "to think and act critically, creatively, and ethically as productive members of society committed to transforming the world," and approximately 30% of the current enrollment of the university seeks teaching certification. The education program introduces students to a variety of learning and teaching styles and encourages them to explore various strategies for effective instruction. Central to the program's mission is its emphasis on preparing students for inclusive teaching that recognizes the learning needs and styles of all children. Twenty-eight percent of the undergraduate students complete the program with dual certification (elementary/special education; elementary/ early childhood; elementary/early childhood/special education; and elementary/ secondary); 29% graduate with K-12 certification, 33% with secondary certification, and 10% with single certification in early childhood, elementary, or special education. The graduate program emphasizes preparing teachers for inclusive teaching.

Program claims:

Under the umbrella of preparing competent, caring, and qualified educators (TEAC's *Quality Principle I*), Seton Hill University makes four claims about those who complete its program. The claims reflect both the program's learning objectives and the criteria by which the state of Pennsylvania requires that student teachers are evaluated. Program completers:

1. know the content and can teach successfully in their certification area (*Quality Principle I, components 1.1 and 1.3*);
2. know pedagogy and can design effective lessons, use technology, manage a classroom, provide for individual student differences, know

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- legal guidelines, and work collaboratively (*Quality Principle I, components 1.2 and 1.4 technology and multicultural perspectives*);
3. demonstrate effective verbal and written communication skills; and
 4. indicate a desire to continue their education beyond the completion of the program (*Quality Principle I, component 1.4 learning to learn*).

Planned evidence to support the claims:

- **Praxis licensure tests** (Claim 1 = Praxis II content tests; Claim 3 = Praxis I writing component). Although the faculty do not rely on licensure scores as the sole measure of content knowledge or writing skills, the tests are required by the state and scores are reported as measures of student achievement. (Prior to 2007, no copies of Praxis II scores were saved by the program.)
- **Grade Point Averages** (Claim 1). The faculty report overall GPA of 3.0 as a requirement for student teaching and GPA in the major as an indication of students' content knowledge. (At this point the program is unable to disaggregate GPA by program option or major.)
- **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Form 430: Student Teaching Rubric** (Claim 1 = categories I and III; Claim 2 = categories I, II, and III; Claim 3 = category IV). PDE Form 430 is administered twice during student teaching (midterm and final) by the university supervisor and measures students' performance in terms of planning and preparation (category I), classroom environment (category II), instructional delivery (category III), and professionalism (category IV). Category I of the PDE also provides evidence that students meet the TEAC cross-cutting themes.
- **Course Grades** (Claim 2 = B- or better in ED 201, *Instructional Techniques and Strategies for Inclusive Education*, and ED 432, *Pre-Student Teaching Clinical Lab*; C or better in all other education courses).
- **Career Placement Form** (Claims 2 and 3) used by teaching supervisors and cooperating teachers to evaluate student teachers with scores of 1 (not acceptable) to 5 (excellent) in 15 categories: leadership, initiative, reliability, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, verbal communication, written communication, attitude toward criticism, professional poise, ability to organize, professional interest, cooperation, poise in social situations, appearance, and probable

employment success. The career placement forms are usually accompanied by letters of recommendation.

- **Professional Rubric scores** (Claim 3) of “S” (satisfactory) or “N” (needs improvement) assigned to students in each methods course in six categories: professional behavior, attendance and punctuality, effective written communication in English, effective oral communication in English, participation in classroom discussions, and potential for assertiveness.
- **Graduate program enrollment, the solicitation of letters of recommendation for graduate school, and alumni data from an alumni survey** are proposed as measures for meeting Claim 4.

Faculty plan to find evidence for students’ meeting the TEAC cross-cutting themes in each of the primary sources of evidence listed above. In addition, faculty cite references to student fieldwork journals as evidence that Seton Hill students are caring and competent.

Internal audit:

Five full-time faculty members conducted the internal audit of the quality control system in May 2006, using 16 student files randomly selected from those of the 99 program completers between spring 2005 through spring 2006. The selected student files represented both the graduate and undergraduate options, and six certification areas (secondary, elementary, special education, elementary/special education, elementary/special education/secondary, and K-12 education). One student represented the Instructional Design non-certification option.¹ The faculty tracked each element of the program’s quality control system and found that, on the whole, the system works as planned. There were a number of small inconsistencies in some areas (for example, student evaluation forms for adjunct professors were not stored where they were supposed to be and some documents for admission and evaluating student teaching were not available or complete).

Plan for program improvement:

The experience of preparing the *Inquiry Brief Proposal* yielded the following information on specific areas in which the program needs to be strengthened: (1) data collection, retention, and analysis; (2) systematic completion of required assessments by cooperating teachers and teaching supervisors; (3)

¹ At the time of the internal academic audit, the program planned to include Instructional Design in the set of options considered for TEAC pre-accreditation. Upon discovering the lack of common claims and assessments, faculty decided to withhold Instructional Design from TEAC review.

revising assessment forms to align better to the program's claims; and (4) training adjuncts and others on the use of different rubrics.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

Generally speaking, the program offers evidence that the university is committed to teacher preparation and the program has the capacity to offer a quality program.

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

The program includes options in early childhood (N-3); elementary education; secondary education; art education (K-12); business, communication, and technology education (K-12); French education (K-12); music education (K-12); Spanish education (K-12); and special education (B-21), and Pennsylvania, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program's graduates.