

**Summary of the Case<sup>1</sup> (from the Inquiry Brief)**  
**Union Graduate College**  
**Master of Arts in Teaching/Master of Science for Teachers**  
**Audit Dates: March 3-4, 2008**

**Introduction:**

Union College, the nation's oldest non-denominational college, is known for educational innovation and distinguished alumni. Its mission to produce professionals, including teachers as well as lawyers, doctors, and engineers, is exemplified in its commitment to improving secondary education, which was enacted in part through National Science Foundation institutes in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s designed to broaden and deepen the science and mathematics content knowledge of secondary teachers. In 2002, Union College, in order to retain its identity as a baccalaureate liberal arts institution, created Union Graduate College to house its 650 masters level students enrolled in the Schools of Business, Education, and Engineering, and its Center for Bioethics.

The School of Education, whose 2007-08 enrollment consists of 63 full-time and 11 part-time students, offers master's level programs of study for students seeking Initial and Professional Certification for grades 7 – 12 in English, Foreign Languages (French, German, Greek, Latin, and Spanish), Mathematics, Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics), and Social Studies. UGC also offers a program of study leading to Professional Certification in Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Mathematics/Technology, grades 7 – 12. Both the MAT and MST program options include classes taught by the SOE's four full-time faculty, spiraled curriculum, close collegial ties to public school faculty and administration, and curricular alignment with National Board Certification principles and practices. The MAT, the initial teacher certification option, features a year-long internship; a supervision model that combines full-time faculty with expert classroom teachers, as well as an intensive summer session through which the faculty immerses the students in essential aspects of teaching. The MST, the professional teacher certification for practicing teachers with initial certification, provides candidates with an opportunity to deepen their content knowledge, update their pedagogical knowledge and skills, and become familiar with relevant research.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

UGC is committed to producing not just good teachers, but successful teachers who advance their students' growth, development, learning, and performance.

**Program claims:**

With reference to TEAC Component 1.1 (**subject matter knowledge**), the faculty claim that SOE graduates know they subject they teach (Claim 1).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.2 (**pedagogical knowledge**) and TEAC Component 1.3 (**teaching skill**), the faculty claim that SOE graduates demonstrate they can teach their subject matter in an effective, caring manner (Claim 2).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, the faculty claim that SOE graduates employ analytic, problem solving methods, which lead to an internalized teaching model of continuous involvement (Claim 3).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, the faculty assert that SOE students integrate technology including visualizers, the Internet, PowerPoint, and video portfolios into lessons and presentations.

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, the faculty assert that students can analyze diverse populations and make adaptations for their special needs.

Taken collectively, these claims support the SOE faculty's overall claim that their Program's graduates are competent, caring, and qualified.

**Evidence supporting the claims**

- **Danielson ratings (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3)**  
Course faculty and supervisors evaluate candidates on content competency, pedagogical knowledge and competency, and caring teaching skills at the end of each term on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best) using the Danielson rubrics. Of the 50 audited students, 96% were rated an average of 3.0 or above on content items, and all but the three students who did not complete the program were rated an average of 3.0 or above on pedagogical items.
- **GPA (Claim 1, Claim 3)**  
MAT students complete at least four content courses, and MST students complete at least six. MAT and usually MST students also complete several pedagogy, methods, and education seminar courses. The

average overall undergraduate GPA for 48 of the 50 audited students was 3.64 and the average GPA in the discipline of certification was 3.35.

- **Portfolio (Claim 2, Claim 3)**

All MAT and most MST candidates submit portfolios, which include sample lesson and unit plans aligned with state standards, sample assessments, an inventory of the technology they have used with their students, a resume and cover letter, a philosophy of education, examples of student work, and videotapes of themselves teaching, for rating by the faculty according to a common framework. All completers who submitted a portfolio received a grade of B or better.

- **Employer and Graduate Surveys (Claim 1, Claim 2)**

In 2002, 2004, and 2006, the program surveyed graduates and their employers, asking them to rate the graduates on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best) on items relating to content preparedness, pedagogy knowledge, and teaching skills. On average, graduates assessed themselves as near or above 4.0 on most items, and employers on average assessed graduates above 4.0 on all items.

- **NYSTCE scores (Claim 1, Claim 2, Claim 3)**

New York State Teacher Certification Examinations include the Liberal Arts and Science Test (LAST), the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (ATS-W), and the Content Specialty Tests (CSTs). Each has a pass score of 220 and a maximum score of 300. Average LAST scores between 2004 and 2007 ranged between 267 and 271, and since 2005 the average scores exceeded independent college and statewide scores by 20-30 points. Average CST scores between 2004 and 2007 in nine different subject area tests were above passing in all cases, and notably above independent college and statewide scores in most cases. Average ATS-W scores between 2004 and 2007 ranged between 268 and 265, which exceeded independent college and statewide scores by between 6 and 18 points.

- **Thesis (Claim 1)**

UGC students have the opportunity to write over two terms a 50- to 75-page thesis that includes a literature review and an analysis of findings. Of the 15 audited students who completed a thesis in their discipline, 14 received a grade of B+ or better.

- **MAT/MST project (Claim 1)**

Students who do not write a thesis must complete a one-term, 25- to 40-page project that includes a literature review, a question that involves both subject matter and pedagogy, and a way to address the question. Of

the 32 audited students who completed an MAT/MST project, 27 received a grade of B+ or better.

- **Preliminary Interviews (Claim 2)**

Each applicant to the program is interviewed for 60-90 minutes by one of the full-time faculty members, each of whom have significant secondary teaching experience and have participated in the hiring, evaluating, and monitoring of faculty. Of particular interest during the interview is subject matter knowledge and commitment. Students are rated with grades of A (excellent) to C (poor). Of the 50 audited students, 2 were accepted with interviews outside the department, and 41 of the remaining 48 were rated with a grade of B+ or above.

- **Field Experience feedback (Claim 2)**

Each practicing teacher who hosts a UGC candidate for the week-long field experiences is asked to rate the candidates on a scale of 1 (worst) to 4 (best). Of the 50 audited students, only one of those rated by mentors who returned the forms was frequently rated below 3.

- **Additional measures**

In addition, the faculty cite internship performance assessments (discussed in a three-way conference between intern, supervisor, and cooperating teacher and summarized by the intern), employment rates, National Board Certification rates, and teaching awards and recognition earned by program graduates.

**Internal audit:**

To test whether their Quality Control System was operating effectively, the teacher education faculty conducted an audit during the latter half of the summer term from July through October of 2007. The audit was based primarily on an analysis of 50 students, including the entire 2006-07 class plus some additions. It also involved evaluations of faculty and courses, student evaluations of facilities, resources, classrooms and services, as well as formal surveys of graduates and employers on various teaching categories. The internal audit linked all aspects of the Program to quality assessments associated with: Curriculum; Faculty; Facilities; Fiscal and Administrative Resources; Student Support Services; Student Quality Assurances; and Student Complaints and Evaluations.

Findings suggested that UGC has very strong Programs with good internal policies, practices, and procedures in place and the people to execute them with skill and care.

**Plans for Improvement:**

The faculty are pleased with their program overall. However, they have identified a few areas for further improvement, including:

- the creation of rubrics for use in assessing the demographic analysis done by students in their first two weeks of their internships
- adjusting the special needs seminar to focus more on regular classroom teachers' knowledge of special educator skills
- the incorporation of more multicultural and technology experiences into the curriculum

**Evidence of commitment:**

As a whole, the SOE faculty concluded that there was parity between SOE and UGC norms. Any differences were attributable to market-driven and historical differences, and not to disparities in support.

The faculty concluded that UGC is committed to the teacher education program.