

## Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)

### Utah Valley University (Formerly Utah Valley State College) Teacher Education Program<sup>1</sup> Audit Dates: March 5 – 7, 2007

*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 Linda Pierce, and Susan Simmerman, and was approved by the faculty on January 12, 2007.

#### **Introduction:**

Founded in 1936 in Orem, Utah, as a vocational school, Utah Valley State College obtained college status in 1993 and now enrolls about 25,500 students (42% women and 15% minorities). The college employs 417 faculty members and offers a bachelor's degree in 53 areas as of March 2007.

Initially the elementary education program option was given in partnership with Weber State College in Ogden, Utah, but in 1996 the Board of Regents authorized a four-year program in teacher education at Utah Valley, and a School of Education with 15 full-time faculty members and an 18 adjunct staff was formed shortly thereafter with two departments – elementary and secondary. The program admits about 175 students each year and has a total enrollment of 700 students who take one of three options – elementary education, secondary education, and a dual elementary and early childhood education, leading to a BS/initial licensure<sup>2</sup> for undergraduates or just an initial licensure for those already holding an undergraduate degree. About 90% of the students are women and less than 5% are minorities.

The program is grounded in Goodlad's four moral duties of the teacher – to provide a culture of democracy, access to knowledge, caring and healthy teacher-student interactions, and stewardship of schooling and culture. The faculty has adopted a constructivist and student-centered view of schooling that is supported by a view of teaching based on pedagogical content knowledge, reflections on links between theory and practice, respect and value for diversity, extensive clinical practice, and technology.

#### **Program's claims:**

The School of Education Program makes the single complex claim that its graduates meet the Utah State licensure standards for beginning teachers, which are based on the ten INTASC standards. TEAC *Quality Principle 1* aligns as follows with the INTASC standards: 1.1 maps to INTASC standard 1: Discipline Knowledge; 1.2 maps to INTASC standards 2 – 8: Development Knowledge (2), Instructional Adaptability (3), Instructional Variety (4), Learning Environment (5), Effective Communication (6), Instructional Planning (7), and Assessment (8); and 1.3 maps to INTASC standards 2 – 10, especially to Reflective Practitioner (9) and Community Relations (10).. Because of this alignment, the program makes its case solely in terms of the ten INTASC standards.

**Evidence supporting the claims:**

The evidence for the claim comes from about 200 students in the program who were enrolled in the fall of 2005 to the spring of 2006. The faculty used evidence from four stages of the program – admissions, professional course work, clinical practice, and from employment as teachers in the schools. The program offers seven categories of evidence: admission data; course grades; results of student teaching scores; standardized tests; teacher work sample ratings; clinical ratings by cooperating teachers and faculty supervisors; and surveys of immediate graduates, employers, and alumni. Each of these categories has assessment links to one or more of the INTASC standards.

The program faculty addressed the reliability of their assessments through Cronbach *alphas* (.58-.85) on the results of key assessments and also through investigations of the correlations between assessments. Content validity was established by the expertise of the panels of faculty who constructed the assessments and concurrent validity was established by correlations between some of the assessments that measured the same standards. The faculty relied on the externally established reliability and validity of the standardized tests they used. In addition the faculty set its own cut-score standard, usually at 90%, for all its assessments thereby establishing consequential validity.

While the faculty reported results for each of the ten standards, the evidence was generally consistent across the standards and can be summarized as follows:

1. Admitted students had grades of 3.0 or above in the lower division courses, had mean ACT scores over 20/36, had standardized writing scores of about 3.5/6.0, and had interview scores of over 4/6.
2. Pass rates for the Praxis II were high (95-96% for elementary and secondary overall), but the rates in secondary were variable (ranging from 43% in business to 100% in social studies, but the actual mean scores in each discipline with the exception of business and health {one graduate each} exceeded the national cut score or national median score. Mean Praxis II scores for Elementary Education were about 170 against a state cut score of 150.
3. Program students had equivalent or higher course grades in major courses than non-program majors in the same courses and had program GPAs over 3.0.
4. Ratings (0-3) of senior field experiences, student teaching, senior projects, lesson plans, investigations, metaphor project, work samples, and dispositions were invariably over 2.5/3.0.
5. Survey ratings from exiting graduates, alumni, and employers were generally about 5/6.

6. Work sample ratings showed growth over time.

7. The aggregated evidence from all local assessments with regard to each INTASC standard was higher for the elementary option than the secondary option, but for both options exceeded 2.5/3.0 for each standard.

**Plan for program improvement:**

Based on these findings, the program is considering the following:

1. It may drop the writing test from elementary education and secondary education admission requirements because the results do not discriminate well enough in terms of effective writing and/or proper English grammar. The faculty is looking at other testing instruments such as PRAXIS I for an admission test.

2. Because the students in the secondary option scored lower than those in the elementary option on all but one of the INTASC standards and below the School's 90% standard of 2.7/3.0 on seven standards, the faculty have created two assignments and additional course work that they anticipate will strengthen the program.

3. The fact that both options were below standard on standard 9 (reflection) concerns faculty members and they plan to add exercises to several courses in this area.

4. To remedy the lower performance on standard 4 (instructional variety), the faculty will make the variety in their own teaching practices more explicit.

The faculty note that based on evidence from field observations, clinical evaluations, student exit surveys, employer surveys, and faculty observations of coursework, they have already introduced a number of improvements in their program and were pleased to see, for example, that the new classroom management course paid off in above standard ratings for standard 5 (learning environment) and a significant increase of 12% in the number of students who connect management with success.

The faculty has also conducted investigations into the relationships between their assessments and found that restricted variance and independent domains attenuated the correlations. They have as well investigated the effects of program changes on the assessment results.

**Internal audit results:**

The program faculty conducted three separate audits – the first on a randomly-selected group of 20 students (10% of the graduating class of 2005-2006) focused on admission, instruction, and student support; the second audit reviewed faculty; and a third reviewed the professional program in the areas of curriculum, facilities, fiscal capacity, and recruiting (Fall 2006).

The internal audit revealed that, on the whole, the quality control system worked as it was designed, but several improvements were warranted:

- Strengthening aspects of the intern program,
- Improving data gathering and record keeping in the secondary education program,
- Systematizing key assignment data,
- Expanding field sites and training cooperating teachers, and
- As a general program improvement goal, the faculty plans to initiate a professional study group to broaden their understanding of issues of concern in the professional program (initially focusing on reflection and assessment).

**Evidence of commitment and capacity:**

The internal audit also revealed that the School of Education has parity with counterparts at the institution in terms of space, equipment and supplies; staff assignments and salary; fiscal and administrative recourses and access to college facilities and services. In some cases (such as facilities and equipment), the SOE with its new building is in better shape than the rest of the college and in cases where there was not parity (percentages in ranks), the faculty's interpretation was that despite the lack of parity the institution was still committed to the program.

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

Department/Major	Degree and/or License
BS in Elementary Education: <i>Students major in Elementary Education; qualify for a Utah State Level I Teaching License in Elementary Education Grades 1-8.</i>	BS/Initial Licensure
Early Childhood Dual Licensure Program: <i>Students major in Elementary Education, take additional coursework in early childhood education; qualify for license to teach grades P-3 and 1-8. Early childhood education license (grades P-3) is earned only in conjunction with the Elementary Education Baccalaureate degree.</i>	BS/Initial Licensure
Secondary Education License: <i>Students must major in an approved content area and take courses in Secondary Education to qualify for a Utah State Level I Teaching License in Secondary Education; or a Secondary Education Utah State Level I teaching license for persons already holding an approved academic degree is also available.</i> (BS from content area major)	Initial Licensure