

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Westminster College
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: December 8-9, 2005

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 Janet Dynak, Sue Smith, and Revellie Sant, and was approved by the Faculty on June 9, 2005

Introduction:

Founded in 1875, Westminster College (WC) in Salt Lake City is a liberal arts college that emphasizes high quality teaching, personalized instruction, interaction between faculty and students, reflection on ideas and practices, high standards for content knowledge, practical experience, and the maintenance of high moral values. The college enrolls approximately 2400 students in one of 28 undergraduate majors and professional programs in teaching, nursing and business.

The Department of Teacher Education's 12 faculty, three part-time faculty, and 26 adjunct faculty offers a program to approximately 230 students at the undergraduate and graduate program levels with options in early childhood education (K-3), elementary education (1-8), secondary education (6-12), and special education. The graduate option is for students currently holding a bachelor's degree seeking a Utah state teaching license in secondary, elementary, or early childhood education.

Program's claims:

The program is pedagogically organized by four strands that run throughout the program – (1) pedagogical content knowledge based on an appropriate academic major or minor in the arts and sciences, (2) diversity, (3) field experiences, and (4) the continuous reflection on the development of a personal philosophical approach to teaching. The faculty make 12 specific claims which they organize in three categories – (1) content knowledge (with emphasis on independent learning and technology), (2) pedagogical knowledge (with emphasis on planning, management, diversity, and effective teaching), and (3) caring teaching skill with emphasis on professionalism.

Evidence supporting the claims:

Evidence is marshaled to support the claims at the category level from the

following eight major and two minor sources:

1. GPA's with particular attention to the comparison of non-education liberal arts students' grades in the majors/minors and education students performance and a GPA standard of 3.0 in education courses
2. ACT composite scores, again with emphasis on the comparison with non-education students
3. Mid-term student teacher self evaluations in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and professionalism,
4. Mid-term mentor student teacher evaluations in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and professionalism,
5. Survey of alumni in the three categories
6. Survey of administrators/human resource directors who have hired the program's graduates
7. Survey of mentors (cooperating teachers) about program students they have mentored
8. Rating by faculty and mentors of the student portfolios with regard to the students' competence in discussing and answering questions about artifacts linked to each of the 12 claims.
9. Job placement rates of 90%
10. The percentage of alumni who responded to a survey who have earned master's degrees in education.

Reliability and validity of measures:

The reliability of the measures was explored through inter-rater agreement and other correlational techniques (alpha). Validity was addressed through the correlations and consistency of multiple measures of the same categories of evidence and through the content validity of the assessments. All reliability and validity measures show sufficient magnitudes, although there is variability in the reliability and validity assessments.

Evidence supporting the claims:

All six measures related to subject matter competence were of sufficient magnitude. The TE students are equal to non-TE students in GPA (roughly 3.5), cooperating teachers and administrators rate subject matter competence as outstanding or good, both mentors and student teachers rate student teaching performance as strong, with an average rating of 4.3 on a 5.0 scale, and faculty supervisors rate students' artifacts and reflections as demonstrating subject matter competence.

Overwhelming percentages of students are rated at least good on pedagogical knowledge assessment items by alumni, administrators, and cooperating teacher surveys. Self- ratings of student teachers on pedagogy and ratings by

mentors were above 4.0 on a five point scale.

Similarly, when items in the measures are disaggregated to reflect the cross cutting themes, the ratings are uniformly above 4.0 on a five point scale.

Survey ratings by alumni and hiring officials that reflect with caring teaching and professionalism are significantly and noticeably higher than assessments for the other categories of claims and exceed 4.5 on a five point scale and on the surveys the majority of respondents gave outstanding ratings to the program's students and graduates. A similar result held for the portfolio, the program's summative measure.

Program improvement:

As a result of developing the IB, the faculty plans to better align student teaching midterm and final evaluations (as of Fall 2005), develop a better database collection and maintenance system, redevelop the alumni survey to better align with program standards, and include additional information about leadership, professional service, use of the Praxis II test, and to improve the portfolio assessment.

Quality control:

The internal audit consisted of specifying the mechanisms dealing with curriculum quality, faculty, recruiting and admissions, and student complaints. The faculty divided up the probes, sampled students as needed, conducted the internal audit. The faculty concluded that: 1) curriculum changes followed established voting procedures, hiring practice followed policy, current rooms in SOE are adequate, but more equipped classrooms are necessary and more space is needed, professional development practice follows policy, TE students have equitable access to services, the admission and graduation requirements for students were followed, some faculty meeting minutes are missing, and grievances were handled according to policy.

Westminster commitment:

On the whole the program conforms to the institutional norms with regard to the length of the curriculum, qualifications of the faculty, class sizes, office space, computers and professional development opportunities. Teacher education faculty are more favorably placed with regard to budget per student credit hour, salaries, smaller class sizes, but have no full professors and a slightly less favorable student faculty ratio.

The faculty members concluded that the institution is committed to the program.

¹ 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:

Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Teacher Education.