

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Xavier University
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: March 26-28, 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 James Boothe, Thomas Kessinger, Kerrie Hollihan, Robert Townsend, and was approved by the faculty of the Department of Education on December 21, 2006.

Introduction:

Xavier University, founded in 1831 in Cincinnati, Ohio, is a private, co-educational Catholic university with a faculty of 227, that provides a liberal arts education within a Jesuit tradition for approximately 6,500 students (3,730 undergraduates and 2,764 graduate students), many of whom are working professionals in the Cincinnati community.

Highly ranked by the *U.S. News & World Report 2007* edition of "America's Best Colleges," the *Princeton Review*, and the John Templeton Honor Roll for Character-Building Colleges, Xavier University is dedicated to developing students' intellectual skills, critical thinking, articulate expression, responsible action, and understanding of moral and religious values. The goal of a Xavier education is to help students integrate the intellectual dimension of learning, spiritual experience, and ethical behavior.

These campus-wide goals are integral to the vision and purpose of the Department of Education, which is housed in the College of Social Sciences, one of three colleges at the university. The department takes pride in providing high quality, personalized service to its 1400 students; in the quality of its 23 full-time, 19 affiliated and 222 adjunct faculty and cooperating teachers; and in the school- and classroom-based experiences of the faculty. The primary objective of the program is to prepare educational leaders in fulfillment of the Jesuit mission of preparing "men and women for others."

Approximately 11% of university's undergraduate students (400) and 46% of its graduate students (1267) are enrolled as majors in the Department of Education.

Program's claims:

The faculty make five claims about the program's teacher graduates, each of

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which is linked to the four Pathwise Praxis III standards and domains adopted by the state. The faculty members claim that their graduates:

1. Know their subject matter because they have a comprehensive foundation in the liberal arts, and they are able to plan and design lessons aligned with state curriculum content standards.
2. Understand their students' various learning styles, diverse backgrounds and experiences
3. Know pedagogy and can align instruction with learning goals, use a variety of instructional approaches, accommodate individual differences, and provide appropriate formal and informal assessments.
4. Can create learning environments for diverse populations where student learning is active and engaged.
5. Exhibit educator professionalism in their caring, reflective and ethical professional dealings with other school personnel, colleagues, and community members to support student learning.

In addition, graduates of the administrative program satisfy the standards of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council and can formulate an educational vision for their school, manage the school, and collaborate with all the school's external stakeholders in achieving the school's mission.

The graduates of the education program are eligible for one of 35 Ohio educator licenses or four endorsements in the areas of early childhood, middle childhood, adolescent and young adults, multi-age, special education & intervention or administration (principal, specialist, superintendent)¹

TEAC's cross-cutting themes are addressed in a number of required courses and reflected in the university and department of education missions.

Method and categories of evidence supporting the claims:

The primary evidence for the claims comes from a sample of approximately 122 students drawn from the graduates and licensure candidates from 2003-2006.

¹ Early Childhood Education (EC), Middle Childhood Education (MC), Adolescent and Young Adult Education (AYA) – professional education minor, Multi-Age Education – professional education minor, Intervention Specialist/Special Education, Administration (3 Principal categories for ages 3-12, ages 8-14, and ages 10-21), Administration (5 Specialist categories: CIPD, Education Staff Personnel Administration, Educational Research, Pupil Services Administration, and School Community Relations), Administration (Superintendent)

Xavier relies heavily on a five phase formative continuous progress evaluation (SACP) of candidates, ensuring the success of candidates through personalized responses to portfolios, video taping, web page development, practice teaching, field experiences, classroom observations, lesson plan development, unit plan development, student teaching, and professional development.

The program's evidence for its claims rests on a set of summative evaluations: course grades, licensure tests (Praxis II Content Area, Principles of Learning and Teaching, and Praxis III), student teaching assessments of the Pathwise domains, exit portfolios, and various surveys.

The program assumes that assessments mandated by the State of Ohio, which include the licensure tests developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the state Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Survey, are both reliable and valid. Attempts to establish inter-rater reliability of several of the locally-produced forms to judge candidate dispositions, field placement performance, and student teacher performance were disappointing because of the lack of variability in the data. Ultimately, Xavier points to a 99%-100% summary pass rate on Praxis II (2003-06) and a 99% summary pass rate on Praxis III (2003-06) of those candidates and practicing teachers who have graduated from the program as evidence of the reliability and validity of their own instruments.

The assessments developed by faculty are based on national models (Pathwise, the basis of Praxis III) and are comparable to assessments used by other teacher education programs in the state. The validity of the judgment of faculty on grades, student learning, and progress in courses is confirmed by the students' scores on the licensure tests.

Results:

The faculty members report the following in support of their claims:

1. Mean undergraduate grades ranged from 3.07 to 3.52 and mean graduate grades ranged from 3.75 to 3.83 in the program options.
2. Praxis II content median scores were in all but one instance above the national median for the particular test and were reflected in 99-100% pass rates.
3. Praxis III means scores of teaching skill were 2.6-3.0/3.5 for each of the 19 criteria of the four domains, where 2.0 is an indication of competence. Mean total scores were approximately 50 against a state passing score of 38. Pass rates were 99-100% for program students.
4. Alumni surveys means (1-5) were over 4.00 for all aspects of the quality of instruction and generally were above 4.00 for the quality of support

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- services and student-faculty relationships
5. A university-wide survey in 2005 showed means generally over 4.00/5.00 for education students' evaluations of their academic experience.
 6. The Ohio Teacher Quality Partnership Survey, from 50 state-approved Ohio programs, showed for the 2005 and 2006 Xavier cohorts, ratings consistent with other Ohio programs and higher ratings during the first year of teaching than other Ohio programs.
 7. A small survey of graduates of the administration program showed means (1–5) close to 5 for the quality of the faculty, coursework, advising and the internship.
 8. Approximately 87-90% of all enrolled students complete the program.
 9. About 150 graduates of the administrative program have leadership positions in Ohio.

Plan for program improvement:

In preparing the Inquiry Brief, faculty identified some aspects of the program for improvement, particularly in terms of the lack of a centralized, reliable data management system and the department plans to develop and manage a data base of students that will include results of both formative and summative assessments. Several advisory groups to different options within the program have been inactive and will be reactivated. The department plans to expand its efforts to work with academic departments to align content coursework with both Praxis II and Ohio state standards. Faculty are concerned about the discrepancy between how student teachers are rated by supervising faculty and cooperating teachers and are developing strategies to address this difference. In response to student perceptions that the department should be more involved in helping candidates find teaching positions, faculty are exploring the feasibility of implementing an education career center within the department.

Internal audit results:

The Xavier TEAC Audit Team conducted the internal audit, randomly selecting faculty and student files to probe aspects of the Quality Control System and concluded that the QCS works effectively. The audit revealed a high concentration of education students seeking help at the writing center, salaries in the education department are below average at the university and nationally, and that a number of students have difficulty completing the program within eight semesters and must attend summer session. In addition, the department lacks the technology or system for electronic delivery/storage of documents and managing the data generated by the program.

Evidence of commitment and capacity:

With the exception of salaries, the program faculty found that the program had

parity with regard to the institutional norms and concluded that Xavier University was committed to its teacher education program.

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

- Early/Middle Childhood Program
- Adolescent to Young Adult/Multi-age Program
- Intervention Specialist Program
- Education Administration Program