

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Accreditation Report for the College of Education,
University of Iowa (state licensure)
Date: January 31, 2000

Recommended Action:

Receive the report on accreditation of the teacher education programs in the College of Education, University of Iowa, from the Iowa Board of Education.

Executive Summary:

On June 3, 1999, the Iowa Board of Education granted continuing approval to the practitioner preparation programs offered by the University of Iowa. This action follows the on-site review and evaluation of the practitioner preparation programs and the team reports based on the standards for the approval of teacher preparation programs. The approval covers the five-year period from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2004.

Accreditation reviews are consistent with the Board of Regents' strategic plan, KRA 1.0.0.0, Quality. More specifically, the accreditation process relates to Objective 1.1.0.0., "to improve the quality of existing and newly created educational programs."

The University of Iowa offers approximately 100 different programs leading to a license or endorsement administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The College of Education is responsible for overseeing these programs, including arranging clinical field experiences and offering courses in education. It should be noted that most students seeking to be teachers are registered in the College of Liberal Arts. During the self-study year, 1997-1998, 1,148 undergraduates (9.4 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment at SUI) were enrolled as teacher education candidates. The College of Education also offers 35 graduate programs in four divisions.

Following the on-site visit, a number of concerns were raised by the Iowa Department of Education. The College of Education responded to these concerns, described below, and full reaccreditation was granted. The self-study and the Iowa Department of Education review were completed prior to the arrival in July of 1999 of the new dean of the College of Education, Dr. Sandra Damico.

Background:

The on-site team report acknowledged many strengths in the educator preparation programs at the University of Iowa. Among them are the long tradition SUI has in the field of educational testing and its commitment to research. Other strengths include the high caliber of students, outstanding library, and increased partnerships with area schools. The on-site report and follow-up correspondence noted that current faculty have an active research agenda.

The report went on to conclude that 57 of the 67 standards related to the undergraduate programs were met, 11 with some concern. Regarding the 10 remaining standards, the team requested additional information. The team concluded that 30 of 32 standards related to the graduate practitioner programs were met, seven with some degree of concern. One of the unmet standards required a more systematic process for gathering evaluation data on students. After the data had been compiled and submitted to the Department of Education, continuing approval to the practitioner preparation programs offered by the University of Iowa was granted for a five-year period, from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2004.

The review did identify several areas that need attention. They include:

- Gathering more complete data from graduates and employers
- Making sure every teaching assistant in the methods courses has teaching experience at the level of the methods course
- Making sure all part-time faculty are carefully oriented, mentored, and evaluated
- Making more consistent use of field advisory committees

More specifically, the visiting team focused on three weaknesses in the undergraduate programs: (1) absence of communication among faculty and programs; (2) absence of follow-up procedures to evaluate graduates; and, (3) under-utilization of feedback from practitioners in the field.

The March 18, 1999 letter from the Department of Education noted the final resolution of unmet standards. They were:

- Standard FU3. (requirement that teacher education faculty have 40 hours of teaching experience in a K-12 environment over a five-year period)
Resolution: Standard met. SUI provided adequate documentation of specificity of teacher activities.
- Standard IU4. (vision statement reference to "Research-based Teacher Preparation")
Resolution: Met. Clarification provided by SUI on types of research activities with which students would be involved.
- Standard OG5. (Part-time faculty) The visiting team had noted that part-time faculty and teaching assistants delivered nearly half of the undergraduate program. Further, the team found little documentation of the evaluation of part-time faculty.
Resolution: Met. SUI provided evidence indicating that part-time faculty are monitored. However, the Department noted that it remained concerned whether the full-time faculty views monitoring adjunct faculty and other instructors as an important responsibility.
- Standard FU2. (Faculty Data Forms) Lack of teaching experience.
Resolution: Met. While granting reaccreditation, the Department of Education expressed some concern about the paucity of actual teaching experiences at grade level of some the teaching assistants and asked that it be monitored.
- Standard FU4. (Involvement with Schools and Familiarity with Current Practice). The concern raised by the visiting team related to students learning both knowledge and skills related to the content they would teach from multiple approaches.
Resolution. Met. Evidence presented by SUI was sufficient that students do gain exposure to multiple approaches to learning.

Analysis:

Nationally, teacher education programs are offering more pre-service opportunities (i.e., classroom involvement activities prior to student teaching). To do that, programs in teacher education are forming partnerships with local school districts, e.g., students may go out as teacher aides in their first year, or faculty from SUI offer a methods course at a middle school or high school rather than on campus. In addition, to expand opportunities for students to experience diversity, SUI has increased the number of out-of-state and international student teaching sites, e.g., the number of states and countries where they may do their student teaching.

The College has made concerted efforts to improve its programs. One example is providing more in-school experiences for future teachers through establishing partnerships with area school districts. Another example is that the College has increased admission standards to teacher education programs; a minimum GPA of 2.7 is currently required for admission. The College has also provided more opportunities for students to learn how to integrate technology into their teaching.

The quality of the program has resulted in positive feedback from both recruiters of its graduates and the supervisors who work with the College's students.

The College acknowledged in the self-study that it needed to obtain formative as well as summative data on its graduates. Formative assessment focuses on judging the level of student performance with the purpose of improving the student's knowledge and skills. Summative data is typically compiled for the purpose of rendering a "yes-no" decision -- admission to or graduation from a program.

One of the overarching concerns of the visiting team was the perception that individual programs were run in isolation. The nature of research universities, with the emphasis on discipline-related activities, contributes to such a perception. Increased communication efforts should be made.

A copy of the self-study, on-site visiting team report, and correspondence between the Department of Education and the College of Education is available in the Board Office.

Charles R. Kniker

Approved:

Frank J. Stork