

Program Review Committee Report Department of Education Spring 2009

Mission Statement

Subtitled "Reflective Educators," the Department's mission statement is clearly presented and consistent with the mission of the University. The statement was reviewed and revised in August 2008 to include an emphasis on diversity.

Goals and Objectives

In 2003, the Department identified goals/objectives for the graduate and undergraduate programs. Four of these goals have been met, 14 are on-going, and a few have been eliminated. Three new goals were added in 2008 based on changes identified in the program review cycle and relevant to continued accreditation. Many of the goals reflect an understanding of the economic pressures of the University and the state and national trends in the field.

Statistical Information

Regarding the undergraduate program, over the last five years, the lower division credit hours have generally been the same, although during 2007-2008, the Department had the highest number of student credit hours, declared majors, and number of graduates as compared to the last five-year period. Although the University's credit hour productivity decreased this year, the Department of Education's credit hour productivity for graduate and undergraduate programs increased (up 14.5% over the previous fall semester and up 8.7% over the previous spring semester). For both programs, the number of full-time faculty members has remained generally the same, while the number of adjunct faculty has increased slightly. Unit expenditures, as a percentage of WU instructional expenditures, have remained fairly constant over the past five years and were 3.7% in 2007-2008.

Outcome Measurement

The Department maintains a comprehensive assessment plan that requires evidence of achievement at both the course and program level. These assessments are critical not only for the Department's self-evaluation but also to maintain accreditation by the Kansas Department of Education and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Undergraduates are required to take the Pre-Professional Skills Test for admission and the Principles of Learning and Teaching exam at the end of the program. Other forms of assessments include Praxis II for content assessments, WU Performance Assessment, performance rubrics completed by university supervisors and cooperating teachers to assess student teaching success, the Kansas Performance Assessment upon graduation, monitoring the number of teacher contracts, surveys of teaching effectiveness, and students' performance on state and local assessment measures. The results of these assessments are reviewed to determine changes to the policies, procedures, and curriculum of the Department.

Graduate students are required to complete a capstone experience to earn a master's degree. Choices for the experience include a thesis, action research project, a comprehensive paper, written comprehensive examination or a portfolio/oral exam.

Unit Strengths as Noted by the Department

1. The Department was the first institution in the state to offer the birth-grade 3 licensure program. This is a very popular program with 141 students having declared a major in this area.
2. The Department has addressed changes in federal laws, state licensure regulations, and NCATE requirements to assure compliance.
3. The Department offers a variety of licensure programs and content areas at the graduate level.
4. Candidates for graduation compare very favorably to both state and national averages on scores for initial licensure exams. Our candidates scored better than the national average in all but one of the content areas and better than the state average in 8 of the 11 content areas.
5. The Department maintains positive relations with many school districts which assures the quality of the field experience for our candidates.
6. The Curriculum Resource Center and Deay computer lab are located in the main building.
7. The faculty and staff respect the Department's Chair and Licensure Office and believe they are competent and committed to their cause.
8. Faculty in the Department are well-qualified and experienced. Approximately 18% of the faculty and staff self-identify as representing diverse populations.

Unit Weaknesses as Noted by the Department

1. Budget restrictions have limited the ability to offer tenure-track positions necessary to attract high quality faculty and to initiate new programs such as an English Language Learners or ESL program.. Priority for tenure-track positions would be for professors to teach in the Birth-grade 3, ESL, and Building and District Leadership programs. Second priority would be for Math and Special Education programs.
2. Additional tenure-track positions are also necessary to ensure compliance with NCATE and state licensure requirements and provide continuity in programs. The paperwork for accreditation and licensure is complex and burdensome for the current faculty and staff. They are required to coordinate with many departments which makes these tasks even more complex. Additional tenure-track positions could increase the ability to offer new programs and reduce the amount of administrative duties currently placed on faculty and staff.
3. The Department is currently operating at capacity in terms of number of students and licensure programs that can be accommodated. Potential for growth is limited by lack of funds, faculty and resources.
4. Classes are held in Carnegie Hall which is a dated building. Some of the problems noted with the building are inadequate heating and cooling systems, ADA inaccessibility, insufficient restrooms, and lack of reliable wireless computer connections and electrical outlets for laptops.
5. The Department's summer budget has been reduced to the point it is difficult to meet the needs of constituents, particularly in the graduate program.
6. More funds are needed to appropriately compensate teachers who serve as mentors and cooperating teachers for field experiences.

Changes in the Future as Delineated by the Department

1. With the downturn in the economy, more and more people are seeking stable employment opportunities such as teaching. It is reasonable to expect higher numbers of students seeking teaching degrees. Lack of funds, faculty and resources will make it difficult for the Department to meet the demand and maintain quality.
2. There will likely be more and more demand for ESL, math and special education teachers, as well as over-all need for technologically competent teaching professionals. The Department would like to add programs to meet these needs.
3. There will be more and more demand for the collection of data by the Kansas Department of Education and NCATE, which will necessitate the need for a data entry administrative assistant. The Department has recently been given permission to interview for this position and hopes to have a qualified person hired soon.
4. Competition in graduate programs in Education will increase. On-line courses and programs at four geographically close universities will drive the competition. The Department must stay competitive by offering programs which meet current demands in the field.
5. The Department would like to expand the early childhood program by offering a master's degree in birth-kindergarten. This would be an extension of the special education graduate program and the birth-grade 3 licensure program at the undergraduate level.

Program Rating:

Operating at an acceptable level.

Recommended Action:

Singled out for further development.

The Department should prioritize current staffing needs.

The Department should be encouraged to consult with the Administration about its highest priorities, and the Administration should look for resources to meet growing demands in light of critical teacher shortages.