

STATUS OF TEACHER EDUCATION/SCHOOL PERSONNEL PREPARATION
A REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM OF
NEVADA BOARD OF REGENTS

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

1. What are you doing to produce high quality teachers?

Programs in the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE requires the development and implementation of a comprehensive assessment system in which our candidates must demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to institutional, state, and national standards. We now assess our candidates at the initial teacher preparation level and the advanced levels at a minimum of three points in their program – for entrance, at a mid-point in the program, which is usually prior to the internship, and at program completion. We collect data from our candidates, graduates, alumni, and their employers; and use it to make improvements in programs and operations. Our candidates are placed under growing expectations for high performance on formal tests, such as the Pre-professional Skills Test (PPST) and Praxis II.

The mid-point assessment of our candidates consists of a portfolio review based upon the five domains of professional competence developed by COE faculty, lead teachers, and university supervisors and derived from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles. Candidates are not allowed to enter their student internship until all of the five domains of professional competence are satisfactorily met. At this point, only limited data depicting the results of the portfolio reviews are available. The final assessment consists of the internship final evaluation, which includes a portfolio of each intern’s documentation used during the internship. Additionally, a Student Learning Sample (SLS) project is now required during the student internship. The Student Learning Sample requires the prospective teacher to review the context of the students, develop learning goals, plan instruction, conduct a preassessment, deliver instruction, reassess, compile results, and reflect on what occurred or did not occur during instruction, then make adjustments to their teaching based upon the assessments. The fall 2003 semester is the first time all candidates had to do a Student Learning Sample during their internship.

2. What evidence do you have that these teachers are high quality?

Some evidence of the quality of prospective teachers can be demonstrated by the results of the state required teacher competency exams. Table 1 reports the aggregated UNR pass rates on each of the Praxis Exam categories. The results indicate that our pass rates, along with the state pass rates, are relatively high.

EXHIBIT B Education	Document consists of 6 pages.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire document provided.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Due to size limitations, pages _____ provided. A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail library@lcb.state.nv.us .	
Meeting Date 2/24/04	

Table 1. Summary of Aggregated Institutional Pass Rates of Praxis Exams

Type of Assessment	1999-2000		2000-2001		2001-2002	
	Institutional Pass Rate	State Pass Rate	Institutional Pass Rate	State Pass Rate	Institutional Pass Rate	State Pass Rate
Basic Skills	99%	97%	100%	97%	100%	97%
Professional Knowledge	97%	92%	85%	87%	96%	97%
Acad. Content Areas (Math, Eng., Biol, etc)	90%	91%	92%	92%	94%	95%
Teaching Spec. Populations (Sp. Ed., ESL, etc.)	NR*	NR	NR	NR	70%	80%
Summary Pass Rates	96%	95%	95%	95%	96%	96%

*NR = No report, fewer than ten people taking the exam.

Recently acquired data from first year teacher assessments in 2002-03 in Washoe County School District provides us with a sense of the success of our teacher education program completers. The table below indicates that UNR's first year teachers are assessed as being proficient. The assessment scores of our program completers are comparable to those first year teachers completing programs at other universities.

Table 2. Teacher Evaluations for University of Nevada Graduates and other Universities

Assessment Domains	UNR Means	Other Universities Means	Combined Means
Domain 1: Planning & Preparation	.66	.66	.66
Domain 2: The Classroom Environment	.69	.71	.70
Domain 3: Instruction	.72	.72	.72
Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities	.67	.67	.67

Scores range from .00 to 1.0: 0 = Unsatisfactory, .33 = Target for Growth, .67 = Proficient, and 1.0 = Area of Strength

In telephone surveys of employers of the College of Education 2001 undergraduate alumni conducted by the University of Nevada, Reno Assessment Office, it was noted that employers were very satisfied to somewhat satisfied (mean of 1.14 on a scale of 1 = very satisfied and 2 = somewhat satisfied) with our graduates. When asked how employers would rate our graduates with those from other institutions, College of Education undergraduate alumni were rated as very prepared to equally prepared (mean of 1.90 on a scale of 1 = very prepared and 2 = equally prepared).

3. What are you doing with local schools to assure that the requirements of NCLB are being met; and are you assisting them if they are not making AYP? Are there other partnerships with K-12 that affect/improve teacher preparation?

The amount of assistance that can be provided to local schools is limited due to a lack of sufficient resources to do more. However, schools have received assistance primarily by the Department of Educational Leadership in helping them meet their adequate yearly progress goals. The department collaborates with the Washoe County School District Principal's Academy in delivering courses for improving school leadership resulting in improved instruction and increased student achievement. Topics such as data driven decision making, coordinating curriculum, supervision and evaluation of instruction, special education issues, English as a second language issues, meeting the diversity needs of students, accountability and public relations, vision and leadership, ethics, school culture and climate, operations/site management, and families and communities have been addressed. The department has also collaborated with Douglas County School District's effort in providing professional development for school administrators in rural districts. These educational leadership courses have been offered through the College of Extended Studies and have been taught by experienced administrators in local districts.

In an effort to improve reading skills of K-12 students, a literacy graduate program was established with funds from Dorothy Lemelson and her Lemelson Education Assistance Program. Funds are used to pay the tuition of teachers participating in the program. Of the first cohort of teachers, fourteen completed their 40-credit Master's degree program in December 2003, five obtained their reading specialist certification, and four more will complete the Master's degree in May. Two other cohorts consisting of 47 teachers are continuing their work, and one new cohort of 24 - 28 teachers was started this semester. Participants in this masters program have become literacy staff developers in their respective schools.

Providing staff development that relates to the improvement of instruction in K-12 schools is another way to contribute to making Adequate Yearly Progress. The College of Education has always played a significant role in providing professional development for teachers and other school personnel in addition to the master's and doctoral degrees offered. The following are some examples of recent teacher professional development activities:

- Faculty members have worked with the Regional Professional Development Program Centers to deliver short-term courses/programs for teacher development. These courses have addressed the Nevada K-12 Standards.
- Two faculty members in special education are currently writing a FIPSE grant to obtain funds to develop online courses that will allow teachers to meet the requirements for an endorsement in special education. This proposed grant is to serve rural areas in obtaining qualified special education teachers.
- A 2003 summer science grant provided for a one-week workshop to increase teachers' content knowledge in physics and technology (robotics). The project addressed the need for teachers to obtain more science credit to meet the highly qualified teacher designation. The Nevada K-12 Standards were included in the content. Furthermore, the units of instruction developed by the participants were aimed at English as a second language students to raise their level of understanding of science with the hope that these students will be better prepared to pass the high school exit exam in science.
- The Nevada Reading Education Act grant provides funds for a couple of faculty members to meet monthly with rural school personnel around the state who are participating. The work in this grant relates to raising literacy levels of all students.

- The Reading First grant provides funding for professional development to all K-3 and special education teachers in the state that is focused on scientifically based reading research.
- The Pro-TELL federal grant provided funding for courses in teaching English to speakers of other languages to teachers who desired to add the ESL endorsement to their teaching license.

During the fall, spring, and summer terms of 2002-03, there were a total of 90 College of Education courses offered through the College of Extended Studies. These courses included regular three credit classes offered to various cohorts in literacy studies as well as one and two credit short courses/workshops made available to various groups. All of these courses provided professional development for educators. Professional development activities for educators has not only served them in moving across their respective salary schedules and provided courses for licensure renewal, but has addressed needs related to meeting the Nevada K-12 Standards, issues related to No Child Left Behind, and assisting schools in meeting adequate yearly progress goals.

Partnerships with K-12 schools in the placement of teacher education students in practicum and internship experiences contributes to preparing high quality teachers. We strive to place every student in a K-12 school setting that is diverse in nature. As a result our students obtain the experience of working with K-12 students who may have limited English speaking skills, disabilities, or other sociocultural issues.

4. Are you changing/enhancing your curriculum to comply with the requirements of NCLB? Will that impact 2+2 programs with community colleges?

Programs at UNR have been in compliance with NCLB, but changes have been made to strengthen programs as a result of the act. The Department of Educational Leadership has developed and implemented a new course entitled “Data Based Decision Making”. It is designed to prepare administrators to use and understand data and data analysis to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. The Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology has a course – Assessment and Diagnosis I – that is required of all prospective counselors. Faculty delivering the teacher education programs have concluded that instruction about assessment procedures and using the results to improve teaching needed to be enhanced. Instruction about assessing and using results is being added to courses. The Student Learning Sample project, described previously, focuses on using assessment data to inform teaching and learning decisions and to improve instruction. These changes have no effect on 2+2 programs with the community colleges.

The No Child Left Behind Act places considerable emphasis on knowing subject matter content. Programs in secondary education do so in that our majors must complete a teaching major, which is often equivalent to a major in the academic discipline. The elementary education program has recently gone through a revision (to become effective summer, 2004) to reduce the number of education credits and increase credits in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts/literacy. Their revisions also align courses to the level that was felt to be more effective in preparing high quality teachers. An option built into their revised program allows candidates who wish to teach at the middle school level to obtain a teaching major similar to secondary education. Completing this option along with passing the appropriate Praxis II exams will place these candidates

in the “highly qualified” designation. To be highly qualified, a teacher cannot have provisions on their teaching license. As such, the UNR College of Education is now requiring candidates to take and pass the Praxis II (teacher competency) exams as a requirement for submitting their verification of completion form to the Nevada Department of Education Teacher Licensure Office.

The College of Education at UNR has 2+2 articulation agreements with each of the community colleges in Nevada and several in California. The agreements are updated and signed each year, and are posted on the UNR web site at www.unr.edu/stsv/trcenter/how/transfer_agreements.asp. The agreements clearly spell out courses that can be taken at each community college and be transferred to UNR and the College of Education.

Most of the education students who transfer to UNR from a community college come from TMCC and WNCC. When teacher education programs at UNR were revised in 1997 to include more 200 level courses, our faculty worked with TMCC and WNCC personnel to help establish those courses at the community colleges. When the courses were in place, articulation agreements were updated accordingly. The transfer agreements are in the process of being updated for 2004-2005 to include the program changes mentioned earlier. For the last three years, the coordinator of the College of Education Student Advising Center has met with education classes and counselors at TMCC and WNCC to go over our teacher education programs and transfer procedures in an effort to ease the transfer process for students.

Changes in the elementary education program resulted in the deletion of EDU 206 – Classroom Learning Environments (3 credits), EDU 208 – Characteristics of Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities (3 credits), and EDU 209 – Exceptional Child Experience (1 credit), which effect the 2+2 agreements with the community colleges. However, EDU 203, EDU 208, and EDU 209 are still required of special education and dual majors. Two new courses – EDU 211 – Introduction to Teaching in and Inclusive Classroom (3 credits) and EDU 212 – Family Involvement for Students with/without Disabilities (3 credits) – have been added to the curriculum for special education and dual majors and can be taught at the community colleges. Additionally, education courses in the elementary education program were reduced by seven credits and general studies courses in mathematics, science, and social studies were increased accordingly. Those seven credits can also be taken at the community college.

5. How is your institution preparing teachers to teach diverse learners (children with disabilities, children with exceptional abilities, English language learners)?

Standards for accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education emphasize the need for teacher education candidates to be able to help all students learn. Therefore, all teacher education majors in the college are required to take a course in teaching exceptional children. Additionally, content about teaching students with disabilities and limited English speaking skills is integrated into other courses in the curriculum. Students who are majoring in elementary education or the dual elementary/special education programs are required to take a course entitled “ESL Instruction in the Elementary School”. All teacher education students are required to take

a course in sociocultural/multicultural education, which addresses the needs and concerns of diverse learners.

In addition to their course work, students have experiences in schools that expose them to teaching diverse learners. At least one of their field experiences is done in a diverse school setting.

There is a shortage of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in the state. Faculty in the area of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages procured a federal grant that provided funding to offer courses for teachers who desired to add the ESL endorsement to their teaching license. The grant paid the tuition for teachers to take the courses. The first cohort of 44 teachers recently completed the requirements for the ESL endorsement, and 49 are just beginning the second program cohort in Carson City.

6. What kinds of alternative certification/multiple pathways does your institution have?

The College of Education has post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs, but they are not considered as alternative certification. The secondary education program faculty just completed a revision of their Master's Degree/First Time Licensure program so that candidates can complete it in one year providing they meet the teacher licensure requirements in their subject matter content area. This program will begin fall 2004. The elementary education program reduced the number of credits required to complete their post-baccalaureate program when they revised the undergraduate teacher education program.

7. Specifically for community colleges – what are you doing with teacher aid certification?

Not applicable to UNR.

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