

## 2007-2008 Annual Program Review Special Education – Initial Licensure

**Program:** Special Education, Initial Licensure Programs which include undergraduates and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT/graduate) students

**List of Annual Program Reviewers:** Moniqueka Gold, Larry Lowrance, Merriel Neal

### I. Assessment of Candidates

**As the special education program strives to prepare professionals through standards based practices we use data to drive that process. We collect data on an ongoing basis, review it systematically and use data result to revise instructional practices accordingly.**

A. What do the summarized reports (portfolio review, milestone review, student teacher information, PRAXIS scores, program completion rates, exit surveys, employer survey, and graduate follow-up survey) data sets show about the performance of your candidates.

There were 14 undergraduates who finished the special education program in 2007-2008, with one failing to get licensed because of Praxis II scores. Twelve of these 14 were Caucasians (86%) and 2 were African American (14%). 13 were female 92% and 1 was male (8%). 13 obtained a teaching license (92%). The student who did not get a license was a white female.

#### 1. Portfolio Review

MAT graduate and undergraduate special education majors were combined in their portfolio review data. They were evaluated on 10 CEC standards and completed all standards from fall of 2006 to spring 2008 with a 100% pass rate. **To maintain the objectivity of the portfolio reviews in the future, the special education team will periodically (once each semester) analyze a sampling of portfolios implementing interrater reliability.**

#### 2. Milestone Review

Undergraduate data at Milestone II shows in the fall of 2007 that 11 students passed this milestone, a rate of 92%, with the failed student being a white female. In the scoring of 2008, one student passed milestone two from special education, with two failing it. Both who failed were African American females and the one who passed was a white female. **Students who fail any portfolio reviews will be required to meet with their education faculty advisors.**

Data from fall and spring of the 2007-2008 school year from special education majors shows that on Milestone IV all students met or exceeded all standards, except for Standard 11 B and C, both on technology, where 60 percent passed 11B Technology for Professional Growth in the fall and 90% did in the spring and the Meet level and 30 percent exceeded these expectations in the fall and ten percent did in the spring. On Standard 11C, there was a twenty percent developing rate

in the fall of 2008 and 80 percent meeting this expectation, with no one exceeding it. In the spring of 2005, all met the standard, none failing or exceeding.

### 3. Student Teacher Information

a. It was not possible to discern graduate and undergraduate student teacher data, nor special education student teaching data from others in the education unit. This data is combined for all groups. Data have been collected for three years, 2005-2008. It was noted that had most trouble encouraging higher order thinking skills, informing parents of student progress, using a variety of questioning techniques and providing a variety of assessment formats. These scores have been consistently low and are not improving. Our students scored highest on such items as establishing good rapport, demonstrating professional behavior, being receptive to professional feedback, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and having a professional appearance.

b. Student teachers, again combined grad and undergrad and across the entire unit, reported these areas highly on their exit survey: they can follow applicable school policies and procedures, they reflect on teaching by continually evaluating progress of instruction, they can use technology to enhance student learning, they can establish appropriate goals and objectives, and they can design communication appropriate to the audience while using correct grammar and organizing information logically.

### 4. Praxis Scores

MAT graduate and undergraduate special education majors take three special education praxis tests (a) the Education for Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge test (taken by 79 students and only one had to retake it before passing, with an average score of 172 with a pass score of 144), (b) Education of Exceptional Students: Mild to Moderate Disabilities (passed by 12 students with no retakes needed with an average passing score of 176 and a pass score of 164) and Special Education: Severe to Profound (with 21 passing it and 6 retakes needed with an average pass score of 164 and a pass score of 155). **The special education team has included case studies in all special education coursework to ensure students have a functional approach as a summative evaluative tool to review content learned in each class.**

### 5. Program Completion Rates

The pass rate for undergraduate students was 92%, not all expected but well beyond the rate NCATE expects for a successful program.

### 6. Exit Surveys

See graduate follow up study below.

### 7. Employer Surveys

Evaluations from area principals of all APSU education unit graduates show high ratings in knowledge of subject matter, understanding pedagogical content, understanding pedagogical skills and reflecting dispositions of professional educators. Weaker areas noted were designing

instruction for diverse students and using classroom management techniques that foster self control and self discipline. These surveys were for all disciplines and were for graduate and undergraduate students. **These surveys will become an annual part of our departmental evaluation process.**

## 8. Graduate Follow Up Survey

a. Special education graduate and undergraduate students were requested to participate in a survey of graduates. 13 returned these surveys and on a scale of 5.0, they responded with means scores from 3.92 to 3.58 with standard deviations from .28 to .67 on ten questions asked, with the high scores being

- (1) I learned the principles and theories of good special education practice, and
- (2) I learned an appreciation of lifelong learning and understand that knowledge grows and situations and laws change, requiring lifelong learning on my part to keep up, and
- (3) I learned that to teach, special educators must constantly collaborate with parents, other professionals and persons from community agencies to facilitate the best of learning from my students. The lowest score was I learned how atypical and typical language development might effect and enhance communication with all students, regardless of language differences.

B. What specific short-term actions will be taken during the 2008-2009 academic year in order to improve candidate performance? What are the long-term action implications? Please specify tasks and timelines for planned actions.

### 1. Short Term Action To Improve Candidate Performance

- a. A review of the area of language development needs to be done. We note student data indicating a need in this area.
- b. regular teaching of the gifted course work in the curriculum.
- c. conduct a study of the need of early childhood special education to the undergraduate program at APSU.

### 2. Long Term Implications

The language content review will lead us to where this work can best be improved in our curriculum. Perhaps in SPED 4350 or 4390. Improvement in this area will enhance our student's abilities in all areas of exceptionality, but especially in the area of severe profound, where retakes of the praxis to obtain acceptable pass rates are noted. The area schools use special educators as gifted teachers and are asking for improved content in this from our program. This will improve teacher skills and improve our relationships with our school districts, our student's employers. The area of early childhood special education will be responding to changes in implementation of education law that brings more and more young children with disabilities to schools. Teachers need more specific preparation in disabilities among preschoolers. This will provide for that.

### 3. Specific Task and Timelines for Planned Actions

- a. Study of language content by 5/09

- b. Regular offering of gifted course by 8/09
- c. Study of early childhood special education by 9/09

## II. Assessment of Program Operations

A. What do enrollment, exit survey, and graduate follow-up survey data sets show about the operations and quality of your program?

### 1. Enrollment

Relative to the size of our overall program, the undergraduate special education program at APSU is well and thriving, providing a high quality supply of beginning special education teachers to the region. **The survey course, SPED 3000, required by all education majors, is the special education gateway course used to systematically recruit more special education majors each semester.**

### 2. Exit Survey

Exit data show principals and participants are both pleased with the quality of our program. Ratings are in the good to very good range as they view the education we offer our graduates. Our students see a need to improve in the area of learning about language development and clearly this needs to be addressed.

### 3. Graduate Follow-Up Survey Data Sets

Our special education majors feel they are learning well the principles and theories of special education, have noted a need for life long learning because of changes in laws and situations they face in schools and have learned to live and work collaboratively well in schools.

B. What do the summarized reports (PRAXIS results, exit surveys, employer surveys, and graduate follow-up surveys) show about changes that may need to be made to your program or to specific courses?

### 1. PRAXIS Results

Our students are doing well as demonstrated by PRAXIS pass rates. However the six retakes to obtain the 21 passed tests for Severe to Profound indicates we need to study the need for improving this area. It is felt that the upgrade of curriculum in autism, language and assistive technology will address this need. **Because the special education team has recently added another faculty member, each member will be able to consistently focus on and teach courses within his/her areas of specialty.**

### 2. Exit Surveys

Our students see a need of improving the curriculum in the area of language disorders. **With our current new hire in special education, continued improvement will be done in curriculum enhancement.**

### 3. Employer Surveys

Somehow it seems that the generic data from principals that our students have difficulty with diversity and classroom management does not apply well to our special education students. We have a whole curriculum built on diversity (exceptionalities at least as a part of it) and extra course work built into in on behavior management at the graduate and undergraduate level, including the graduate course SPED 4330, Behavior Management for Exceptional Students.

### 4. Graduate Follow-Up Survey Data Sets

C. What specific short-term actions will be taken during the 2007-08 academic year in order to improve program operations and quality? What are the long-term action implications? Please specify tasks and timelines for planned actions.

#### 1. Short Term Actions To Be Taken to Improve Program Operations and Quality

a. It is suggested that a review of the portfolio be taken to make sure in integrates with what is taught in the curriculum.

b. The possibility of advertising our undergraduate special education programs will be reviewed, with an eye to getting the word out to our community that we are offering programs that are of need to schools and agencies.

c. Grant opportunities to enhance student enrollment and scholarships will be explored.

**d. For our MAT students, we are going to need to review alternative ways to offer courses. For example, the 8-week format, Saturday courses, weekend courses and online. Exploring the opportunity of offering a one-year pilot program where students can complete the special education initial licensure program in once calendar year via alternative formats would be a very appealing method to increasing enrollment.**

#### 2. Long Term Actions Implications

The implications of the review of portfolio alignment with our curriculum are internal consistency of operations, with the goal of having our students see the relevance of the portfolio and improve its quality. Advertising our program and obtaining grants will improve enrollment and increase the quality of students enrolled.

#### 3. Tasks and Timelines for Planned Actions

a. study of integration of portfolios and curriculum by 9/09

b. study of advertising of SPED undergrad programs by 5/09

c. review of grant opportunities, current and ongoing, in perpetuity

### **III. Assessment System**

A. What data do you need to better evaluate your candidates and/or program?

1. We need to break out the employer data and clinical teaching data so it shows more specifically a light on special education students instead of having to use generic data for the entire program.

2. We need to break out data by graduate vs undergraduate programs in special education. It became apparent in writing two reports that this is needed.

B. Based on the data provided, how can the Teacher Education Unit Assessment System be changed to provide more meaningful and useful evidence regarding candidate performance and program operations?

1. Be more “program specific” in the analysis of data.

2. Be more specific in terms of graduate and undergraduate data analysis for special education students, even more specific with graduate students between those in MAT vs C & I advanced programs.