

May 27, 2010

Dr. Gerald Baldasty
Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School

Dr. Jim Antony
Associate Vice Provost & Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, The Graduate School

Dear Dean Baldasty and Associate Dean Antony:

On behalf of the Education Program, I would like to express our appreciation to The Graduate School and the Academic Program Review Committee (Dr. Sikma,, Dr. Mantle-Bromley, Dr. Kerr, Dr. DeMarrais) for the detailed and helpful report they submitted. We found the process to be one that drove us to consider the program's assets and growth needs. In addition, the Review Committee's report provided an all-important triangulated view to help us orient our attention to program quality.

The site visit was thorough and rigorous and, clearly, the Review Committee members were experienced observers and evaluators. Since the delivery of the report, we have engaged in a process of reflection and analysis in relation to our self-understanding and future planning. The report helped us in all regards.

The Education Program response is divided into three areas: 1) Reflections on the committee findings; 2) Centrality of the recommendations; and, 3) Plans to incorporate the review into future directions.

Reflection on Report Findings

In the past 20 years, the University of Washington Bothell campus has distinguished itself through innovation and growth. The Education Program has contributed to this history as it grew from a small teacher certification program to its existing palate of professional preparation, graduate study, and pathways to education careers. At its current stage—especially during a period of budget retrenchment—balancing growth and excellence is an analytic frame we embrace.

Dr. DeMarrais brought a unique perspective to the report having been a member of the review committee ten years earlier. Education colleagues found it encouraging that the review committee affirmed the values that have been a part of the program and our campus history. An emphasis on teacher-student learning interaction and interdisciplinary activity continue to guide many dimensions of our work.

We concur with the general characterizations and recommendations outlined in the Review Committee report. In the next sections, specific clarifications and responses are detailed.

Centrality of Committee Recommendations

The report from the Review Committee divided their recommendations into four areas:

1) Balancing growth and responsiveness with focus and efficiency; 2) addressing the increasing complexity of partner school relationships; 3) building a responsive conceptual and technical infrastructure for formal, comprehensive program assessment; and 4) working to provide faculty, staff and student development.

Balancing growth and responsiveness with focus and efficiency

The Review Committee outlined a program dynamic that we are aware of and addressing. Over the last several years as the program has grown in the number of students served and the scope of programs offered, the “add-on effect” has resulted in a complex system of courses that vary in credit and occasionally duplication. In addition to presenting questions of coherence, it is a curriculum that is challenging to deliver within the faculty resources available.

The Education Program faculty is in the process of a curriculum review. In the Autumn of 2009, a standing *Curriculum Committee* was formed for the process of examining course arrays for duplication and consolidation and analyzing the impact of new course proposals or course changes on the larger framework of the program curriculum. Both the K8 Teacher Certification Program and the Secondary and Middle Level Program have proposed and made changes during this academic year that are streamlining and strengthening our ability to deliver the content in a high quality manner. This review process is ongoing and will continue into the 2010-2011 academic year. As suggested by the Review Committee, a multi-year plan of course sequencing is in design.

The Review committee recommended that we consider consolidating the M.Ed. options for National Professional Board of Teaching Standards (NPBTS) preparation and the Washington State Professional Certification (Pro-Cert). We are looking at all of the options for ongoing professional learning and support for practicing teachers, especially as the state changes the university-based Pro-Cert process (for continuing state licensure) to a university-supported (but not required) Pro-Teach portfolio. We believe that it is important in the current environment of limited resources in K12 education that we maintain an array of professional learning options for practicing teachers.

In the short term, the economic situation in Washington suggests that fewer newly certified teachers may be hired. We are planning to adapt to this economic condition by ensuring we have an array of ways that both pre-service and in-service teachers can find educational opportunities at UWB. For the moment, we believe that both Pro-Teach and NPBTS options place us in a better position.

Addressing the increasing complexity of partner school relationships

The process of initial teacher preparation and the relationship between schools, school districts, and universities is under careful scrutiny across the nation. As professional preparation advances

and the stakes for the outcomes of teaching and learning become more apparent, it is vital to have a substantive link between the academic and clinical features of professional preparation. As the Review Committee noted, this is more than simply a structural change in how teacher candidates are placed for their fieldwork, but involves more reciprocity and collaboration between the university and the schools.

We are moving toward the co-teaching model (a model that places teacher candidates and mentors in a team-teaching arrangement) which research is showing provides for greater learning for students and a deeper context for professional learning. We recognize that this is more than a structural change and necessitates a change in the way we conceptualize our licensure program, collaborate with schools, and integrate our clinical faculty. Recently, we invited three participants from across the country (one school-based, one university-based, and one district-based teacher educator) to spend a day with the Education Program faculty exploring the dimensions of this model. It will serve as a means for integrated planning for the array of changes necessary to make this work.

Building a responsive conceptual and technical infrastructure for formal, comprehensive program assessment

In our unit-derived questions for the Review Committee, we asked that attention be given to the data and evaluation structures within the program. Understanding that program quality depends on clear assessment practices and a comprehensive data system, we were eager for advice. We were aware that this program element would be nascent and plans for changing this are underway.

There are three strategic aims for the Education Program in developing a comprehensive program assessment system.

a) We now have an array of programs that serve educators from undergraduates exploring educational careers, to pre-service teacher candidates, to experienced teachers and teacher leaders, and now school principals. This is a continuum of professional preparation and career growth that is necessary for the expanding roles and expectations of educators. Our assessment process should reflect the differing populations, needs, and data sources at each step.

b) National educational reform strategies are oriented toward developing new evaluation methods for teachers and school leaders tied to the outcome measures of student learning. This is a requirement for states competing for “Race to the Top” innovation funds from the US Department of Education and is also in compliance with recent measures passed by the Washington legislature. In teacher certification, one criterion for program evaluation and certification is “Standard V”, which prepares teachers to provide evidence that their students have learned the content intended. Our program must follow the same theory of action and be able to provide data that our graduates have demonstrated mastery in the standards required for licensure.

c) Internally, the Education Program aims to develop a data strategy with alumnae so that we can answer key questions about our graduates. Some of the data we seek include basic questions such as: *Where are our graduates? What positions do they attain and how long do they stay in post? Do our graduates see their UWB education as having prepared them to be effective in their profession?* We have established an “Inquiry Committee” that will plan this work and are in the process of hiring temporary expertise to establish the data systems necessary for ongoing program assessment.

Working to provide faculty, staff and student development.

One of the strengths of the Education Program faculty and staff is their continuous commitment to program design and their own professional learning. This is also noted in the Program Review report and the concerns for faculty and staff load. The senior faculty members have met to discuss and plan mentoring strategies—especially with the addition of two new assistant professors in the fall.

We also note the recommendation that institutional memory be preserved and roles cross-trained to ensure program viability across individuals. While the program has worked with few written policies, we have begun to establish written policies for key practices such as teaching load.

Further, we recognize the urgency toward diversifying our faculty, staff, and student populations. Search committees are charged with developing strategies for recruiting diverse pools of applicants. In student population, we see some of our best opportunities in creating pipelines to undergraduate admission and recruiting undergraduates to teaching careers. Our greatest success has been through pathway programs such as the “Dream Project” (which reaches first generation college-bound students in high schools) and the Education Undergraduate Minor. We plan to strengthen our pipeline programs in the future as a means of diversity recruitment as well as enlisting the support and help of our alumni community.

We noted the concerns for ELL and Special Education topics in our teacher certification. The UWB campus has just hired an ELL lecturer to work out of the Teaching and Learning Center. This new colleague will have an academic home in the Education Program and will assist us with ELL content in our teacher training. The need for additional special education expertise is acute and will most likely be our next faculty hire at whatever point we are able to search in the future.

Plans for Program Growth and Improvement

Many of our specific plans for program growth and improvement in response to the Program Review are described in the previous sections. Below, in summary are our key strategies for responding and ensuring program quality.

1. Implementation of activities associated with the Education Program’s three Strategic Goals:.

Goal 1: Develop a professional career continuum for educators

- Develop a strong component of teacher professional identity that includes commitments to inquiry-based practice, social justice, and professional learning.
- Develop a teacher leadership strand that is integrated into pre-service preparation, in-service collaboration with schools, and forms the basis for Phase 1 of the Master’s in Educational Leadership.

Goal 2: Develop our expertise and extend leadership in e-Learning for our region

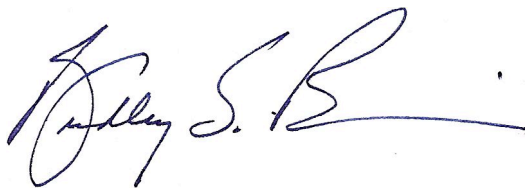
- Develop our research and teaching expertise in how technology serves/mediates student and professional learning.

- Use technology to expand our reach and impact. This includes regional expansion (especially to underserved communities) and globalizing the learning and experience of our students.

Goal 3: Develop substantive partnerships with K12 schools and Community Based Organizations

- Develop new and existing school and district partnerships to enhance a cohesive system of schools for professional preparation through co-learning/co-teaching and reciprocity.
 - Develop partnerships that can serve as shared commitment for teacher, teacher leader, and principal preparation.
 - Pursue partnerships that expand our diversity goals and enhance multicultural education.
2. Further strengthen the work of the two new standing committees for:
 - a. Curriculum
 - b. Inquiry and Assessment.
 3. Develop partnership strategies informed by co-teaching models and articulating connections with the eight-district consortium for our new M.Ed. in Educational Leadership.
 4. Hire a data and assessment expert (short term) to assist with the design of a comprehensive program assessment process.
 5. Develop mentoring strategies and activities for all assistant and associate professors and lecturers.
 6. Develop an alumni database and strategies for re-connecting with program alumnae.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Bradley Portin
Director and Professor