

Report on the University of Washington Bothell Education Program

10 Year Review

April 5-6, 2010

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Executive Summary of Findings

Excellence is evident in the University of Washington Bothell Education Program's mission, curriculum, community relationships, student satisfaction and innovations. There is an emphasis on student success and positive relationships while maintaining rigor and a caring stance. The Education Minor and the innovation of the Dream Project provide linkages that will continue to prepare undergraduates for the program and further diversify the student population. The program has an excellent and highly productive faculty, strong effective leadership and committed, outstanding staff. The greatest challenge to the program is sustainability: balancing growth and responsiveness with focus and efficiency.

The Review Committee **unanimously recommends that the undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the University of Washington Bothell Education Program retain their continuing status with a subsequent review in 10 years.** We offer further advice to promote the health, sustainability and further development of the unit in 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.

I. Summary of Review Process

A review team consisting of two internal and two external members was appointed by the UW Graduate School in August, 2009 with the charge to assess the quality of the degrees offered by the UW Bothell (UWB) Education Program and to provide the faculty and administration with constructive suggestions for strengthening those programs. Members of the review team and affiliations are listed at the front of this report. The review committee was provided a self-assessment from the UW Bothell Education Program along with additional relevant documents. The review team met twice via teleconference and then conducted an on-site visit on April 5-6, 2010 with full cooperation and transparency from the UWB Education Program faculty and staff. We met with the Program Director Bradley Portin, the program faculty, staff, students, field supervisors, alumni and the Professional Education Advisory Board (PEAB) at the Bothell campus. The team divided for visits at two affiliating school sites (one

elementary site in the Lake Washington School District and one secondary site in the Seattle School District) with principals, field supervisors, students and mentor teachers.

II. Overview and Strengths of the Program

The UWB Education Program offers an Education minor, a Fifth Year Teacher Certification Program (K-8), a Professional Certification Program (Pro-Cert) and the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree program with multiple options (individually designed degree focus; secondary and middle level teacher certification; Pro-Cert; National Professional Board of Teaching Standards (NPBTS) Certification; Reading Endorsement). In addition, Secondary Level Teaching Endorsements are available in five areas (biology, English/language arts, math, history, social studies) and Middle Level Teaching Endorsements are available in three areas (humanities, math, science). In this section we provide an assessment of overall strengths of the program as well as specific strengths in the respective programs and the Education Minor.

Program Leadership, Faculty and Staff. The new program leadership has served to stabilize the program and bring faculty together in a cohesive, positive way. Dr. Portin has the respect of the faculty and is viewed as a skilled administrator. Assistant Professors noted how helpful he was to their work and development. His steady hand, collaborative leadership style, and vision for the program fit well into a program that has strong faculty leadership and high expectations within. The program has excellent and highly productive faculty, particularly in the following areas:

- Faculty model the reflective practice and methods they expect their students to demonstrate in K-12 classrooms. Students reflect: “We’re taught how we’re expected to teach. “I realized I was doing in my student teaching what we’d experienced in our university classes.”
- Faculty engage in high quality scholarship at all levels and collaborate across local, state and national levels within the context of a heavy teaching, advising and service load.

Program staff are highly competent and serve as links between students, faculty and field personnel. As was mentioned by many, they are the “glue” for the programs. Both faculty and staff focus on development of professional relationships and collaborate well in a “flat” organization where everyone’s voice is heard.

Programmatic Strengths. Excellence is evident in the program’s mission, curriculum, community relationships, student satisfaction and innovations. The mission statement continues to be viable and is evident throughout the design and implementation of all programs. There are clear linkages between the M.Ed. program, the certification programs, the national board standards and an emerging M.Ed. program in Educational Leadership. All programs have a thorough and rigorous screening process for applicants and good student support mechanism that result in students highly likely to succeed and remain in the profession. Theory and practice are well integrated across the curriculum. Extensive graduated field experiences across an academic year from September through June enable students to integrate theory and practice and build their confidence as teachers and educational leaders. There is an emphasis on student success and positive

relationships while maintaining rigor and a caring stance. The Education Minor and the innovation of the Dream Project provide linkages with great potential to feed diverse applicants that would be highly likely to succeed in the program and remain in the profession.

The Education Program prepares innovative, ethical practitioners who are grounded in intellectual and professional communities and who are dedicated to educating diverse students. Student outcomes and comments reflect the program's mission and conceptual framework. Students live and practice ideals of culturally responsive pedagogy. Teacher candidates see faculty modeling technology use in courses, talk positively about the course in technology use, are encouraged to use technology in projects and portfolios and perceive the campus as supportive with generally good technology resources. Students also see the cohort model as supporting their professional and personal growth and ability to be successful in the program. Students' willingness to comment eagerly and without prompting about these issues is truly unusual and should be taken as a key indicator of program success. Overall, the students are highly satisfied with the program and are wonderful ambassadors for the program in the community. The program is making arrangements to begin constructing a comprehensive system for capturing and tracking information about students, their work in the program, the impact they have on students, and their placement following graduation. The importance of this sort of system cannot be overstated: it will be required for continued state accreditation, and it will be a significant addition to the program's ability to self-monitor and respond to needs and conditions in the field.

The Professional Education Advisory Board (PEAB) is very functional, close, committed and involved in creating and improving programs. While in some programs, the operation of the PEAB takes on either a perfunctory role or (in others) becomes confrontational, the working relationship in the UWB PEAB seemed to be most productive, cordial, mutually active and beneficial. Creating this sort of climate is a positive achievement to be praised. The program has many significant placement sites and continues to develop relationships with more. Community partners cite positive outcomes for their schools and students from collaborations with UWB. The faculty are moving toward a "co-teaching" model for the work their student teachers do in the field. This transition will require significant attention to professional development of mentor teachers as well as the program's faculty.

Teacher Certification K-8 Program. This post-baccalaureate program includes a 5-quarter and an extended model. The extended model meets the needs of career changers through scheduling responsiveness and faculty support to provide "scaffolding" for these students as they transition into the program. The program offers middle school endorsement in math, science or humanities as students earn K-8 certification. Site-based literacy and science pedagogy courses are well integrated into school settings and increase collaborations among university and school faculty and their students. Teacher candidates viewed September and dyad experiences where they saw beginning of school as well as multiple levels of students invaluable in developing their professional practice. K-8 alumni demonstrated significant professional growth (seeking Pro-Cert and NBPTS)

as well as collaboration and leadership in their school settings in a variety of roles. Students were highly complementary of the quality, support and responsiveness of the faculty. They are challenged as well as supported by faculty, staff and school mentors. This established, rigorous program develops skills in critical analysis, reflective practice, the development of professional, collaborative communities and the ability to have positive impact on diverse student learners.

Secondary Teacher Certification M.Ed. Program. This program that prepares content specialists to become secondary teachers is a 2-year, master's level program. It begins as an evening, part-time program; the second year becomes a full-time day program. The program is new and is being modified as feedback from students, faculty and the field indicate reasons for change. Strengths of this program include the format which moves from part-time to full time to allow for transition into the program. Faculty have listened carefully to feedback from students and modified it as they consider its impact. Students speak freely, not only about their commitment to and knowledge about diversity and social justice, but also about inquiry and reflection as key strands of their preparation. While early grads of the program reported needing more help learning how to read and write from a social sciences perspective, current students from science fields report more scaffolding, reflecting a positive trend in the adaptation of the program as it has evolved to meet the needs of career changers from the fields of science, math and technology. Students report positive field experiences and a sense of ownership in the final portfolio which is an effective tool for reflection and presentation of their learning to faculty.

M.Ed. Program (with ProCert, pathway to NBPTS Cert, Reading Endorsement options). The Master of Education program is designed to provide the academic foundations and depth needed to advance in teaching careers and take on leadership roles within the profession. It has options so that students can concurrently pursue Professional Certification (Pro-Cert), a pathway to NBPTS Certification and/or obtain a Reading Endorsement. The M.Ed and certification options provide a continuum of preparation and support, evolving from initial certification through increasingly responsible mentoring/coaching and clinical faculty roles. These programs also facilitate important cross-campus linkages and connections. The program shows a very responsive approach to meeting the needs of teachers in surrounding schools and districts. It also appears to be very responsive to the individual situations of students and is perceived in that way by them and by recent graduates. Teachers find the work that they do in these programs very relevant and thought provoking. They said things such as: "This work made me a better teacher," "It stretched my thinking." "My emphasis shifted onto kids". This is good evidence of a well-designed and very effective program. The dossier options also provide a useful bridge among NBPTS, Pro-Cert/ProTeach, and Endorsements. This approach mirrors the best current national thinking about how to effectively document the emergence of teaching proficiency. Our discussions with recent graduates revealed a very high level of satisfaction with their experiences in the program.

Education Minor and the DREAM Project. The minor in education seems to be well-enrolled and is providing a "pipeline" to post-graduate education options offered by

the program. The advising to undergraduates for this minor is strong and facilitates smooth transitions to graduate education. The DREAM project is an outstanding innovation that is connecting undergraduate students with the program. That this program also serves underrepresented students in the community, and provides a direct conduit into the UWB and its programs, makes its value all the more significant both for the program and UWB as a whole. It should continue to be offered and supported.

III. Challenges and Risks

The UWB Education program is faced with the challenge of balancing growth and excellence. Despite having experienced a recent period of great growth, we saw program strength and excellence in every element of the program. The growth experienced has led to a faculty that is stretched very thin. The current variety and dispersion of programs and courses can be confusing to students and inefficient for faculty. Given the recent program growth, a related challenge is systematically evaluating the program and tracking comprehensive evaluation data to document the excellence of their work.

Connections and positive relationships have been a strength of the program. However, sustainability of the program is a risk. Continued growth may negatively affect the ability to develop such strong relationships and there is a concern regarding the ability of the faculty to build and sustain their academic careers in the face of the workload. Assistant professors clearly exemplify the pressures and tensions felt by faculty in the program as a whole with many competing demands on their time for new program development, new course design and offering, student advising, pressure to build a research portfolio, and so on. Rapid growth creates a kind of fracturing of faculty attention that, over the long run, may make it difficult to attract and retain highly skilled faculty.

Another challenge is the ongoing development and maintenance of relationships with partner schools. School personnel are now expecting much more from university partners and are in the position to select those universities with whom they wish to work. Students and their teaching mentors in the schools have a lot to accomplish within a relatively short student-teaching timeframe. A challenge for students and mentor teachers is balancing course requirements during the student teaching experience.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation: Our primary recommendation from this review is **continuing status of all programs with a subsequent review in 10 years.**

In the spirit of collaboration, we offer further advice to promote the health and further development of the unit in 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. After a period of significant growth, we encourage a period of stabilization and focus on developing a vision for the next phases of the program's development. We support plans for curriculum review and consolidation to complement this. These efforts will help the program address the challenge of sustainability.

During the process of curriculum review, we encourage the faculty to look for course efficiencies and consider course integration or consolidation to help reduce faculty workload. Careful consideration of the curriculum beginning with standards and a focus on integration (across the various programs) may result in fewer, 5-credit courses that may reduce the large number of courses faculty now teach. Since the state's Pro-Cert program is changing and may be moved outside the university structures, the faculty may consider whether to eliminate this program, and focus solely on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards preparation for their students at this level. Another important issue to address is the heavy advising load for faculty. While the programs are already "packed" with credits, course consolidations may result in "room" for the faculty to assign credits to the work supervised as part of the advising role of faculty.

A student oriented consideration in curriculum review will be re-evaluating required course scheduling to address pressures of the student teaching quarter and coordination of student assignments with the schedules of the schools they are teaching in. Finally, as curriculum review is completed and newer program threads are stabilized, faculty may be able to develop clearer trajectories for students of what exactly lays ahead, how the program is structured and scheduled and why. Another outcome of this effort might be a three year scheduling cycle that would also assist students in planning.

Formal Comprehensive Program Assessment. We encourage the faculty to develop a conceptual model for program evaluation that is reviewed regularly and used for program decisions in an ongoing way. The assessment system needs to parallel the teacher development model they use. The evaluation model can then be integrated with a meaningful technical data system for capturing and tracking student impact and outcomes.

Partner School Relationships. We encourage continued collaborative design and formalization of the UWB partner school model. While Co-teaching is an appropriate possible model for this, following national patterns in best practices for teacher preparation, it is a more complex arrangement than the traditional solo-practitioner model of student teaching and may require a more complex structure on the part of UWB faculty, staff, and field supervisors. The value of choosing this approach will need to be assessed against the costs and complexity the new model imposes. This will require careful consideration of what it means to be a partner with the UWB and how those partnerships are reciprocal in such a way that they are sustainable and distinguish the work as UWB.

Faculty , Staff and Student Development. While assistant professors generally feel supported by program leadership and appreciate their ongoing collaborations with UWS mentors and faculty , they could profit from a more formal mentoring arrangement in which they have direct advising and defined support from senior faculty in the program. We encourage creative thinking about cost-effective ways to bring additional English Language Learner (ELL) and special education faculty expertise into the program in times of extreme budget constraints.

While the overall structure of degrees and certifications seems to be well conceived, it is a complex structure, and the specifics of how it is explained to students appear to reside with just a few staff members. As the program develops, efforts should be made to assure that key “institutional memory” of this sort is preserved in multiple locations and not dependent on the presence of a single individual. Cross training of staff to work across programs might address this issue. The high quality of published materials for each program and fine organizational skills of the staff would assist in this effort.

We encourage the program to continue efforts to diversify and recruit a student population that reflects the diversity of the campus. While technology resources on the campus are extensive, we suggest that the administration make sure that students/faculty have technology available on the UWB campus (Smart Boards) that is consistent with resources that are used in the schools where students do their student teaching.