Southeastern Louisiana University

2014 Institutional Report

***Continuing Accreditation Visit for Initial and Advanced Programs***



Submitted for review by the

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

August 19, 2014

**Standard 4**

**Diversity**

The promotion of diversity is extremely important in the overall mission of Southeastern. Through the variety of faculty recruitment efforts and exposure of candidates to diverse thought, cultures, and ways of looking at the world, Southeastern continues its commitment to promote and foster diversity as a cornerstone of the university.

Instructors acknowledge the importance of diversity as evidenced by their inclusion of activities and assignments that promote an awareness of diversity and give rise to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to adapt instruction with diverse populations in mind. For all education majors, a diversity course (EDUC 212) is required early on in their program, and T&L advanced candidates must take EDUC 660 (Dimensions of Diversity for Education: Students, Families, Cultures, and Communities) as a part of their graduate program. With respect to the EDL advanced programs, diversity is integrated in a number of courses. For example, master's level candidates address diversity, culture, and climate in all EDL course seminars. In EDF 610 & 612, advanced students examine data from the School Improvement Plan and identify diversity issues. Then, in EDF 662 they develop a professional development plan including data from the school’s diversity issues. In EDF 664, the School Improvement Plan is implemented. An environmental scan is completed in EDL 811 by doctoral candidates. Candidates in the special education initial program (SPED 363) develop a Start-Up Plan where they must identify how the classroom can be organized to meet the diverse needs of students with respect to ethnicity, race, language, SES, gender, and exceptionalities. Candidates in the special education advanced program instruct students in classrooms that are different from their own teaching assignments (e.g., rural/urban, high SES/low SES, primarily African-American/primarily Caucasian.

Several assessment instruments in initial programs measure proficiencies related to diversity, such as the Lesson Plan Rubric, the Compass/LCET, the Dispositions Checklist, and the Assessment Plan Rubric. Of special interest are the instruments created to measure diversity proficiencies at the initial and advanced levels (e.g.,Prospective Education Candidate (PEC) Surveys). In reviewing data from these instruments, it is clear that candidates increase in their ability to design instruction and select approaches for a diverse student population, assess services and resources for them, and create equitable learning communities.

The unit makes a concerted effort to afford candidates many opportunities to interact with diverse speakers on a variety of topics and themes. The series of Conversations on Diversity, Black History Month speakers, Women's History Month speakers, and various other guest speakers provide topics of interest to make candidates aware of diversity issues. Since the guidelines for portfolios and many education classes require professional development activities, candidates selectively attend these functions to complete that part of the requirement. Moreover, these lectures are offered during the day and in the evening, both initial and advanced candidates can attend. As well, professors of individual classes have invited ethnically diverse guest speakers to their classes to broach such topics as ELLs and the investigation of cultures of other countries. These types of opportunities instills efficacy and achievement while also promotion multicultural awareness and understanding.

Candidates also work with diverse clinical faculty. Form A completed by cooperating teachers of FXs allows the Director of Field Experiences to assign a candidate to schools of differing levels of faculty diversity. Candidates have opportunities to study abroad with Southeastern faculty who are familiar with a particular country and with local professors of that country. These classes in music, foreign languages, history, and literature foster that sought-after global perspective. The IGF position provides candidates opportunities to interact with an international educator. Faculty demographics indicate that 14% of the professional education faculty in initial teacher preparation programs and 8% of faculty for the advanced programs are Black, non-Hispanic. Initial program faculty representation is 10% higher than the Black, non-Hispanic representation in the entire institution, and advanced program faculty representation of diversity is double that of the institution. Black, non-Hispanic school-based faculty represents 9% of the total reported race/ethnicity. With U.S. Census Bureau estimated average percentage of Parishes, greatest service areas, being 13%, professional education faculty numbers are comparable, and clinical faculty approaches that percentage with 8.8%. Female faculty for initial and advanced programs are 82% and 80%, respectively. School-based faculty is composed of 92% female teachers. The institution employs 55% female faculty.

Candidate demographics reveal that most candidates at Southeastern are White, non-Hispanic (83%), 12% Black, non-Hispanic, 2% Hispanic, and less than 1% each of American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander. These percentages coincide closely to the demographics of the geographical area served by the University.  This is not the case for gender.  Females dominate teaching, especially in the elementary school setting.  The same is true in the teacher education program with 15% of the candidates being male.

Southeastern offers several opportunities for interaction with diverse candidates in an academic and socially diverse environment.  At the University level, Multicultural and International Student Affairs helps to create a campus environment that welcomes diversity.  This program is in collaboration with academic departments, student-led organizations, and a wide range of programs and services located on campus.  Sponsors and candidates design activities to assist all candidates in academic achievement as well as promoting personal, group, and self-direction with an emphasis on celebrating new cultures and developing a diverse way of thinking.  Some of the activities incorporated with this program include Project Pull Mentor Program, Let’s Get Acquainted, Minority Seminar, and leadership conferences.

Candidates may also participate in student organizations and Greek life programs.  These programs are an integral part of campus life and constitute one of the best opportunities for candidates to integrate knowledge from the classroom with everyday experiences of living and working in a society with people of varied interests, ideas, and values.  These organizations include Black Student Union, International Student Association, and Italian Club, as well as others.  The Student Government Association (SGA) is available to all students in order to promote fairness, diversity and the University mission for excellence.   
 In the Dept. of Teaching and Learning, candidates can join service organizations as well as honor societies.  Kappa Delta Pi and Southeastern Education Association for Students (SEAS) are open to candidates in education and the Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) is open to all academic majors.  Each of these organizations allows candidates to interact with other individuals from diverse backgrounds with a common interest to serve students in education.

Lecture series for Black History Month and Women’s History Month bring together speakers who expertly deal with issues in Black history and politics and in women’s issues.  Presentations share valuable insights, and many of the speakers belong to minority groups.  These lectures provide occasions for candidates of all races, ethnicities, and genders to come together for a single purpose.

The Unit strives to recruit and retain minority candidates.  Departments work with programs across campus to attract and retain candidates from diverse backgrounds.  Informally, faculty members identify qualified minority candidates within the initial programs and inform them of the availability of advanced programs with the College.  The Minority Affairs Advisory Committee’s first goal is to recruit minority candidates.  The committee also develops programs that will address problems that any candidate may encounter, plus those that are unique to minorities, in an effort to assist them in completing a successful course of study.

A major effort in retaining all candidates is the Professional Development Program.  Instructors recommend candidates for remedial help in many areas.  Also, the program provides workshops on a variety of subjects that help candidates attain the required professional development hours.  Many of these workshops deal with PRAXIS preparation.  Programs such as these offer support and aid in the retention of minority candidates.

**Moving Toward Target**

The Faculty Handbook makes clear that the Southeastern Louisiana University shall not engage in unlawful discrimination in employment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. Southeastern also takes affirmative action to employ underrepresented groups.

The commitment to a diverse faculty includes good faith efforts to recruit and retain faculty in COE, as well as in the partner colleges. Each college works diligently using a variety of strategies. Vacant positions are advertised in various media in an effort to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. In addition to advertising in state, local, and community newspapers, the College advertises in national journals such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education.* Specific to the recruitment of qualified minority candidates, the unit advertises open jobs quarterly in *Black Issues in Higher Education* and *Hispanic Outlook*. The College also attempts to attract faculty through various listserves and uses specific language in recruitment materials and job descriptions intended to entice underrepresented professionals. In addition, departments channel vacancy notices to Historically Black Colleges and universities. The faculty is proactive in recruiting by communicating via e-mail and informal conversations with faculty from doctoral universities who have may be aware of recent minority graduates searching for an available faculty position.

Partner colleges also make cultural diversity a goal in the hiring of faculty. Within the NHS, the Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies advertises all positions in the Chronicle of Higher Education and on higheredjobs.com. The call specifically indicates that Southeastern is an AA/ADA/EEO employer. AHSS utilizes several vehicles for attracting minority faculty. University personnel visit selected doctoral institutions that historically have drawn their enrollment predominately from minority groups with the goal of encouraging graduate students to consider applying to Southeastern upon completion of their graduate programs. Departments groom successful undergraduate and master's level minority candidates at Southeastern to apply for positions here after completing a doctoral program. Such candidates work as instructors. The departments are ever mindful of affirmative action guidelines when searching to fill vacancies. Efforts are continuously made to endow a chair for a minority faculty member and to foster a faculty exchange program with historically Black and Hispanic universities such as currently underway with the Universidade Federal de Lavras, Departamento de Ciências Humanas in Brazil.

Demographics on Clinical Sites for Initial and Advanced Programs, indicates that racial composition differs in each parish with the highest percentage of minority students being 95.4% and the lowest concentration being 6.9%. Because of the vast differences in distribution, we ensure candidates have experiences in different environments and add sites to support diversity. For example, the Dual Language Preschool site in Livingston Parish was added since the last accreditation visit which provides linguistically and ethnically diverse interactions for our teacher candidates through a unique field experience with a school district, Head Start program and Southeastern.

Southeastern is committed to the belief that to be prepared to meet the many challenges in today's ever-changing world, candidates must experience working with as many diverse groups as possible. Prior to being approved to work with candidates during FXs, clinical faculty must complete and submit Form A. The data on Form A allows the COE to select a diverse group of clinical faculty to work with candidates. Additionally, cooperating teachers must complete Form B. Forms B and C list demographics of the class. Using this data, Southeastern instructors can ensure that candidates have experience working with students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, among others.

To ensure that candidates have the basis to develop and practice knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to diversity during their FXs and clinical practices, candidates must include these elements in lesson plans during their two methods courses. Instructors teach candidates to plan their lessons according to Compass/LCET, which includes several areas of diversity. Candidates must submit lesson plans to instructors during FXs. Instructors evaluating the progress of a candidate must reflect on the plans submitted by candidates, stating how the plan includes diversity elements and how the candidate can improve. Comparing the assessment of lesson plans submitted in the first methods course to the assessment of lesson plans submitted in the second methods course, one can see significant improvement in all 10 areas.

Following the second methods course, the coordinator places candidates in student teaching positions. Daily lesson plans are reviewed and assessed by supervising teachers, supervising school administrators, and university supervisors. Skills are assessed and data reveal candidate competency in addressing diversity proficiencies.

To ensure that candidates are reflecting on and incorporating recommendations to improve their skills in working with students from diverse groups, the unit provides for the following:

* Methods courses require peer evaluations and peer debriefing sessions for lessons candidates teach in diverse field settings.
* Form C: Class instructors review Form C submitted by candidates during FX's, make suggestions if needed, and follow-up to determine if candidates implemented any suggestions during subsequent visits.
* Lesson Plans: Methods instructors, university supervisors, and supervising teachers review lesson plans and give suggestions for improvement. They look for implementation of these suggestions in subsequent lessons.
* Seminars: University supervisors hold two seminars with candidates during their clinical experiences. Diversity dominates part of the discussion as supervisor and candidates share ideas for working with a diverse population.
* Supervising Teacher Journal: In a journal, supervising teachers note candidates' strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve. These sometimes include issues concerning working with diverse students. Candidates reflect on the entries and may suggest other ways to improve.

Recognizing the fact that classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, numerous new endeavors have been undertaken to move toward target (e.g., Dual Language Preschool field site, department scholarships for historically under-represented groups, faculty exchange programs, diverse program speakers in the unit) which provide extensive and substantive experiences, including field and clinical experiences, supporting candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions to interact with K-12 students representing diverse populations.