

UWT Education Program Response
To the UW Graduate School Review Report (September 20, 2006)

November 30, 2006

The Program wishes to thank the Graduate School for its thorough review process and thoughtful report. We appreciate the clear recognition of the success of our program. It was challenging for the site reviewers as well as the program to evaluate the program as it was just prior to implementation of a rather large restructuring moment in the program's history. The self-study initially written two years prior to the review, and now this response being written nine months after the site visit, represents a long span of time in the history of this dynamic program and campus. In this response we will address how we have begun to approach program improvement according to the key findings of the report, how we plan to approach the recommendations, and we will seek to clarify some rather significant misunderstandings. We will cite page numbers from the report for clarity in brackets (e.g., [p. 1, rec. 2(a)]). “(Appendix--)” refers to documents in the Self-Study, used during the site visit.

A significant problem in communication during the site visit was related to the large, legal sized table that was presented, which was intended to show the a detailed structure and scope of our planning for a long-range future. The chart had the opposite effect, confusing many—in fact most. We apologize for this and will attempt to clarify our work below. We are also attaching the new Program Brochure, which provides evidence of our newly implemented structural changes.

The UWT Education Program is a performance-based program, using ongoing assessment of our work to measure how we are meeting our own rigorous accountability outcomes (Appendix N). By national and state standards for schools and colleges of teacher education, we have been deemed very successful by the State of Washington, and the South Sound community. We appreciate the Graduate School reviewers focus on the deep structure of the program that educates and delivers these excellent teachers and principals to our region.

Capacity

[p. 12; rec.1(a, b)]

It seems that the committee was left with a perception of a proliferation of programs (there is a number of 17 study options quoted several times). In fact, just the opposite has happened. Previously, there were a variety of certificates, degrees and study options that were structurally unrelated, and developed more by individual faculty interest and expertise than by any coherent planning—which is common in the development of new campuses. The change, as we have become a more mature program, was one of

consolidation and focus. It is clear that we were not effective in presenting the new structures.

This page will briefly summarize the old structure and following that, the new structure:

Old structure: In the past we offered 2 certificates (i.e. Residency and Professional) and 1 M.Ed. with 5 study options, not well connected to State endorsement system:

Residency Teacher Certification with K-8 and Reading Endorsements
(67 credits for but certificate no degree)

M.Ed. (45-49 credits)

Study Options:

- Special Education
- At-Risk Learner
- Science Education
- Integrated Curriculum
- Technology
- Educational Administration

Professional certificate (certificate plus degree or stand alone)

In contrast:

New structure: 1 degree (i.e., M.Ed.) and 5 study options within it (i.e., Teacher Education, At Risk, Science/Math, Humanities, Leadership), by which students may be recommended for 2 certificates (i.e., Residency, Professional) connected to the degree.

M.Ed. degree with following study options (all connected to State content area endorsements where available):

- Teacher Education: (with focus on K-8, Special Education, or Secondary Science)
- At-risk: (with focus on At Risk Learner, Special Education, or Reading/Literacy)
- Science/Math (with focus on Science; Mathematics under development*)
- Humanities (with focus on: Middle Level Humanities, Multicultural Education, Social Studies)
- Leadership (Educational Administration)

**by under development, we indicate that we are currently searching for a mathematics educator(to start Fall, 2007) to replace our current part-time lecturers. When we have a full time mathematics education faculty member, we will be able to allow students to choose this focus.*

We have consolidated students' options, and improved the value of students' education by connecting the study options and focus areas to degrees and the state endorsement system. It is true that because the site visit came just prior to implementation of the new structure, not all participants were aware yet of the details. We are now two quarters into the new structure, and information is certainly clearer.

We will evaluate the success of the new model [rec. 1(a)] in May, which is the end of a one year cycle. In order to evaluate student and program outcomes, every year we use an assessment system (Appendix N) that focuses primarily on TCP and EdAd programs. During spring, 2006, we will use this normal process, expanded to include the general M.Ed. and Professional Certification programs. In addition, UWT has just opened an office of Institutional Research, which we will engage to help us with data-based decision making. We will submit a written report to the Graduate School [rec.1(b)]. We will then share the results with faculty and advisory boards, and make necessary program improvements. This process includes formative assessment at multiple points during the year, and a more summative assessment each May. All components of the UWT Education Program related to certification are currently undergoing our 5-year State program approval review, and those results will also be integrated

The Program started a strategic planning process (Site visit document: “Strategic Planning in Education at UWT”). Over the past 7 years, we have accomplished (a) the development of a mission statement, (b) a vision statement that presents a rationale for our work, and (c) includes measurable objectives. The next step in the process is to create a plan [rec. 2(b)] articulate specific priorities and strategies for implementation of the next phase of growth, building out the 5 study options (again, not 17) and determining a resource estimate and timeline for the future of the program. We will attempt to predict how and under what circumstances growth will occur, realizing that most of our development is tied directly to the legislative allocations, which are unpredictable at best [2(a)]. Continued strategic planning has been discussed by the faculty and there is strong support and commitment to this long and sometimes challenging process.

We will certainly continue to build synergies across campus for curricular development [p. 10 ; rec. 2(c)]; as we can always do more. However, it should be clear that this is not a new plan. To suggest a few examples of past and ongoing collaborations within UWT (there are many more examples of institutional collaborations (Appendix O)): (a) inclusion of a mathematics professor in our discussions of how to create our math education program and in our search committee for a math educator; (b) engagement of members of the science and computer science and faculty on multiple occasions to help us design a science education program that will create excellent teachers, including topics of curriculum development, challenges in recruiting women and minorities, and current NSF funding issues; (c) multiple collaborations with an IAS faculty member who specializes in the economics of education, in seminars related to poverty issues, teaching a class for the Ed. minor, and serving on various P& T committees; (d) co-teaching a course with a Nursing faculty member for the freshman core. (e) collaboration with a UWT Computer and Software Systems faculty member and a UWS faculty member in Physics, along with many community partners, writing a NSF grant (not-funded).

We will continue to improving capacity by adding depth in study options [p. 6-7]. Since the site visit, we have hired a new associate professor in Science Education. We now have two science educators, which will help the program in breadth and depth and offer the students more opportunities. An additional tenure track Educational Administrator will likely be a high priority as we set our hiring goals for the next biennium. We are hoping to add three more faculty members over the next biennium. The Program will determine which study options to strengthen and prioritize hiring of faculty based on the comprehensive strategic plan and with the assistance of Institutional Research to provide needs assessment data,.

Although not part of the formal recommendations, we would like to clarify a section in the report related to the future Ed.D. at UWT. It would be highly inaccurate to state the program is moving forward with plans to offer this degree [p. 6]. This prospect was suggested as part of long term thinking for the UW and UWT (as directed by the “House Bill 2707” report), and the Education Program. We agree with the report that we do not have faculty, or resources (or authority at the present time) to pursue such an endeavor. However, an Ed.D. degree from the UW in the South Sound will someday be an important contribution. We are forward thinking enough to believe that someday we will be able to offer it.

Governance

In terms of faculty relationships and governance issues, the review has highlighted two aspects of the program to which we agree need attention: (a) trust [rec. 4(a)] and (b) attention to development of policies and procedures [p 7, 9, 13; rec. 5],

Within the Education Program, there is a broad range of theoretical positions of best-practice, driven by different interpretations of scientific evidence and values-driven perspectives. It has, at times, caused difficulty for faculty, staff, and students alike, as the differences have not always been experienced with respect for open, respectful inquiry [p. 9].

The Education Program will take the advice of the committee and engage a facilitator [4b] to work with the program preferably during spring quarter, 2007. A task force has been formed of representative faculty and staff to explore options from the pool of UW recommended facilitators. The work of this task force is to draft the goals, parameters, and desired outcomes of the facilitator’s work. The faculty, staff, and director will review the draft and come to agreement prior to choosing a facilitator. Choosing from the neutral UW preferred provider pool will work to prevent perceptions of bias that might occur from other selection methods. The Chancellor’s office has agreed to provide financial resources for this consultation.

We will encourage the use of the facilitator to help resolve some issues surrounding program governance [rec. 4(a)] and take campus wide governance into consideration in our deliberations [rec. 4(c)].

We will continue our development of policies and procedures for decision making [rec. 5], and will improve the consistency of documentation of these in writing. Over the past 7 years, the Program has been active in developing policies and procedures for faculty and staff participation in matters of governance and program implementation. As in any new organization, these are often developed on an as-needed basis—and frequently arise in periods of fastest growth. Over the past two years, at faculty initiation, we have developed a Faculty Policy and Procedures Manual (Manual presented in evidence at site visit). The UWT campus as a whole is working to improve written records of policies and procedures; it is an ongoing effort. The faculty and director have periodically initiated policy deliberations, and recorded them. In a recent meeting, faculty suggested and it was agreed to heighten the priority by making this an ongoing agenda item for program meetings. A second revised edition will be implemented by June, 2007.

Curriculum Design

Part time lecturers

In periods of rapid growth, we have at times hired more part-time lecturers than we might prefer, and then, as we hire additional tenure-track core faculty, the problem abates. However during the 2005-2006 academic year, we began work on increasing program coherence in regard to part-time lecturers [rec. 6]. We began working to define common learning objectives and outcomes for each core course, regardless of who is the instructor—regular or part-time faculty. This is showing early promising results, and we will extend it to extend it to all core classes. This coherence will also help student's confidence in preparation for comprehensive examinations. This should be completed by the end of Summer, 2007.

Culminating experience

Since its inception, the faculty has been charged with the design of the culminating experience for the M.Ed. It has had several iterations over time, as we continually work to improve the quality and rigor of the degree. While there has been significant improvement over the past seven years, we will continue to work to clarify the requirements, and will regularly communicate these with staff and students so that all will know what is expected [rec.7].

TCP field supervision

Regarding TCP fieldwork, we would like to clarify our evidence. We believe the report indicates several serious misconceptions. [p. 4, rec.8. (a, b). While we are always open to feedback on program improvement, our field supervision of interns in all programs is very well coordinated. As of July, 2005, the program has hired a part-time field administrator to oversee all internship field supervisors. The field supervisors meet monthly for trainings and collaboration. There are detailed handbooks for field-supervisors, cooperating teachers, and students, (which include assignments, forms, deadlines, etc.) that are regularly updated, and presented to each groups via structured orientations. This process has existed for many years. On some occasions, individual field supervisors may ask individual students to do additional tasks, based on individual need for enrichment or improvement of their classroom practice, but this is a positive flexibility, allowing us to help each student as needed. We regularly evaluate the field

supervisors and on occasion do not re-hire if there is any hint of mediocrity in their work. However, the fact that this misperception came out of interviews suggests a communication problem we will work to correct [rec. 8a].

Cooperating teachers

Regarding the selection of cooperating teachers, the information is incorrect. We have a specific process of selection (which never includes random principal or teacher volunteering), which includes current field supervisors and the field placement coordinator looking for nominations of excellent teachers, interviewing them and their references, and close evaluation of their work. However, this is not a perfect process; differences in the teacher's class composition from year to year and other factors can result in a less than ideal placement for our interns. On rare occasions we will change a placement. When, on occasion, a teacher is not satisfactory, we do not continue to use this placement. There are stereotypes of cooperating teachers who are lazy and want relief by having a student teacher...these may exist, but we do not hire this type of teacher. Again, the fact that this misperception came out of interviews suggests a communication problem we will work to correct [rec. 8 (a)].

IAS Education Minor—a Pathway to TCP

There seems to be a misunderstanding about the IAS Ed minor, as evidenced in the report. The Education Program has made every effort to employ the IAS Education Minor as a pathway for students interested in the Teacher Certification Masters degree [p. 9.; rec.9; 12(b)]. As indicated in the report, the Ed Minor was *not* under review, as it is housed in IAS.

The Education Program created the Ed Minor in IAS in 2003. There two primary objective in its design: (a) to build a pipeline into the TCP, (b) to increase diversity in TCP, since there is more diversity in IAS (15 %) than TCP (8.5%). We collaborated with IAS to create and deliver the content and the pre-pedagogy courses of the 29 credit minor. Education now delivers 6 sections per year from the Education Program for the minor, and it is currently the most popular minor on the UWT campus, with approximately 100 declared students. In fact, we are now collaborating with CSS to include a technology strand of the IAS minor, so that we may serve technology interested liberal arts majors as well. Approximately 30% of our TCP students come with an IAS minor.

Professional Certificate

The Professional Certification Program (state-mandated, second level teacher certification) is integrated into our M.Ed. program, and therefore has the academic rigor as well as the cost of graduate tuition, which we do not believe to be “outrageously expensive” [p. 5]. The other nearby private universities offer this program for continuing education credits (which are of course, much less expensive) and graduate degree credits (which are much *more* expensive than UWT). The State has approved our program as we have designed it, and we are very satisfied with the product and the cost. The UWS College of Education offers both continuing education options and graduate degree options—and for the latter, we charge exactly the same tuition.

Support and Development

Research support

Since the self study was written, the UWT campus has continued to improve support for research among faculty. In August, 2006, the Education Program added a new staff member with expertise in grants and budgeting to help faculty. We will continue to take a leadership role [rec. 10] in improving research support on campus. Several of our faculty currently accomplish this by committee work (e.g., IRB, Research Task Force). In addition, UWT is in the process of opening a full time office of sponsored research to assist faculty in grant writing and implementation. The campus has hired staff in the finance office to support faculty, and the addition of the new Office of Institutional Research will help faculty in their research foundations as well. The VCAA office is currently attempting to articulate a policy governing course buy-outs for research.

Faculty and staff development

The program will work to ensure equal access to existing or new Program resources [rec.11].

Diversity

The Education Program is always seeking to improve on its mission to “...meet the needs of all learners in our diverse communities”. It is not clear how the site review team was defining diversity [rec.12], but we attempt to provide educational opportunities for those of diverse ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, gender, and sensory disabilities. We will continue these efforts, but we disagree with the report that we have done little to systematically honor our mission. In fact, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, have formally commended our diversity efforts, in public program approval hearings during 2002. We would offer that we have engaged in multiple serious attempts in the past few years, for example:

- We encourage students with disabilities in their goals to become educators, and have helped many to find success.
- The director, on multiple occasions, has met with leaders in the African American community in Tacoma to build relationships and seek advice on how to build the pool of African American teachers. Outcomes have included following this advice including the transition of the TCP from non-degree to degree program (a specific recommendation—due to increased salary levels upon exiting), creating evening secondary program, hiring another faculty member of color. We have delivered summer tutoring programs to local K-12 students who are at severe risk of school failure, as a practicum training for our students [rec.12(b)].
- We have worked on increasing support for students from underrepresented groups. Outcomes include working with the Development Office to create a new scholarship program specifically targeted to future teachers of color, with each new Educational Administration cohort, we have helped students of color successfully find scholarships and be awarded state funding to support their internships [rec. 12(a)].
- In an attempt to increase the number minority candidates in the teacher pool, we have been in discussion for about two years to add an additional cohort of TCP

- that will be an evening, part-time program, addressing specifically the para-educator population. In attempting to moderate change, we chose to add a cohort of special education teachers first (now in place) to meet the state-wide shortage of form of this form of diversity. Now that we have the graduate level TCP in place, we can develop the next form, a part-time cohort. This will also address multiple forms of diversity (e.g., ethnic, socio-economic).
- We have intentionally worked to develop a multi-ethnic faculty that is 27% non-white and a staff that is 33% non-white, including hiring a faculty member of African descent and a staff member of Native American heritage over the past 18 months [rec. 12].
 - Finally, the creation of the Center for the Study of Education and Poverty (C-STEP) has allowed us to raise awareness of the issues of diversity in Education by bringing experts in these issues to the South Sound community every year for the past 3 years. Through this center, we have a building an annotated bibliography of issues of politics and economics of poverty and race education—which is open to anyone to use from the website. Through C-STEP the Education Program engaged the campus and the local leaders of color in a 2-day Tacoma community conversation about race and education. We recently partnered with UWS College of Education to present an event on immigration and education [p. 10]. We are attempting to find funding [rec. 12(a)] to make the center even more successful.

In summary,

The Education Program is pleased to have recognition that in spite of some of the challenges, represented by the recommendations, there is high praise for program by students, and the school districts that we serve. The *outcome* of our work, suggest a rigorous and relevant curriculum, outstanding faculty and staff dedicated to professional impact and student success, that is deeply appreciated by our stakeholders.

Our agreement with the findings of the committee are most aligned with the issues surrounding governance and our need to continue strategic planning. We will make every effort to improve in these areas, as recommended. We would disagree with the notion of “promising more than we can deliver” [p, 12] and hope we have clarified that we are only promising *what* we can deliver, but are thinking and planning ahead to deliver more as resources become available.

In a recent faculty meeting to discuss the report in detail, the UWT Education faculty and staff expressed a deep commitment to work on the areas of recommendation, and many efforts have already begun.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger MacDonald, Director

One final technical clarification, in order to match OSPI Standards language: p. 3, language clarification: remove words “primary” and “supporting endorsement in Reading”. This should read: “*Certificate*, and eligibility to request an endorsement in Elementary Education.