

**University of Washington Tacoma
Education Program**

Graduate Program Review Report

**Site visit dates: November 3-4, 2011
Final Report submitted December 2, 2011**

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Introduction

The following report has been prepared in accordance with the charge to the Review Committee from the University of Washington Graduate School. The recommendations outlined in this report should be considered the agreed findings of the four members of the committee. The findings are divided into sections with specific recommendations to the Education Program, UW Tacoma, The Graduate School, and the University at-large.

As a committee, we express our gratitude to those who facilitated the task of completing this review. The self study materials provided by the Education Program and the support and guidance of colleagues at the Graduate School ensured that we were able to make the best use of the site visit. We especially thank the Director of the Education Program, Dr. Kären Landenburger, the Education Program faculty and staff for their exceptional preparations and response to our requests. We are also grateful to colleagues in The Graduate School who supported and facilitated our work, especially Augustine McCaffery.

The review committee submits this report in response to our charge from the Graduate School for review of the Education Program at the University of Washington Tacoma. We followed the key questions in the charge letter including:

- Is the Program doing what it should be doing?
- Is the Program doing it well?
- How can they do things better
- How can the university assist them?

The answers to each of the questions are contained in the report narrative. Each section is written to outline the work of the Program, its strengths, areas worthy of further attention, and ways that the university may assist them in their development.

The Context of the University of Washington Tacoma

The mission and purpose of the University of Washington Tacoma has several characteristics that influence the Education Program. It is noted the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Director of the Education Program are all new to these positions since the last program review by The Graduate School.

We took note of the following themes indicated by Dr. J. W. Harrington, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs: First, a theme of social justice exists across programs. Second, UWT is an urban university and has an emphasis on creating and maintaining strong community partnerships within the south Puget Sound Community. Third, continued growth is an expectation for the campus. This growth will manifest in an increase in enrollment and in new degrees based on needs of the community. There will be continued support of high quality teaching as well as encouragement to increase sponsored research.

The Education Program is well positioned to be in concert with the campus directions described by Vice Chancellor Harrington. The Education Program has deepened program strands to include a potential new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree and is a leader among programs at UWT in receiving grants.

Education Program Objectives

Our observations of the Education Program were driven by the program specific objectives:

Education Program faculty have defined specific objectives to be met by all graduates of the UWT Education Program. These objectives articulate our core values regarding knowledge, service, professional excellence, justice, and diversity. We seek to create educators who are able to:

- 1. Integrate theory, research, ethics, and experience to implement best practices in assessment, instruction, and classroom management.*
- 2. Develop an integrated philosophical framework that clarifies and guides educational practices.*
- 3. Develop the dispositions, knowledge, and skills to collaborate in professional learning communities.*
- 4. Demonstrate strategic decision making for the betterment of the students, classrooms, families, schools, and communities.*

5. Develop a reflective practice that addresses the complexity and strength of race/ethnicity, class, culture, language, genders, sexualities, age, mental/physical ability, and religion. (Self Study, p. 2)

Education Program Breadth and Strength

The Education program at UW Tacoma offers a number of program strands:

Certification and M.Ed.

- K8 General Education
- K8 Dual Track with Special Education
- Secondary Education in Mathematics and Science
- Educational Administrator (Principal)

It is important to note that it is clear that faculty care about the quality of graduates from their program strands. The dual track teacher certification option is supported by a U.S. Department of Education OSEP 325T grant. The purpose of the OSEP 325T grant program is to provide funds to revise university-based special education licensure programs so they feature evidence-based practice and are closely aligned to the needs of schools.

The Dual Track K8/Special Education and K8 General Education licensing strands overlap in that they both provide a K8 certification, but they are built on very different philosophical bases and views of pedagogical practice. As a result, students in the Dual track/K8 strand take few of the same classes as students in the K8 strand alone. The Dual Track K8 strand is currently reported as the largest, the trend seems to be growth in the dual track.

While these programs can co-exist in the near term, it will be difficult for them to co-exist in the long term because the overall number of faculty in the Education program at UW Tacoma is small and it may become untenable to offer two programs, both of which result in K-8 certification.

Other M.Ed. options for practicing educators include study strands in:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Special Education
- Student Academic and Social Success
- Teaching English Language Learners

Additional non-degree options include:

- Special Education Endorsement
- Teaching English Language Learners

Recommendations:

1. In the interest of program coherence, we recommend the program articulate in a clear way what connections are intended between the K8 General Education, Dual Track K8, and Secondary Teacher Certification Program strands.
2. Students expressed some need for clarification of program requirements in the dual track second year. There is a sense that some elements of the second year are still in development. However, this is to be expected at this phase of a new program strand with resources being provided through grant funds.
3. It was not clear whether a student is permitted to complete the Teacher Certification Program and M.Ed. portions at the same time. The Director reports that it is not allowed, however students and some faculty reported that a small number of students are finding ways to do both simultaneously. This is reducing the quality of the field learning experience for those students.
4. The review committee had questions of whether the separate K8 Gen Ed and Dual track K8 are feasible given faculty numbers and teaching needs. We recommend that the program explore how or whether both can be offered in the long term.

Reputation in the field

These certification programs are well respected by the community, the students with whom we spoke, and the advisory board. It seems clear that the Education Program has established itself as a consistent provider of high-quality graduates and prepared professionals for the schools and districts in the area. This is important given that the area is served by a number of other universities.

Recommendation:

5. The program may wish to invest in further alumni outreach. While we did not have a chance to speak to many (and from the self study), it seems that alumni connections could be developed further.

Program Leadership

Dr. Kären Landenburger is to be commended for addressing issues of faculty divisions noted in the previous review report. While differing views remain, the faculty report that they are a group that can sit at the same table and respectfully

listen to each other's views. Dr. Landenburger is clearly respected by all faculty members with whom we spoke. They indicated that she is thoughtful, treats people fairly, follows through after discussions, has fostered collegial respect, and "works really hard."

Dr. Landenburger has reorganized staff roles in the main office, and communication with students has improved with the development of a Graduate Faculty Council and the addition of a Field Supervisor Coordinator. The appointment of a Field Supervisor Coordinator has resulted in greater communication among field supervisors, and improved communication between field supervisors and faculty.

While Dr. Landenburger has done an extraordinary job in a short time, she faces clear challenges in the near term. First, the proposed combined Nursing/Education Administration Ed.D. degree presents opportunities for growth and for establishing the first doctoral program on the Tacoma campus. However, it will be important that the faculty commit to supporting the program (i.e., supervising projects in their area of expertise; serving on student's supervisory committees, serving on a program admissions committee) and that faculty with research expertise are identified to lead the program.

Second, Dr. Landenburger will need to continue to mediate interactions among faculty with very different philosophical approaches and deepen the culture of respect that permeates the program. The development of the proposed Ed.D. is one activity that may be used to bring faculty together. As the proposal moves forward, it may present opportunities for faculty who are committed to their own teacher preparation programs to come together and agree on aspects of a program in which they are not directly involved. For example, they might work together on establishing program admissions criteria or developing broad guidelines for the final Ed.D. project.

Third, it will be important to carefully consider into what areas the faculty should expand and to help faculty link programs together so their effort does not become fragmented. For example, it will be important to carefully articulate how the proposed Ed.D. strand will interface with the Educational Administration masters strand. Clearly, one requirement for administrators is instructional leadership and assessment. The certification programs present unique opportunities in which to develop these skills.

The full professors summed up Dr. Landenburger's contribution by stating that she has done an excellent job of leading faculty and she needs to "help us shape where to go next." Finally, any program expansions will need to carefully take into account the added load for staff. Staff indicated that they now have one fewer staff person as compared to last year and that they streamlined their work to accommodate the change. It seems apparent that a new program cannot be added without considering how that program will affect staff responsibilities and the excellent service that they currently provide students.

Recommendations:

6. The program should continue to clarify its long-term core commitments and processes for making decisions.
7. It is always a challenge in small units to equitably distribute program management and service loads. We recommend that this be a consistent point of attention for the Director to ensure that pre-tenure faculty members are able to attend to scholarship interests.

Faculty Roles

Roles and responsibilities for full time faculty are quite clear. The Assistant professors were quite positive regarding the support they have for grant proposals (especially campus grants) and the research sabbatical quarter provided during the tenure and promotion process. However, they are a “little uneasy” regarding the expectations for additional scholarship as Vice Chancellor Harrington suggested while maintaining the teaching profile at current levels. The assistant professors noted that new professors might benefit from additional mentoring and/or research collaborations with more experienced faculty. One of the assistant professors has taught different classes each year. This is a burden for younger faculty and should be considered when new faculty members are hired.

Some lecturers indicated that at times their roles and rights as faculty members are “murky,” and should be better defined.

The field supervisors stated that their communication with faculty, staff and students is excellent. Dr. Tucker provides them with feedback on evaluations and cooperating teacher evaluations. While there is communication between field supervisors and methods instructors, a more formal approach would be helpful. Finally, there is a formal feedback process for evaluating cooperating teachers that includes both field supervisor and cooperating teacher evaluations.

Recommendations:

8. We recommend the program clarify the roles of lecturers in the decision making process of the program.

Research and grant activity

Research and grant activity has been encouraged and has grown recently. Clearly, additional growth will result in added tension between the teaching focus of UW Tacoma and scholarship/grant activity. Administrators will need to be sensitive to this and respond to these “growing pains” accordingly.

Recommendations:

9. Clarifying expectations for promotion and tenure will, no doubt, be an ongoing issue for the campus as growth and scholarship expectations evolve.
10. We recommend establishing clear mentoring strategies for both the step from assistant to associate as well as associate to full. This is especially important with a faculty that has a high percentage of associate professors.

Student service orientation

Students were generally positive about the UW-Tacoma Education program. They indicated that they liked the cohort model featured in some of the UW-Tacoma programs, but suggested that an initial orientation experience (if the students started the program in the winter or spring quarters) might be helpful to orient new students into the program. They also liked the professors' flexibility and felt the professors were committed to student success. Suggestions they made included better recruitment (web site and brochures) for the math and science program, improved communication with students in the Dual Track K8 program and an overhaul of the UW-Tacoma website so it is easier to negotiate and find critical information.

Recommendations:

11. We recommend the program revise its website to be more accessible and helpful for students.
12. The program should look at graduate class sizes. Some are reported as being quite large (in excess of 30) for graduate seminars.
13. Tuition increases are placing pressures on students. The program/campus may wish to further explore ways of supporting students through further opportunities for scholarships.

Engagement with community and school districts

The Education Program is well thought of in the community and by local school districts. It is clear that the Advisory Board is committed to the program. The principals on the Advisory Board indicated that the special education strand at UW Tacoma is a strength and they prefer to hire UW Tacoma graduates.

While they support the other programs they suggested that students in the secondary science and math program would benefit from additional classroom experiences and the educational administration and teacher certification programs need better linkages.

Recommendations:

14. We recommend the program explore linkages between the teacher certification and educational leadership strands in terms of how partner schools might be integrated.

Future Directions

In the self study, the program identified five future goals. We commend the program for this forward thinking and believe these will contribute to the program's growth and strength.

Goal 1: Secondary Math and Science: Our goal in the next year is for Education faculty to work with Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, the department housing the science program and the future mathematics minor, and the Institute of Technology to determine how we might develop the courses needed to prepare quality teachers in science and mathematics.

Goal 2: Restructuring of the teacher certification with endorsements in K-8 elementary education and special education (Dual Track):

Goal 3: Teacher Certification with an endorsement in English Language Educators: We will begin restructuring our coursework by focusing on research-based instructional practices in teaching language development, literacy, math, and content knowledge, the curricular areas addressed most directly by TESOL and state learning standards.

Goals 4&5 The EdD that we propose is designed to provide a pathway for collaborations between UWT and local school districts, hospitals, and colleges, particularly community colleges. Students will, with their employers, consider actual problems of practice in the communities in which they serve.

Ed.D. Degree

The Education Program and the Nursing Program are in the process of developing an Ed.D. degree. This degree was initially requested by Senator Randi Becker in 2009. Based on focus groups conducted in 2010, it was determined that an Ed.D. degree was needed with three tracks: Superintendent, Higher Education and Nursing Education. This degree will consist of 97 credits for all except the

Superintendent track which has 103 credits. In April 2010, HB 1586 granted “branch” campuses the authority to offer applied doctoral degrees.

To date, the Ed.D. curriculum and associated budget has been approved by faculty in both the Education and Nursing Programs. This Ed.D. proposal has been reviewed by the UWT’s Curriculum Committee and has been approved by the Academic Policy Committee in Autumn 2010. The Ed.D. proposal will be sent to the Graduate School for review by its council after receiving feedback from three external reviewers. After approval by the Graduate School Council, it will be sent to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. With the approval of this body, it will be sent to the University of Washington Regents for final approval.

It is hoped that the Ed.D. degree program will admit 30 students (20 educators and 10 nurses) in summer 2013. Another cohort will be not admitted until this first cohort graduates in 2016, to insure adequate resources associated with course development and support of capstone projects.

Recommendations:

15. The Ed.D. is unique as the first doctoral degree, and as a coalescing activity it can be a forum for bringing conversations together. It has its own challenges and opportunities including project supervision, research and evaluation platforms, course development, audience and degree program leadership. Additional discussion and deliberation that results in broad faculty participation in the degree is clearly needed prior to final approval. In addition, it is clear that both Vice Chancellor Harrington and Dr. Landenburger should carefully consider who will provide the primary leadership for the Ed.D. after it is approved. It is likely that the Ed.D. will have greater external credibility and it will be easier to foster collegial conversations among faculty if the program leader has both practical field experience and has conducted research and evaluation projects related to school leadership.

UWT Education Program Review Part B: Unit Defined Questions

Assessment:

How well does the program face the challenges of meeting the various requirements for an assessment/evaluation system that meets the expectations of multiple audiences?

Dr. Landenburger appointed Vanessa Tucker to coordinate the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) implementation. She has established good linkages across classes for TPA implementation. Students are practicing parts of the TPA prior to actual completion during student teaching. The student teaching supervisors also appear to understand the TPA and will be available to answer student questions. While the program appears to be on-track to implement the TPA, strengthening communication between student teaching supervisors and methods instructors will help improve implementation and student performance on the TPA over time. It was a good decision to have someone coordinate the assessment process and the person chosen seems well suited to the task.

Recommendations:

16. We recommend formalizing feedback mechanisms between parts of the program (e.g., between field supervisors and faculty, etc.)

Program Quality and Community Engagement:

How well do we serve local, state, national, and international communities to advance research, teaching, and service in education?

The review committee was impressed at the strength and national presence of the faculty scholarship. In addition, innovative programming is serving many constituencies.

How well do we integrate the content from previous and/or current courses into the classes we teach?

We have noted observations and recommendations for this question in the section entitled: **Education Program Breadth and Strength**

Policy and Organizational Structure:

Have changes/updates in policies and organizational structure of the program

assisted in the ease, completion and quality of work accomplished?

Improvements have been accomplished under the current leadership and these have put the programs on good policy grounds that coupled with the suggested articulation mentioned above suggest organizational structure adjustments that will allow for the effective implementation of the policies.

How well has the program worked to facilitate admission, retention, and graduation?

These aspects can be improved by a more proactive effort to identify program requirements that are well articulated across each program, a more user-friendly web presence that communicates the program requirements, and a more formal orientation process for new students.

Recommendations to the Graduate School:

The Education Program provides an important contribution to the University of Washington Tacoma and serves the educational interests of the State and region and we recommend that the Program be authorized for a ten-year period with subsequent review in 2021.