

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – WHITEWATER

REJOINDER

TO THE

NCATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS REPORT

ON-SITE VISIT, MARCH 12-17, 2004

Introduction

The Unit has received the BOE Report of its on-site visit in March, 2004 and submits the following rejoinder. In doing so, the Unit extends its sincerest appreciation to the chair of the BOE Team, Dr. P. Rudy Mattai, and all of the team members for their dedication and hard work, before, during, and after the on-site visit. The Unit found the team collegial, well organized and prepared, and thorough.

The Unit considers the BOE Report to be well written, detailed, and comprehensive and congratulates Dr. Mattai for the high quality of this report. The Unit appreciates the many compliments that appear throughout the report as these compliments attest to the hard work and many successes of the Unit as it has addressed the standards. In general, the Unit agrees with most of the observations and conclusions. In those instances where the Unit takes issue with conclusions, there is more of a concern with the “extent” of the conclusion rather than with the conclusion itself.

As several of the BOE recommendations deal with diversity issues, the Unit wishes to emphasize its strategic geographical location in rural Wisconsin and its corresponding primary historical mission to serve the rural schools and communities of its service area. The Unit is proud of its efforts to address diversity issues, many of which have received accolades in previous NCATE BOE reports. Given its location and mission, the Unit considers its efforts to address Standard 4 to be one of its many strengths.

The following responses are organized by page number in the BOE Report.

Page 12

The Unit would like to respond to the statement, “Despite the reported culmination date of December, 2000. . . .” By way of clarification, the December, 2000 date stated in the IR was the date that the faculty formally voted to accept the newly revised Conceptual Framework in principle. Several relatively minor editorial changes were made in that approved document. A final version reflecting the editorial changes was approved in the spring, 2003. The Unit considers the Conceptual Framework always

a work in progress and the BOE correctly noted that minutes and actions taken on the reconceptualization of the Conceptual Framework were and are ongoing.

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In the “Commitment to Diversity” paragraph, the statement is made that “review of documents and interviews conducted suggested that all candidates are not systematically provided with opportunities for working with diverse student populations with the exception of the experiences gained in EDFOUND 243: Education in a Pluralistic Society.” We wish to correct and comment on this statement.

First, the course referenced, EDFOUND 243, is incorrect. The correct course is EDFOUND 210: Observation and Participation. This course is a required course for all students in Phase 2 and is part of the Pre-Professional block. This course is the first of at least two field experiences, in addition to clinical practice (i.e. student teaching), that every student is required to take. During the course, students spend eight consecutive Tuesdays in public schools (primarily in Milwaukee and Madison) that are characterized by very diverse student populations. Therefore, all graduates of our teacher education programs have had at least one such experience.

We would also like to point out that our campus is located in rural Wisconsin and our mission historically has been to produce teachers for rural Wisconsin schools. During the last decade we have expanded that mission to provide more experiences in urban settings. However, the most diverse school settings are on the fringes of our service area. Milwaukee and Madison are over an hour away and are located in the service areas of UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison respectively. It has been a major effort to provide this field experience for our students in these areas, due to the distance involved for our students and our faculty, the need to establish contracts with the appropriate schools, and our desire to avoid overlap into the geographic regions of sister institutions. This program has been a very successful since its inception 15 years ago.

All students in the Unit have at least one additional field experience (field studies) and clinical practice (student teaching). Some students, particularly those in the Early Childhood Program, have considerably more than two field experiences. In general, school placements for field studies (usually taken during the methods block in the Junior year) are made in the districts near the campus. This arrangement minimizes student travel time as our students need to be on campus to take courses. Some of these placements are made in districts with significantly diverse populations.

Student teacher placements are usually made in school districts within a 40 mile radius of the campus although some exceptions are made for certain programs to secure quality sites. All of these districts have linguistically diverse, special needs, and low socio-economic pupils (based on free and reduced lunch counts). In some cases, students are given the opportunity to request a particular school for their student teaching, usually depending on the type of school for which they are most interested.

To summarize, all students in the Unit have at least one quality field experience in schools with exceptionally diverse populations. Most students have two such experiences and some have three or more such experiences during the course of their programs. Given the practical limitations of the location of the campus, the Unit is proud of its efforts to provide its students with diverse field experiences, consistent with its mission.

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We would like to comment on the statement in the first line, “The unit does not have aggregated data across all programs summarizing portfolio rubric scores.” At the time of the on-site review, the Unit had aggregated data for all programs on Phase 2 portfolio scores. Characteristics of those students who failed the Phase 2 portfolio were analyzed and an action plan was developed by the Committee for Program Review and Accreditation. This plan was shared with the Review Team. At the time of the review, the unit was in the process of collecting portfolio data for Phases 3 and 4 and so did not have aggregated data for these two remaining phases.

In response to the statement “The unit does not have aggregated assessment data for cooperating teachers, field supervisors, or candidates across all programs”, we believe that this statement does not accurately reflect our efforts to collect and analyze data from many of these sources. The Unit provided numerous reports in its IR that show how data were collected and aggregated in past years from cooperating teachers and school administrators. The Unit is recording new data from these sources, based on the Wisconsin Teacher Standards, in its data management system. Clearly there needs to be ongoing efforts to continue to collect these data systematically and comprehensively, but the Unit believes that it has demonstrated a solid foundation to do so.

The Unit would like to respond to the statement, “The unit does not have records of candidates’ GPA and requested information provided to the team indicated that the mean score for all current students (2075) was 2.964.” The Unit does not understand this statement as it does have records of all candidates’ grade point averages. In fact, each student’s GPA is available in real time on the student’s Academic Record (AR) in PEOPLESOFT. Students’ grade point averages are formally checked at Decision Points 2 through 5.

Page 31

The Unit does not take issue with the two areas of improvement stated by the Review Team for Standard One. Although the Unit does collect data on dispositions (as indicated in numerous places in the BOE Report), the process needs to be more focused and explicit across all programs. A special work team will be identified in the Fall, 2004 semester to consolidate appropriate dispositions as related to the Conceptual Framework, to develop rubrics to assess the acquisition of common dispositions, and to develop a process for informing all constituencies and recording and analyzing dispositional data.

Page 37

The Unit would like to correct the statement, “**Most** [emphasis added] departments and programs have advisory boards . . .”. In fact, **all** departments and programs have advisory boards as is correctly stated in the BOE Report in the second paragraph of page 51.

Page 44

While we maintain that the Unit does aggregate data in a variety of ways, we agree with the BOE’s conclusion that the data are not aggregated evenly across all programs. We expect that the data from Phases 3 and 4 will be recorded and aggregated during the Fall semester, 2004. As the State of Wisconsin implemented the Praxis II requirement as a “no fault” pilot year from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, the complete set of student data on the Praxis II was not available for analysis at the time of the on-site review. This data set is now complete (with passing scores determined by DPI in June, 2004) and will be aggregated and analyzed by the end of summer, 2004.

The Unit does not take issue with the statement that “The unit does not use external surveys evenly across programs to assess its graduates and program quality.” While several individual department programs collect such data, the Unit has had difficulty engineering such surveys in conjunction with other forms of university level external assessments. The Provost is committed to assisting the Unit as it works with the Office of Institutional Research to conduct surveys of alumni and employers in the coming year.

Page 53

The Unit would like to respond to the statement in paragraph 5, “Some [cooperating teachers] indicated that they receive no orientation to their role or to the unit’s expectations regarding candidate performance.” All cooperating teachers are provided access to the *Student Teaching Program Handbook* which clearly outlines expectations for cooperating teachers (pages 28 – 30). The handbook also describes the Unit’s Conceptual Framework, portfolio requirements, and expectations of student teachers. In addition, by state law, all cooperating teachers are required to take training in supervision. At UW-Whitewater, this training is usually in the form of a 3-credit graduate course that covers the many dimensions of supervision, the role of cooperating teachers, and the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards.

Page 56

The Unit does not take issue with the BOE’s recommendation for areas of improvement for Standard 3. We believe that we have an outstanding field experiences

program and that this program is a strength of the unit. We agree, however, that a more systematic approach for clinical faculty support is desirable.

Page 63 (Top)

The Unit wishes to comment on the statement at the top of page 63 of the BOE Report that states, “. . . the unit does not systematically attempt to ensure that all candidates are placed in field and clinical experiences that afford them the opportunity to work with diverse PK-12 faculty.” The Unit has over 2,000 majors with close to 450 student teachers each year. Table III.4.3 on page 63 shows that the percent of minority teachers and guidance counselors in the districts most used by the Unit is about 12%. It is simply not possible to place all of these students or even a significant portion of them with minority cooperating teachers. In addition to the limited number of minority teachers employed in the Unit’s service area, the placement of student teachers is influenced by many factors. Some teachers have not had the state mandated training for cooperating teachers and are, therefore, ineligible. Some teachers do not want student teachers, while others may accept them on a limited basis (such as one every so many years.) Teachers are also required to serve as mentors for beginning teachers or as members of review teams for Professional Development Plans, as required by Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction administrative code. To concentrate relatively large numbers of student teachers with the few minority faculty available would impose an unreasonable expectation on these faculty members, a course of action that is neither educationally sound nor respectful of the many professional responsibilities of our school partners.

Page 63 (Bottom)

The Unit wishes to respond to the statement, “The Unit has limited opportunities for candidates to work with diverse candidates within their programs.” In fact, the sentences following this statement in the BOE Report describe the Unit’s many efforts to recruit and retain minority candidates. Minority candidates (including those that are handicapped) are fully integrated throughout the Unit’s programs. Multicultural programs, some of which extend over a month of activities, are open to all students and are well attended by both minority and majority candidates. The Minority Teacher Preparation Program offers many services (such as preparation workshops for the PPST) to both minority and majority candidates. The Unit and University are proud of their efforts to celebrate diversity in its many forms and to provide opportunities for all students to learn and work together. The Unit believes that there is clear evidence that appropriate resources (including personnel and funds) are provided to support its diversity efforts.

The Unit would like to respond to the statement, “No data are available to determine how the unit’s budget covers on-campus and clinical work to prepare educators nor were data available to show how the unit fared in budget allocation vis-à-vis other units on campus except for the information provided in Table III.6.2 which was retrieved from the unit head. Table 6.1 gives a summary of the unit’s budget over the last three years.” In addition to Table 6.1, the BOE team was provided with a detailed budget which listed all personnel in the Unit along with their salaries. This included total amounts for clinical faculty by department, as well as a breakdown for student help, services and supplies, and capital expenses by department and sub-unit. The Unit does not understand what additional information was needed.

As indicated in the BOE statement above, Table III.6.2 provides budget data for the four colleges for 2003-2004, broken down by the categories of instruction, academic support, public service, and student services. The university does not routinely compile this type of intra-college information as it is of very limited value. The university is not unionized and each college has a very different salary structure. Also, each college has a somewhat decentralized budget which allows each unit to allocate funds within its budget as it deems appropriate. Therefore, comparisons between and among the colleges using these data are not informative.

The unit would like to respond to the entire statement on page 78 of the BOE Report. By way of clarification, the normal teaching load at the undergraduate level is 12 credits per semester. For faculty whose entire load is at the graduate level, the ideal teaching load is nine credits per semester. For faculty who teach a combination of undergraduate and graduate courses, the ideal teaching load would be determined on a proportional basis. For example, two 3-credit undergraduate courses plus one 3-credit graduate course would constitute the equivalent of a 10 credit undergraduate load (since the graduate course would be equivalent to one third of a full load). The only department whose faculty teach graduate level courses exclusively is the Department of Counselor Education. With only five faculty members and a CACREP standard of limited class size, the Unit has historically been able to provide one 9-credit load on a rotating basis. The most recent round of budget cut backs at the state level has further limited the Unit in its ability to provide 9-credit hour loads for all five of these faculty members. Having said that, it is important to note that class sizes for the Counselor Education Program are the lowest in the university. All faculty members in all other departments teach either all undergraduate courses or mostly undergraduate courses with some graduate courses on occasion. Periodically, faculty who teach combinations of undergraduate and graduate courses are given an opportunity for a reduced load. Again, this practice has been more difficult to achieve in the last three years due to continuing budget cuts at the state level. Faculty and staff with special assignments in the areas of advising and field placements

are provided reduced teaching assignments. These special assignments are listed in the budget that was provided to the BOE Team.

Page 79

The Unit would like to respond to the statement, “No data were available to determine the number of part-time workers in the areas of teaching, clinical support or administrative role.” As stated previously, the BOE was provided with a detailed unit budget that lists all personnel by department and subunit, their percent assignment, and salary. Since this issue has come up several times in the BOE Report, the Unit concludes that it would have been desirable to have provided a written explanation of the Unit’s budget report to facilitate the BOE Team’s interpretation of the data provided.

The Unit would like to respond to the statement, “Interviews yielded very little with respect to the Unit’s effort in providing orientation activities for part time faculty or evaluations of part time faculty.” Part time faculty and full time academic staff are included in all retreats and activities of the Unit as well as those provided by the university. Full time academic staff are formally evaluated every year by a process similar to that for probationary faculty, as detailed in the Unit’s Report. All part time faculty and staff are evaluated by the department chairperson every year. These written evaluations are kept on file in the department offices and in the Office of the Dean.

The Unit appreciates the careful consideration of the issues raised in this rejoinder. It looks forward to receiving the final report and the decision of the NCATE Board.