

Review of MFA Results and Report on Curricular Change

B.A., Special Education Department of Special Education

December 1, 1997

Review of the results of the 1996-97 assessment activities indicates areas of strength and weakness within the Special Education program. Examination of the Student-Teacher Evaluation forms indicates that 100% of graduates scored an average of 3 or better on all targeted items. Thus, it appears that during student teaching our students receive at least "satisfactory" ratings on items related to the following: knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of instructional strategies and materials, knowledge of classroom organization and management techniques, knowledge of family issues and collaborative approaches, and knowledge of assessment principles and procedures. Students also received at least "satisfactory" ratings in the following: demonstration of effective communication skills, sensitivity to individual needs, demonstration of enthusiasm as teachers, and awareness of professional/ethical behaviors and practices in the field of special education. Additionally, 100% of the graduates passed student teaching. However, one student withdrew from student teaching due to personal problems. Results from the SLU Exit Survey were not available at this time.

Data were also gathered through Structured Interviews conducted by student teaching supervisors at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. One hundred percent of graduates indicated satisfaction with the program. Of the 9 students responding, 100% reported that they had participated in at least two professional development activities or organizations during their program. A summary of the results of the Structured Interviews is attached. While there is general agreement about the many strengths of the program, some weaknesses were identified. Students expressed a need for more preparation in developing Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). They also reported that they wanted additional experiences teaching large groups, rather than small groups, in the schools.

Overall, based on the data available, students in this program are performing at the levels expected when criteria for the Major Field Assessment were established. It should be noted that Employer Surveys are no longer mailed, as it was decided that the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment would take over this responsibility.

No substantial changes have been made in the required special education courses. Faculty members teaching the methods and assessment courses met regularly during the Spring, 1997 semester to monitor student progress. While in the past, students found their own placements, we now place the students with specific

teachers who can provide the most effective training experiences. We also provide these teachers with more specific information about student requirements, and provide detailed suggestions regarding the types of activities appropriate for our students. We request that our students be allowed to read IEPs and to observe IEP meetings with school personnel and parents.

With regard to student advising, some students expressed concerns regarding the unavailability of advisors. These concerns will be addressed in the future through revised advising procedures currently being established.

We have not made substantial changes to the program because of the mandate to reduce the total number of hours in the B.A. program. Department heads and faculty members are currently working to meet this requirement. Two faculty members within the Department did work on a College-wide committee designed to examine the teacher education program and consider various proposed changes. Several members were interested in identifying ways for general education and special education faculty members to collaborate in course delivery. This effort may help to eliminate duplication of information in courses, an area that some students have identified as a concern.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM- 1996-1997

STRENGTHS:

Many students were in agreement that their education was more individualized due to the small size of their classes. A few students were pleased with classroom and behavior management courses. Other comments varied: good experiences in the classrooms, meeting with supervising teacher before the first day of class helped to relieve some of the anxiety, information on teacher-made materials was helpful, and much knowledge was gained during experience component. Students found that they benefitted from the schools in which they were placed and the teachers with whom they worked. Other strengths included: exposure to technology, experiences in both special and regular education, professional development training, and arrangement of school placement facilitated by program directors.

WEAKNESSES:

Three major weaknesses were prominent throughout the evaluations. The first pertained to the inconsistencies between the regular and special education departments. Students complained that many of the courses were repetitious, possibly due to the departments not collaborating or communicating enough to serve the needs of the students. Another major concern that was voiced was the need for a special education practicum. Students maintained that they needed more hands-on experiences with students in special education before they did their student teaching. Thirdly, students overwhelmingly responded negatively to preparedness for IEPs. Namely, they felt unequipped to set up meetings, to write IEPs, and to use the computerized format. A couple of students commented that they needed to know more about the duties and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and how to work with them. Student note that more whole class teaching experiences were needed.

ADVISING:

Comments varied in this area. After assessing all of the comments, a major problem lies in the unavailability of advisors. Students are confident of the knowledge of their advisors and that they could be very helpful; however, many maintained that the responsibility often fell to the students. One student reported that they should have been more informed about the extent of outside hours required for the program. One student commented that they appreciated the candidness of their advisors, claiming that they needed the constructive criticism that they received.

PREPARATION FOR STUDENT TEACHING:

Most students regarded themselves as overall prepared. Many commented that they felt more confident in the regular education arena than they did in the area of special education. Many attributed this to the lack of a methods course^{practicum} in special education, insisting that they needed more time in the classroom with students with special needs. Experience in a variety of grade levels was needed, according to several students. One student maintained that they were exposed to a variety of students prior to their student teaching and that they spent ample time in the classroom.

HOW COULD WE MAKE THE PROGRAM STRONGER?

There was much agreement amongst students in their belief that they needed more teaching experience in special education, perhaps within their methods courses. Students relayed that spending time with a greater variety of age and grade levels would have been most beneficial. One student claimed that there was a need for more whole-class teaching within their methods courses.

OTHER COMMENTS:

All responses differed. Some students declared that they were pleased with the program overall. One student expressed the need for more information concerning teacher-made tests; while another maintained that a variety of grade level exposure is needed, especially when their certification covers such a range of grade levels. An increase in the number of professors in the department would offer students a variety of instructors to choose from, as well as giving them an opportunity to encounter differing philosophies. One student commented that observations and teaching should occur all day long.

OVERALL: (11 answered)

| | (-) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (+) |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| Number of students that answered 5: | | | | | | 3 | |
| Number of students that answered 4: | | | | | 7 | | |
| Number of students that answered 3: | | | 1 | | | | |
| All answered above the 3 rating: | | | | | | | 100% |

NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OR NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS JOINED DURING THE PROGRAM:

Students response of 2 = 1
Students response of 3 = 5
Students response of 4 = 3
Responses 9 out of 11:

ORGANIZATIONS NAMED:

SLRC, 13 Club, Kappa Delta Pi, SCEC, Reading Association, SLU Education Association, speaker at CEC superconference, Student Teaching Advisory Council, Reading Program, and Pi Kappa Pi

It should be noted that 1 student withdrew from student teaching.
In addition, 4 other student evaluation data are missing.

[*progeval]

GOAL ATTAINMENT FRAMEWORK

B.A. Special Education
Department of Special Education

Academic Year 1996-97

December 1, 1997

| Expected Outcome | Much Less than Expected | Less than Expected | Expected | More than Expected | Much More than Expected |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| GOAL I | | | | | |
| EO1a. % of graduates who rate the components of the Special Education Program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q73, 74 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO1b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO2a. % of graduates who rate the components of the special education program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q75, 76 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO2b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on the targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO3a. % of graduates who rate the components of the Special Education Program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q77, 78 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO3b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on the targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO4a. % of graduates who rate the components of the Special Education Program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q79, 80 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO4b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on the targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| GOAL II | | | | | |
| EO1a. % of graduates who pass student teaching. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |

NA

NA

NA

NA

| Expected Outcome | Much Less than Expected | Less than Expected | Expected | More than Expected | Much More than Expected |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| EO2a. % of graduates who pass student teaching. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO2b. % of students who indicate satisfaction in their program during the Structured Interview. | <90% | 91-99% | 100% | | |
| EO3a. % of graduates who rate the components of the special education program as helpful or very helpful on the SLU Exit Survey. Part A, Q1, 2 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO3b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items on the SLU Exit Survey. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| GOAL III | | | | | |
| EO1a. % of graduates who rate the components of the special education program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q81 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO1b. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO1c. % of students who report that they participated in 2 professional development activities or organizations during the Structured Interview. | <40% | 40-49% | 50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| EO2a. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form.. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO3a. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form.. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO4a. % of graduates who score an average of 3 on targeted items of the Student Teacher Evaluation form.. | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |
| EO4b. % of graduates who rate the components of the special education program as satisfactory or better on the SLU Exit Survey. Q40, p. 159 | <80% | 80-89% | 90% | 91-95% | 96-100% |

NA

NA

NA

NA