

## Major Field Assessment Report

Degree Program: Special Education - Graduate

Year: 1995-1996

A major field assessment plan was developed by faculty members in the Department of Special Education for the graduate special education program. Sources of assessment data for this plan include: computer-generated reports of student GPAs, Exit Questionnaires, Comprehensive Examination records, Structured Interviews, and Employer Surveys. Other evidence of accomplishment of outcomes can be located in the graduate admission records, NCATE accreditation file, graduate program core course syllabi, and records of the Graduate Credentials Committee. Assessment results are presented

The **first goal** of the special education graduate program is to develop and maintain a quality education program.

Credentials for all faculty members, full- and part-time, are submitted to the Graduate Credentials Committee and individuals must be approved before teaching courses for the department.

When student admission procedures were examined, graduate admission procedures continue to be implemented effectively.

Reports of student GPAs were obtained for each semester. For the Summer, 1995, Fall 1995, and Spring, 1996 semesters, 97.5%, 95.6%, 92.8% of students respectively, met the "good standing" criteria.

The Department has NCATE accreditation and the majority of courses are taught by full-time faculty.

When student preparedness for positions in the field of special education was examined, 100% of students rated their preparation as satisfactory or better on the Exit Questionnaire.

The Employer Surveys for 1995-96 will not be mailed until April, 1997 so that employers are surveyed at the end of the first year of a graduate's employment.

The **second goal** of the special education graduate program is to provide a curriculum to develop professional competencies in the teaching, supervision, and/or administration of special education.

On the Exit Questionnaire, 100% of graduates indicated that they were satisfactorily prepared on targeted competencies. Ninety percent of graduate students successfully completed

comprehensive examinations on their first attempt.

Fifty percent of students who retook comprehensive examinations passed. [1/2]

The five comprehensive examination areas with the percent of students passing on the first attempt include: General, 90%; Research, 90%; Methods, 75%; Assessment, 86%; Management, 80%.

On the Exit Questionnaire, 87% of graduates indicated that they were satisfactorily prepared on targeted competencies for Summer, 1995; 100% of graduates for Fall, 1995; and 100% for Spring, 1996. One student taking comprehensive examinations in the Summer, 1995 identified weaknesses in knowledge of classroom organization; and training and use of paraprofessionals, team decision-making, health and safety issues relative to students with severe/profound disabilities. These topics are addressed primarily in elective courses and the student may have chosen not to take courses in these areas.

The **third goal** of the special education graduate program is to develop sensitivity to the unique needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The core special education courses required for master's degree students include SPED 600, SPED 662, SPED 581, and SPED 602. One hundred percent of syllabi for these courses include a component on disability awareness and current best practices.

On the Exit Questionnaire, 100% of graduates indicated that they were satisfactorily prepared on targeted competencies.

The **fourth goal** of the special education program is to foster and maintain a positive environment for student's professional development.

During Structured Interviews, 40% of students indicated that they had participated in at least 1 professional organization or activity, and 30% indicated that they had participated in two or more organizations or activities.

#### Use of results:

Discussion of 1995-1996 data focused again on course scheduling and off-campus courses. With an additional full-time faculty member and one part-time grant-funded staff member, more courses can be offered. A textbook change was approved for SPED 600 based on the instructor's and students' prior concerns and interests.

A draft of the comprehensive examination manual was reviewed and discussed. A decision was made to change the policy regarding

the number of times a student can re-take comprehensive exams. It was decided that a student could take them as many times as desired, but that a formal remediation plan would only be available for the first retake.