

B.S. Ed. in Elementary Education 13.1202

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY

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| 1. | Reporting Institution | Eastern Illinois University |
| 2. | Program Reviewed | B.S. Ed. in Elementary Education |
| 3. | Date | January 2020 |
| 4. | Contact Person | Dr. Jeanne Okrasinski |
| | a. Telephone | 217-581-7883 |
| | b. E-mail | jeokrasinski@eiu.edu |

5. Overview:

The Department of Teaching, Learning, and Foundations is committed to fostering the development of professional educators within diverse settings while building upon the natural leadership abilities of our students. We strive to model innovative techniques & reflective practices in order to provide our students with unique opportunities to translate theory & research into effective & practical instructional applications. Through modeling, mentoring and providing services, we support and pursue local & global partnerships & participate in collaborative scholarly endeavors. The program has a tradition of excellence in teacher education. Graduates are recruited by school districts throughout the state. Graduates of the Elementary and Middle Level Education program have been successful in their career paths. Results from the 2018 Alumni Survey indicate that 94% of the Elementary Education respondents are employed full time.

Students are recognized for their outstanding work at the university, regional and national levels. For 2019, our college holds 20 of the top 89 sophomore gpa scores. Five of those twenty (25%) are from the elementary education program. That certainly speaks to a great future for our students! Our undergraduate students continue to be selected to present at the National Undergraduate Research Fair, publish with faculty co-authors, and receive scholarships from both internal and external organizations. Our registered student organizations within the department have organized and presented professional development and workshops for students and local teachers.

Strengths of the current teacher education program include early field experiences and partnerships with area schools. Opportunities provide a framework for pre-service teachers to link theory with practice. Whether it is the social studies class creating lessons to be implemented with local students at the Lincoln Log Cabin historical site, dictionary day with the 3rd grade students or etiquette lessons in Shelbyville, our teacher candidates work with students early and often, both in and out of classrooms! Additional outreach efforts include the proposed Elementary Education cohort program in Danville. This partnership with Danville Area Community College and area schools has been ongoing since 1980, targeting non-traditional students by giving them the flexibility of completing an elementary education

degree at off-campus sites while continuing to work. We will begin the new cohort in January of 2020.

The Elementary Education program was successful in our CAEP review in 2017. The faculty continue to review program and student data and plan for course/program revisions. Results from program and unit data drive program changes. As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation are being explored including increased Field Experience, more explicit inclusion of differentiation, integrated technologies, and planning for and teaching diverse learners, including English Language Learners and students with other special learning needs.

6. Major Findings and Recommendations

6 a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program/disciplinary context, e.g., (1) changes in the overall discipline or field; (2) student demand; (3) societal needs; (4) institutional context for offering the degree; (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; and (6) other.

Student enrollment in the university and the department began its decline in 2012. Becoming a teacher was not at the forefront of high school students' minds when bad press and safety concerns were at their height. Numbers of Elementary Education majors dropped significantly and quickly over a period of 4 years. This decline in enrollment is also reported in data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics which reports a decline in the number of educational degrees awarded. In addition changes to the state testing system included raising the passing score for the Illinois Basic Skills Test. Fortunately, the State amended the Basic Skills test to allow for the ACT/SAT to be counted. In the summer of 2019, the state removed the requirements for an entrance exam which has opened the door for many more students to pursue Elementary Education as their major. Enrollment in 2012 was 464 students and has declined every year through 2017. In 2018 we saw the first hint of an increase when numbers grew for the first time from 176 in 2017 to 180 in 2018. Numbers from 2019 look promising and we are hoping a steady increase will continue.

Diversity enrollment was consistent from 2013-2016 at approximately 13% of our major students. In 2017, we saw a bump to 18% and in 2018 raised our minority student numbers again to 20% of our majors. The number of males seeking elementary education has also declined during this cycle of reporting from approximately 13% in 2013 to only 9% in 2018.

6b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement;

The department collects student performance data on all undergraduate students as they progress throughout the program, including Student Teaching. Assessments align with state and national standards, is collected and analyzed through Live Text, a web-based data collection and portfolio system used by all teacher education candidates. This data shows that in excess of 98% of candidates are achieving Level 4 or 5 (Level 5=Exceeds Standards) on all standard-based assessments. Data revealed that candidates in the program were successful in understanding and delivering content knowledge, attained a high degree of

pedagogical knowledge, and exemplify excellent dispositions in the teaching profession. With ever changing technology, our students always have room for improvement in keeping up to date with the latest and greatest tools for classrooms.

Students passed the content test without much difficulty, until the changes were made to the test last year. Our recent results, along with the state have shown drastic differences in the apparent competencies of our students. In the most recent testing experience (December 2019) EIU results were 50/50% P/F however the state results were a staggering 39/61% P/F. These results are fairly typical for the last year. We analyzed the results and noticed that our students had the most difficulty in passing the Language Arts and Math portions of the test. We opted to focus more intentionally on certain aspects of Language Arts that weren't covered as in depth. In addition, the Math department strengthened certain topics within the coursework that demonstrated weaknesses after reviewing the testing data. We also improved our students' results by using one-on-one mentoring with faculty, review sessions with students, online study guides, and the like. Changes are on the way for the Elementary Ed test as it is reverting back to the previous way of issuing the test and we hope to see the "old" results as well!

6c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes;

Since the last review the department has focused on enhancing its assessment program to distinguish assessment activities and results of the program. Generic syllabi were developed for all undergraduate coursework. The department has utilized the first faculty meeting every year to focus on the data collection process as well as to review data collected during the past year. The meeting is also used to determine goals for each of the department committees for the upcoming year as well as to discuss accomplishments from committees from the previous year.

In order to help our students understand and have more experiences with diverse students and settings, we developed ELE 3050, a course that provides students with opportunities for volunteering in school and community programming to get a better sense of how a community works together for the good of its people. Students explore different attributes of "community" and choose projects to complete in order to fulfill their volunteer hours. The hours must be spent working with students and families, but they might be accomplished through a variety of activities either sponsored by the EIU Volunteerism office or approved by the instructor. We have seen an increase in empathy and understanding of differences as reported by the cooperating teachers when our students continue on in the program, documented on the students' disposition review forms.

6d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes.

All teacher education programs in the State of Illinois may be required to realign/design their program to include the new Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) currently under revision. In addition, the content test for Elementary is currently transitioning to a compensatory test and will be reviewed in light of our current curriculum to identify any

alterations that need to be made. The department will monitor state licensure requirements while using assessment data to make needed program/course revisions.

7. Responses to Institution Assigned Issues

No Institution-Assigned issues

8 Outcome

8.1 Decision

Program in Good Standing

Program flagged for Priority Review

Program Enrollment Suspended

8.2 Explanation – PROVOST FEEDBACK

Based on enrollment and graduates, the program is in good standing. The program report underscores how the changing state testing framework for pre-service teachers impacts the program and students. Given that the state test guidelines are changing, the program is confident EIU student performance will return to prior observed levels—which is a reasonable expectation given the academic profile of students in the major. Finally, I note this program is closely watching proposed new standards (in process) to determine if future changes in the program may be necessary.

While the program notes challenges associated with licensure rules and state policy, EIU graduates meet an important need and excel in the classroom. Additionally, I note the diversity of enrollments in the program has increased in recent years—and the department is to be applauded for advancing inclusive excellence.