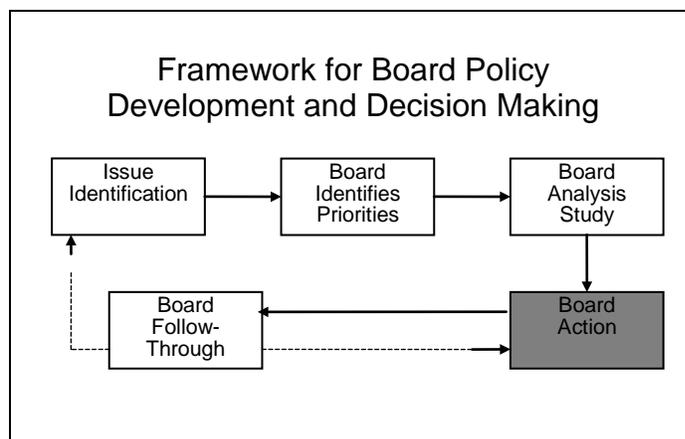


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

September 13, 2012



Agenda Item: Simpson College Teacher Preparation Program

Iowa Goal: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

Equity Impact Statement: Practitioner preparation programs support the improvement of instructional practices and strengthen the quality of educator preparation and professional development programs to give educators at all levels the skills they need to improve teaching and learning.

Presenters: Dr. John Byrd, President
Simpson College

Dr. Steve Griffith, Senior Vice President and Academic Dean
Simpson College

Dr. Carole Richardson, Professor of Education
Simpson College

Dr. Barb Ramos, Professor of Education
Simpson College

Attachments: 2

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the Simpson College Teacher Preparation Program through the next state visit cycle scheduled for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Background: At the State Board of Education meeting on July 31st, the State Board heard a report and recommendation related to continuing approval of the Simpson College Teacher Preparation Program. As the Board reviewed the

information, they had a number of questions about how Simpson College plans to address concerns raised in the report. Specifically, they had questions about faculty overload, use of adjuncts, technology, the curriculum lab and facilities.

The State Board felt that to a great extent these were resource issues that might be better addressed at the administrative level of the college. They asked that a letter be sent inviting administration at the college to attend their next board meeting.

President John Byrd and Senior Vice President and Academic Dean Steve Griffith, along with Professors of Education Carole Richardson and Barb Ramos accepted the invitation, and provided the attached summary that addresses the board's questions and includes additional details about the institutional response to the review team's recommendations.

SIMPSON COLLEGE



August 28, 2012

Dr. Jason E. Glass
Director
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

Dear Dr. Glass:

Thank you for your invitation to attend the State Board of Education meeting on Thursday, September 13 as you continue your review of our teacher education program. We are very proud of our program and its graduates and welcome the opportunity to address the questions set forth in your letter of August 17, 2012.

We are grateful for the very positive evaluation of our program by the review team last April and for their suggestions and observations about how we might make it even stronger. Our academic dean and education faculty embraced the team's advice and worked throughout the summer to make a number of changes that have strengthened our program. Since the exit interview in April, we have created a new suite of classrooms and work spaces dedicated to our education students and faculty, purchased and repositioned information technology equipment to make it available for use inside and outside of classrooms, and have reviewed our staffing and the use of adjunct faculty. I have enclosed a brief summary that addresses the board's questions along with a bit more detail about our institutional response to the team's recommendations. Please feel free to share this information with the Board in advance of the upcoming meeting.

I look forward to meeting with you and members of the Board of Education. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Byrd". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

John W. Byrd
President

Enclosure

Office of the President

Response to Questions Raised by the State Board of Education

Simpson College

August 28, 2012

Introduction

At the conclusion of the site team visit in April 2012, the Simpson College Teacher Education Program faculty, staff, and administration were very pleased with the information presented at the exit meeting. All six areas that were assessed were rated as “met or met with strength.” Assessment and diversity were identified as “exceeds.” However, we recognized that several areas of concern existed and that we needed to address them.

The review process identified four areas of concern in the Simpson College Teacher Education Program. These included: 1) the overload of teacher education program faculty and reliance on adjuncts; 2) concerns expressed by cooperating teachers, administrators, supervisors, candidates, graduates, and faculty about the availability and reliability of technology; 3) the adequacy and location of the curriculum lab; and 4) the facilities, especially as they relate to organizing space to enhance access and professional collaboration for candidates and faculty.

The response of the Simpson College administration and faculty to the identified concerns was immediate. During the exit meeting, President Byrd and Senior Vice President Griffith asked specific questions about the report and made a commitment to address the concerns over the summer and prior to the start of fall classes. Here are the results of our actions since the exit meeting:

- Teaching load for all education department faculty members has been carefully reviewed. Upon investigation, we learned that when teaching load at Simpson College is reported in the way used by most of our peer institutions, none of the faculty in the education department is teaching more than the customary 24 credit load. The incongruity in reporting has been caused by Simpson including within its original report faculty activities and responsibilities that may not be recognized at peer institutions. At Simpson, we believe it is important to recognize and compensate faculty for their work outside of normal class activity.
- Adjuncts at Simpson are selected purposely for their expertise and current experience in order to provide a high quality program. They are not used solely as a means of lowering expenses. The majority of education department adjuncts in our original report to the Board are part of our Master Teaching program. According to the information we have collected, the number of adjuncts used outside of the Master Teacher

program is not unusual at peer institutions and the Master Teacher approach is common in teaching preparation programs.

- Technology resources have been upgraded and new spaces are available for students to explore and practice with technology.
- The curriculum lab has been remodeled, the curricular materials have been updated, and the space has been made more available to students.
- Additionally, the two dedicated education classrooms have been moved from Wallace Hall to Dunn Library to be adjacent to the curriculum lab and provide a larger work area for faculty and students. Details about these improvements can be found below.

Faculty Overload and Use of Adjunct Faculty

Faculty Overload

The Board expressed a concern regarding the overload of teacher education program faculty. The Board review process has pointed out that Simpson College uses a rather unusual policy for assigning load in the education department. It has become practice at Simpson for education faculty to receive load credit for duties other than teaching courses. At other colleges these duties might be considered service to the college, administrative duties or simply a part of faculty duties. These include load credit for department chair, director of the graduate program, licensure duties, work on the e-Portfolio system, technology work in the department and advising education club. When only coursework is calculated in faculty load each department member is at, or within, the typical 24 credit load. The department chair is working with Dr. Griffith to calculate education department faculty load that more clearly reflects teaching load. However, recognizing that an externally accredited program requires additional responsibilities, the administration has been generous in its support of education for faculty. The following table illustrates how load credit would be reported if based on the actual course credits taught.

Full-Time Faculty Load for 2012-2013	
Faculty Member	Teaching Course Load Credits
Kate Lerseth	20
Jack Gittinger	16
Sharon Jensen	23
Steve Rose	20
Patti Young	23
Jackie Crawford (Spring sabbatical)	11.5
Marcy Hahn	18
Barb Ramos	8
Carole Richardson	8

Although we think our system of credit assignment appropriately compensates faculty for work outside the classroom, we will review our practice as we make final adjustments in responding to the changes caused by our new Engaged Citizenship Curriculum.

Use of Adjunct Faculty

The Board communicated a concern about the reliance on adjunct instructors. The Simpson College Teacher Education Program makes purposeful decisions to use adjunct instructors based on areas of expertise and the quality that they bring to the program. For example, six of the adjunct instructors hired each year are hired as ‘Master Teachers’ and each works collaboratively with a full professor at Simpson to teach content specific methods courses. The Master Teachers are in-service teachers who have been selected as outstanding secondary teachers from the area. They are provided professional development to build their capacity to teach college students. They work with Dr. Rose to teach specific methods to prospective secondary teachers and then host them as practicum students in their classrooms and schools. This arrangement allows candidates the opportunity to combine theory with enhanced practice opportunities in the field. This practice aligns with the college’s new Engaged Citizenship Curriculum which values integrative learning, marrying theory and practice. The group of individuals selected and hired as Master Teachers has been remarkably stable over the past ten years. Only one has been hired within the past five years; each of the remaining Master Teachers has been serving in this capacity for seven or more years.

Aside from the use of Master Teachers, Simpson’s use of adjunct instructors is in alignment with other institutions. Adjunct instructors are hired to enhance the quality of the program. Generally, adjunct instructors are selected because of their experience or qualifications in specific areas (e.g. special education, speech/language, etc.) or due to demand for specific courses. Typically, all of the adjunct instructors who teach in the teacher preparation program have been instructors at Simpson for a number of years. Most of the adjunct instructors have worked with us at Simpson for at least six years, some considerably longer. All adjunct instructors are offered professional development, are included in department communications, are mentored by full-time faculty members in the department, and are evaluated by the Department Chair or the Director of Graduate Education Programs on a regular basis. The College’s practice is to monitor the number and use of part-time adjuncts and when appropriate, hire full-time faculty. It should be noted that all of our part-time faculty participate in the same course teaching evaluations as our full-time faculty.

Technology and Facilities

At the conclusion of the site visit in April, the administration expressed its commitment to enhance technology and facilities. Dr. Griffith immediately asked the department to prepare a list of pressing needs. The planning process for addressing these needs included many people across the campus, including education faculty, the Wallace Hall building manager, the college librarian, the director of procurement, physical plant staff and the president. A number of plans for improvements were considered. After considering all plans, one was selected that would provide for the best immediate solutions.

Availability and Reliability of Technology

The availability and reliability of technology was expressed as a concern. Since the exit interview, technology has been upgraded and made more available to students and faculty. This equipment will be available for faculty use during classes and will be open for student exploration when classes are not in session. The following were added to the technology resources available to the teacher education program and students in response to the Board's concern:

- Projectors with software that make the white board a smart board are in each dedicated classroom.
- Document cameras are in each dedicated classroom.
- Student response systems and video cameras are available for check-out from the library.
- A dedicated laptop cart is available for use in the dedicated classrooms.
- A set of iPads were purchased, along with faculty training on their use.
- Two new spaces were added for students to explore and practice with technology.
- A projector, video camera, and additional technology were added to the technology lab for student practice and use.

Adequacy of the Curriculum Lab

Another concern mentioned by the Board was the adequacy and location of the curriculum lab. The uninviting and under-utilized curriculum lab has now been updated with new carpet and shelving. The education faculty purged outdated materials from the curriculum lab and the library stacks, with the help of library staff. New materials have been added to the curriculum lab. We are no longer using the curriculum lab as a space for non-education tutoring. This allows the space to be dedicated for use by teacher education students for learning and practicing teaching skills with curricular materials. In addition, the curriculum lab is now located adjacent to the dedicated education classrooms. Curricular materials are easily accessible for use during

methods course instruction, and the dedicated classrooms are available for student use when methods courses are not in session.

Organization and Location of Teacher Education Program Facilities

The Board voiced a concern about the organization and location of Teacher Education Program facilities. After considering five plans, it was decided to move the two dedicated education classrooms from Wallace Hall to Dunn Library. The administration made it clear that this was a plan to address the immediate concerns in the short-term (three to four years), while the college creates a long-term plan for facilities for the education department. The two classrooms are now located next to the curriculum lab and across from the children and juvenile literature and K-12 textbooks in the library. The education department has worked closely with the registrar to ensure that courses needing access to the materials will be scheduled in those classrooms and that courses offered from other departments will no longer be scheduled in the dedicated education classrooms. Built-in storage has been added in the classrooms and the adjacent hallway to allow for better storage of faculty materials. These classrooms will also be available for education students to work and explore during library hours when education classes are not in session. There are also several tables just outside of the curriculum lab and classrooms for education students to work and explore if a class is in session. In addition, the science and social studies methods classroom shares a door with the curriculum lab which has a regular sink for use during class.

At this time it is not feasible to place all education faculty offices in the same location. Offices are located in the same building and this concern will be considered in long-term planning. Faculty members regularly collaborate even though offices are on multiple floors of the building.

Summary

The Simpson College Teacher Education Program and administration hopes that this additional information is helpful to the Board. We also welcome any questions at the September board meeting. We fully understand that ensuring quality is a continuous process. As partners in this process, we appreciate the opportunity the State Board of Education review offers us to have our program reviewed by our colleagues.