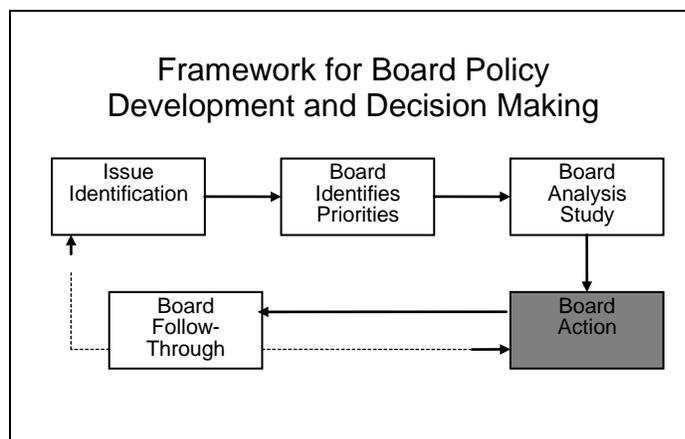


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

November 18, 2009



**Agenda Item:** Buena Vista University Practitioner Preparation Program

**Iowa Goal:** All K-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.

**Presenter:** Arlie Willems, Administrative Consultant  
Practitioner Preparation  
Bureau of Accreditation & Improvement Services

**Attachments:** 1

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board approve the Buena Vista University practitioner preparation program through the next state visit cycle scheduled for the 2014-2015 academic year.

**Background:** Iowa Administrative Code 281—79.5(256) grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. The Buena Vista University program has met the program approval standards as approved by the State Board.

**Recommendation for Continuing Approval  
of  
Buena Vista University**

**April 13-18, 2008  
April 21, 23, and 28, 2008**

**(Follow-up visit June 1, 2009)**

Buena Vista University (BVU), located in Storm Lake, currently enrolls approximately 2,600 students; approximately 1,000 are on-campus students and approximately 1,600 students are part of the Professional and Online Programs (P and O). The college offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in forty-three programs.

The BVU School of Education offers thirty-five endorsements and graduates between 160 and 180 teachers each year. A majority of new teachers recommended for licensure graduate from the P and O. For education majors, this program is offered at sites located in community colleges in the following cities: Council Bluffs, Denison, Estherville, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Le Mars, Marshalltown, Mason City, Newton, Ottumwa, and Spencer,

A day-long preliminary review of the BVU program was conducted on January 29, 2008, by the State Review Panel and the State Review Team. Comments and questions from that review were sent to the BVU Program for response at the time of the review.

The site visit occurred April 13-18, 2008. During that time, team members reviewed documents and interviewed faculty, staff, administrators, students, and practitioners affiliated with the BVU Program. The team examined six standard areas: Governance and Resources, Diversity, Faculty, Program Assessment, Clinical Practice, and Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions. Additionally, satellite programs were visited on April 21, 23, and 28.

The initial report to BVU cited significant areas of concern in the governance/resource standard, specifically related to the satellite centers. These areas of concern affected most of the other standards as well. Consistent with the Department's policy of continuous improvement, a series of communications followed between the BVU School of Education and the Department as BVU addressed the cited areas.

Substantive changes have been made in the BVU program as a result of the visit and findings. These improvements are outlined in the following report in conjunction with a summary of the team's initial findings.

## CHAPTER 79

### STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

#### **General Comments:**

- BVU serves an important need, especially in the rural areas of Iowa, by providing teacher preparation at centers across the state through the Professional and Online Studies (P and O) program.
- Both the campus program and the centers exhibit genuine interest in and concern for their students. The centers are especially focused on students' needs and life circumstances.
- Personnel on campus and at the centers were open, gracious, and cooperative.

#### **Issues that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

A lack of consistency was found among the various center programs and between the centers and the main campus program in such aspects as leadership, faculty expertise, teaching assignments, resources, course sequence, and course structure.

Institutional and program leaders at BVU have been most cooperative in this review and appear to be genuinely interested in and dedicated to making the changes necessary to hold the center programs to standards equivalent to those of the campus program.

The State Visit Team found that much coordination between the centers and the campus program exists 'on paper;' work has gone into this coordination. However, interviews with many individuals on campus and at site visits to eight of the centers provided a reality of inconsistency that must be addressed before the program can be recommended for continued approval.

Therefore, the BVU Program is expected to:

- 1) Complete an on-site self-study of the centers with close attention paid to the following areas as specified in this report: governance and resources; faculty; clinicals; knowledge, skills and dispositions of candidates; and assessment. The program shall submit to the Department a summary of the findings of the self-study when it is completed.
- 2) Develop and implement plans to address the findings in this report as well as the findings of the institutional self-study.
- 3) Submit to the Department by June 1, 2009, actions taken during the 2008-2009 academic year and plans for future changes.

#### **Buena Vista University Response:**

A self-study report was submitted to the Department by June 1, 2009. It included a summary of the findings of the self-study as well as actions taken during the 2008-2009 academic year and plans to address findings in this report.

The Dean of the School of Education will continue to follow-up on plans in this report and to document the improvements that BVU is making during this current academic year. On-going reports will be shared with the Department for review for the next two academic years.

**Department Follow-Up:**

Since the site visit, the Department consultant has met on several occasions with BVU's Dean of Education, Associate Dean of Professional and Online Studies, and Vice-President. All are new to their positions and/or the university; all are extremely enthusiastic about and instrumental in creating the changes that resulted from the site visit.

Two Department consultants attended the culmination of a BVU School of Education planning summit held in October of 2008. The campus faculty, site leaders, and administrators in attendance had spent an intense three days in assessing needs and creating plans for the future of the program. The results were focused, the enthusiasm contagious; leaders spoke of a new culture emerging. The 20+ steps that were delineated during those three days have now been completed; this is an extraordinary amount of work completed in a short amount of time.

Following the final response from BVU, a follow-up to the June document, the Department consultant held phone interviews with twelve individuals from over half of the BVU sites to verify the information presented in the final response. To a person, the interviewees spoke in glowing terms of the implementation of the plans for change: the increased avenues of communication, increased accountability and consistency, better accessibility of information, and greater inclusion of site faculty and leaders within the BV structure. These interviews provided strong evidence of the initial success of the newly implemented plans and of a change in culture across the campus and off-campus sites of the BVU teacher preparation program.

The summary report of the standards follows.

**SECTION A: GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES**

**Initial Team Finding**

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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**Strengths**

- The University provides excellent support for professional development and travel for on-campus faculty.
- Technology support is available for campus faculty.
- Electronic databases are available for all faculty and students, both at centers and on campus.
- The library has a sizeable collection. All programs have access to online e-books, abstracts, and online articles.
- The program has small class sizes that allow for a low student/teacher ratio.

### **Concerns/Recommendations**

- 1) The Advisory Council does not include representation from centers or candidates.
- 2) The system for regular on-going information sharing between Storm Lake and the centers is inadequate.
- 3) In several centers, candidates are allowed to take courses 'out of sequence' in order to consolidate course offerings and/or to increase convenience for candidates. This practice raises a concern regarding a compromise of quality for convenience.
- 4) The annual on-campus meeting for adjunct faculty is described as valuable by those who have attended. However, this annual meeting is a decrease from the biannual meetings of the past. Attendance is not required; the resulting participation is lower than would be expected.
- 5) Adjunct instructors have limited access to resources for educational materials and/or professional library. Many adjunct faculty members use materials available from their own PK-12 classrooms; though a use of authentic teaching materials, this practice limits the variety of materials that candidates experience.

**All of the above concerns/recommendations have been addressed by Buena Vista University in impressive ways. For example, regarding #1 above, six new advisory councils have been formed and have met in order to provide feedback to the twelve off-campus sites and to strengthen relationships with local schools.**

### **Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

- 1) Accountability, connection and coordination of centers with the campus program are necessary if the whole is to be approved as a single program.

### **Buena Vista University Response:**

Since the site visit, a new Vice President for Academic Affairs and a new Dean of the School of Education have been hired. Both have played an integral role, in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Professional and Online Programs (P and O), in reconstructing a system that better supports the sites. Additionally, as a result of the site visit and the subsequent required self-study, BVU has implemented significant changes in the governance of the university system, especially in strengthening the accountability, communication, connection and coordination of the satellite sites with the campus education programs. Included in these changes are the following:

- As of November 2008, the sites across the state have been divided into three regions. Three newly hired regional directors' report directly to the Associate Dean of the P and O. The outcome has been more effective communication and governance among the sites and with the Storm Lake campus.
- During the 2009-2010 academic year, the institution is piloting the implementation of three regional education coordinators to manage teacher preparation at the sites and to support site education coordinators and faculty. Permanent hires are scheduled for the spring of 2010.
- Seventeen site leadership positions have been filled or replaced.
- Stronger support for adjuncts has been implemented with the creation/revision of new handbooks, orientation and training.
- A stronger formal hiring and evaluation process for adjunct faculty at the sites has been implemented.

- Attendance at appropriate faculty meetings has been made mandatory for adjunct faculty.
  - Increased opportunities for professional development (PD) have included adjunct faculty from the sites. The impressive list of PD includes such topics as Cognitive Guided Instruction, Understanding by Design, Teacher Work Sample, and Iowa Core as well as assessment, differentiation, technology, and literacy training.
  - Improved two-way communication between campus faculty and off campus faculty has been attained via electronic means and face-to-face meetings.
- 2) Resource allocation appears to be significantly different at the centers than at the Storm Lake campus.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

- The total increase in resource allocation for a system that better supports the sites is in excess of \$750,000.
- Staff development money has been made available to adjunct professors at the sites.

**Final Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**SECTION B: DIVERSITY**

**Initial Team Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

- The Office of Intercultural Programs provides student-led programs that focus on providing a safe haven for students and increasing cultural awareness on campus.
- The university hired a diversity recruiter for student admissions recently.
- The Storm Lake School District is a rich source of clinical experiences with diverse student populations.
- The Academic Excellence Center provides services concerning accommodations to students at the centers.
- The centers and the graduate programs address the needs of the rural population in Iowa.
- Efforts are made to increase awareness of higher education for middle school students of diversity in the local area.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

- 1) Students in the teacher education program do not mirror the diversity of the general student population on campus. The general student population provides a rich potential for recruitment of candidates to teacher preparation.
- 2) Some centers offer candidates limited opportunities for clinical experiences with diverse populations.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:** None

**SECTION C: FACULTY**

**Initial Team Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

- Professors, especially in the campus program, were described as caring and approachable.
- The full-time education faculty members in the campus program have doctoral degrees from many different academic institutions; furthermore, they have in-depth teaching experiences with individuals from diverse cultures and with diverse abilities.
- Faculty members are dedicated to their teaching, mentoring, and advising responsibilities.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

- 1) Although the system demonstrated at the Storm Lake campus for verifying appropriate background and experience of adjunct instructors appears to be solid on paper, spot checking of the qualifications of adjunct faculty at the centers found some individuals teaching courses for which they were not well prepared.
- 2) A number of adjunct faculty members reported that they need more preparation and support in knowing how to teach college students as well as more support in content and structure of the courses they were assigned.
- 3) In some centers, directors and education coordinators reported a lack of confidence in the ability to ensure consistent quality of adjunct instructors.
- 4) No formal consistent process for evaluation of adjunct instructors exists other than student course evaluations.
- 5) Comments from a number of adjunct faculty members indicated that the use of syllabi developed by BVU Storm Lake faculty is inconsistent
- 6) Adjunct faculty expressed a wide variety of expectations regarding candidate attendance and classroom performance in order to accommodate the needs of nontraditional students.
- 7) Little professional development is provided for adjunct faculty; it appears that none is required by the program.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

- 1) The program must establish and implement a more consistent method for recruiting, hiring, and evaluating faculty for online and center programs.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

A new hiring and evaluation procedure has been implemented; oversight is the responsibility of the Dean of the School of Education and regional education coordinators. Since implementation, a number of applicants have been screened out of the process and the services of several adjuncts have been discontinued.

- 2) Faculty teaching specialized methods classes in the post-baccalaureate program (e.g., SEDU 451, 452, 462, 471, 481, 482) need to have preparation and experiences in situations similar to those for which the practitioner preparation students are being prepared.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

By the spring of 2010, content-specific methods courses will be offered in a hybrid format by faculty with background and experience in the appropriate content areas.

- 3) Because the Prekindergarten-Kindergarten and the Middle School Endorsements are offered only in the centers, no full-time or tenure-track faculty members are responsible for developing the courses in these programs. The unit needs to identify faculty with preparation and experiences in these areas to oversee these endorsement areas.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

A meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2009, to determine how to proceed with a pilot to be implemented in the fall of 2011. The university has made a commitment to hire faculty for review, overhaul, and oversight of these programs.

- 4) Currently, area education agency (AEA)-employed faculty, teaching coursework in the graduate program in reading, are not hired, supervised, or evaluated by BVU administrators.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

This program has been discontinued. However, any future courses taught by AEA employees will be approved, supervised, and evaluated by BVU administrators.

**Final Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**SECTION D: CLINICAL**

**Initial Team Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

- Goals have been set to strengthen the relationship between the campus program and Storm Lake schools as well as with cooperating teachers.
- All student teachers from the campus site are supervised by BVU faculty.
- Area administrators and cooperating teachers commented that BVU student teachers come prepared and have particularly strong backgrounds in technology.
- Strong clinical experiences exist in the graduate counseling program.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

Campus Program/General

- 1) A number of student teachers indicated it would be helpful to have regularly scheduled seminar sessions to process and problem-solve their student teaching experiences.
- 2) A number of student teachers would like more discussion with their university supervisors at the end of each observation in order to receive more direct feedback.

Centers

- 1) There is no orientation to the program for student teaching supervisors.
- 2) Some cooperating teachers from the sites commented on the need for more consistent support from university supervisors.

**Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

- 1) The program must implement a coding/tracking of clinical experiences to insure diversity of placements, both in the campus program and in the centers.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

A basic tracking system has been developed by the Assistant Director of Field Experiences and was submitted with the BVU response.

- 2) The program must implement a system of monitoring supervision of student teachers so that expectations and support for student teachers and cooperating teachers is consistent.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

The three new regional education coordinators and the field experience director are working with site education coordinators to better monitor supervision of student teachers. Consistent expectations for supervisors and candidates provide the main focus. These expectations are part of the required orientation for supervisors.

- 3) Contracts must be in place with all school districts where candidates do field experiences and/or student teach.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

The Dean of the School of Education has supplied lists of contracts that are now in place with all school districts where candidates do field experiences as well as student teach. Regional education coordinators will be responsible for verification in the future.

- 4) For the Prekindergarten-Kindergarten program endorsement, clinical experiences must include not only settings for children who are age eligible for kindergarten, but, as well, settings for preschool children who are age eligible for the state-funded preschool programs.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

As of August 2008, all PK-K endorsement candidates have field experiences in settings that serve preschool children. These placements can be verified through the newly created field experience tracking system.

**Final Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**SECTION E: CANDIDATE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS (CURRICULUM)**

**Initial Team Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

- Student teaching evaluation forms are tied to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards. Data collected around these forms are clear and useful.
- Students on the BVU campus report that advising is very helpful.
- Elementary candidates receive an overview of reading strategies in their methods course.
- Secondary candidates complete a required reading class.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

- 1) Methods courses need to increase attention to professional standards in specific content fields.
- 2) The grading system for student teaching could be better defined.
- 3) Increased guidance would help candidates in understanding the purposes and differences between the two portfolios they complete.

Centers

- 1) Comments from some graduates and employers indicated that the balance of theory and practice appears to be in question at some of the centers. More attention is focused on practice without underlying theoretical foundation.
- 2) Inspection of the syllabi submitted by adjunct instructors caused doubt about the rigor and relevance of the courses as offered.
- 3) Student teachers and graduates appear to need stronger preparation in differentiation and formative assessment.
- 4) Many candidates, graduates, and adjunct instructors expressed concerns with lack of consistency in the sequencing of courses.

**Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

- 1) Advising needs to be more consistent among centers and more similar to the advising experiences of candidates on campus.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

- The new regional education coordinators now provide guidance and supervision on all education policies, procedures, and process. They work together with the Dean of the School of Education to provide consistency throughout the program.
  - Since the site visit, new handbooks and orientation materials have been developed and implemented. Many new opportunities have been created for the site leaders to work with campus support personnel on advising and use of resources.
  - The registrar and the academic policy coordinator have conducted workshops at the sites regarding advising issues. Additionally, they meet monthly with site directors.
- 2) Coursework needs to be more consistent among centers and more similar to courses offered on campus.

**Buena Vista University Response:**

- The need for consistent coursework at the sites and on-campus has been the theme of the 2008-2009 academic year. This expectation is included in adjunct faculty orientation and evaluation of instruction. The new supervision plan, including regional directors and regional education coordinators, is providing appropriate oversight.
- Contact between campus instructors and adjunct faculty has increased. With replacements/retirements of campus faculty, this priority has already been put in place.
- Consistency will be enhanced by the future implementation of the Teacher Work Sample throughout the program.

**Final Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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## SECTION F: CANDIDATE AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

### Initial Team Findings

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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#### Strengths

- The unit is collecting performance data on individual candidates throughout the program.
- The unit has multiple candidate assessment points. The gates are clearly outlined in the catalog. Gates are used consistently and students are aware of them.
- The unit is collecting data through the student teaching surveys, graduate surveys, and employer surveys. Surveys are based on the standards.
- Data are being aggregated for review and disaggregated by center for analysis. This information can be useful toward program improvement.
- The university is committed to using technology to assist the unit with data analysis.

#### Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The program is encouraged to consider additional methods for assessing candidate knowledge, especially in the secondary content areas.
- 2) A more systematic and regular approach to analyzing data and sharing information with campus and center programs toward program improvement should be developed.
- 3) Data collected at check points I and II on individual candidates would be more useful for program and candidate assessment if these data were tied to the standards.
- 4) Counseling candidates out of the program is not common. At some centers, this is done intentionally; at some centers no one takes this responsibility.

#### Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:

- 1) The program must develop more consistency among the centers and between centers and the campus regarding evaluation of artifacts that are required in the assessment system.
- 2) The program needs to develop more consistency in helping adjunct faculty and candidates understand the assessment system and the standards that drive the program.

#### Buena Vista University Response:

The new supervision system and increased training are addressing these issues.

- Adjunct faculty orientation, training and evaluation of instruction/assessment will bring more consistency to the use of the assessment system. The new supervision plan, including regional directors and regional education coordinators, is providing appropriate oversight.
- Increased communication between campus instructors and adjunct faculty can facilitate discussions regarding expectations in assessment.
- Consistency will be enhanced by the future implementation of the Teacher Work Sample throughout the program.

**Final Finding**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**All standards have been met. The Buena Vista University Teacher Preparation Program is recommended for continuing approval.**