

NCATE STANDARD VI: UNIT GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

Prompt 1: How does the unit's governance system and resources contribute to adequately preparing candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards?

The Unit

The "Professional Unit" at Francis Marion University is the School of Education (SOE) along with the Art Education and School Psychology programs. It should be noted that Art Education and School Psychology are not functional parts of the SOE but are separate programs administered by the Departments of Fine Arts and Psychology respectively. Some supporting education courses for the Art Education program are offered in the School of Education. The School Psychology program is administered in the Department of Psychology and all courses are taught in the Department of Psychology. For the overall structure and organization of the unit, see [VIRE 2: *Structure and Organization, Roles and Responsibilities*](#).

The School of Education (SOE) offers the following initial certification programs: (a) Early Childhood Education (grades PK-3); (b) Elementary Education (grades 2-6); (c) Middle Level Education (grades 5-8); (d) Secondary Education (grades 9-12) in Mathematics and English; and, (e) M.A.T in Learning Disabilities (grades 1-12) ([VISE 1: *Licensure Programs*](#)). Candidates seeking certification in secondary Mathematics and English obtain a major in their respective discipline and take content courses in the College of Liberal Arts and in the Departments of Mathematics and English, Modern Languages and Philosophy respectively. The School of Education also offers the following advanced programs: (a) the M.Ed. and M.A.T. in Learning Disabilities (LD); and, (b) the M.Ed. in Instructional Accommodation. Only the M.A.T.-LD leads to initial certification.

Leadership and Governance

Following a university wide philosophy of "shared governance," all major curricular decisions at FMU must go through a system of university faculty approval. The Unit faculty approve all major program/curricular changes

through a process described in the *School of Education Faculty Handbook* ([VISE 3: School of Education Faculty Handbook, page 22](#)) before they are sent through the university approval system ([VIRE 1: Policies on Governance and Operations of the Unit](#)). At the foundation of the unit decision-making process are the program committees. At this level, faculty analyze and reflect on assessment data, reflect on current process, and/or discuss ways to improve the knowledge, skills and/or dispositions of candidates within their programs. Program committees are represented on the SOE Leadership Team composed of all program chairs, the NCATE/Assessment Coordinator, the Clinical Coordinator and both deans. The Leadership Team advises the Dean, who then proposes changes to the SOE faculty for approval. Once the unit faculty makes a decision, it is then sent through the University governance system. This process involves approval by the Academic Advisory Council or Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, and finally approval by the full university faculty ([VISE 2: An Overview of the Governance Process at FMU](#)).

The School of Education seeks input and support from all relevant stakeholder groups through a network of advisory committees and groups that represent diverse constituencies that have a vested interest in teacher preparation. These advisory committees also play an important role in the decision making process. Ideas and direction provided by these committees assist the School of Education in improving opportunities for teacher candidates ([VISE 4: School of Education Faculty Handbook: School, Community, and Institutional Relationships, pages 20-22](#); [VISE 5: Summary of Advisory Bodies and Stakeholders](#)).

Student Services

While the unit faculty are responsible for routine academic advising, students with personal or social-emotional problems can be referred to the Office of Counseling and Testing ([VIRE 3e: FMU Catalog, "Office of Counseling and Testing," page 18](#)). Candidates have access to student services including advising and counseling that assists them in meeting their personal and academic needs. Candidate academic advising is an important responsibility for all SOE faculty. Once students declare education as a major, they are assigned an advisor from the SOE full-time faculty. Candidates are encouraged to meet with their advisors on a regular basis and to discuss all

academic and professional problems with the advisor. SOE faculty members are required to post and keep regular office hours to insure candidate access.

Recruitment and Admissions

Recruitment and admissions are primarily functions of the University Admissions Office ([VIRE 4: Recruiting and Admissions Policies](#)). SOE faculty assist with "Counselor Breakfasts" around the state to encourage high school guidance counselors to recommend FMU to potential students. The SOE faculty also participate in the Open Houses and Orientations conducted by the Admissions Office. At these occasions, the SOE faculty are involved in recruiting students in general and in promoting education programs where possible.

The SOE is also active in several recruitment efforts to promote education programs. Probably the single most effective recruiting tool for the SOE is the Teacher Cadet program. Talented high school seniors from throughout the region participate in the Teacher Cadet program held in regional high schools and sponsored by the School of Education. During this experience, potential teachers are exposed to the University faculty and teaching as a potential career and receive University credit for the experience ([VISE 6: Teacher Cadet Information](#)).

Several approaches are used for graduate/advanced program recruitment. At the end of student teaching each semester, a representative from the advanced programs presents graduate program options to the candidates and encourages them to enroll in a program of interest. FMU is a partner in the Pee Dee Education Center, which is an active network of 19 school districts. This provides the SOE a robust resource for assisting with the creation and promotion of needed advanced programs. Advanced programs have been established for single district cohorts while others involve multiple districts. The SOE also maintains a recruiting booth at the university's Career Day, a spring and fall combination career fair and job fair hosted by the Office of Career Development. The goal of the job fair is to encourage students in general to use the fair not only as an opportunity to learn about open positions within participating school districts, but also as an opportunity to discover new potential career paths. Participating

organizations in the fair include school districts, manufacturers, banking and financial institutions, hospitals and other health care providers, and graduate and professional schools.

Unit Budget

The last few years have presented budget challenges for universities. Even with these unprecedented budgetary restrictions, the SOE has been able to maintain all programs at or above the same level that existed before the severe budget restraints. Neither protocol for clinical placement nor faculty professional development have been reduced. Faculty workload and allocations for teaching materials and technology also remain unchanged ([VIRE 6: School of Education budget](#)). SOE budgetary allocations are proportional to other units on campus with similar clinical components ([VIRE 7: SOE Budget Comparison](#)).

Personnel

Faculty loads for the SOE in most instances conform to the faculty load policy of the university as presented in the *SOE Faculty Handbook* ([VIRE 9: Summary of Faculty Workloads](#)). This faculty load policy meets the requirements set in Standard 6c. Because of recent budget cuts, full time faculty provide all of the instruction within the School of Education ([VIRE 8a: SOE Faculty Handbook: Faculty Roles and Responsibilities, page 11, paragraph 3](#)). Graduate assistants do not teach courses at FMU.

The School of Education employs a LiveText Coordinator to assist faculty and candidates with key assessments and data collection. This person also is responsible for coordinating education professional development courses. Three administrative assistants support the School of Education. One is assigned basic support for the working of the school, one specializes in candidate records and certification, and one is an assistant to the Coordinator of Education Professional Development Courses and LiveText.

The university has a special professional development fund to provide faculty members with support to attend and/or present at state or national professional meetings. The SOE also has designated funds to support professional development (see [NCATE Standard V](#) and/or [Budget line item](#)

[E3100 in VIRE 7: SOE Budget Comparison](#)). The campus technology staff regularly provides special professional development related to applicable instructional and communications technology.

Unit Facilities

Several aspects of the campus and School of Education facilities deserve special mention ([VIRE 10: List of Facilities](#)). The newly constructed Gail and Terry Richardson Center for the Child provides both training facilities for early childhood candidates and a working day care facility available to the community. Innovations Place is a classroom equipped with recent instructional technology that allows candidates to learn to use this technology. Many classrooms within the John K. Cauthen Educational Media Center have up-to-date technology that enhances candidate exposure to and use of new technology. The holdings and staff of the James A. Rogers Library support the School of Education and its candidates ([VIRE 11: Library Resources](#)).

Unit Resources Including Technology

All candidates have accounts for e-mail, Blackboard 9.1 and LiveText. They also have both Ethernet and wireless Internet access. The School of Education Computer lab is just one of the computer access facilities available to all candidates. The Center of Excellence for Preparation of Teachers of Children of Poverty is another resource available to candidates, faculty, the Pee Dee community and beyond. The James A. Rogers Library utilizes up to date technology to assist faculty and candidates in locating information. ([VIRE 7: Rogers Library Holdings](#))

Prompt 2: Briefly summarize the most significant changes related to Standard VI that have led to continuous improvement.

Revision of the Conceptual Framework

After the last NCATE visit (2004), the School of Education (SOE) realized that the existing conceptual framework was far too cumbersome and complex to serve as an efficient and compelling organizational and

philosophical core for the school. A more simplified and revised conceptual framework (preparing competent and caring teachers) has led the School of Education toward new and more effective ways of preparing teacher candidates. Five major changes resulting directly or indirectly from the revised conceptual framework are discussed below.

1. A robust system for collecting and analyzing the data accompanied by an ongoing emphasis on data based decision-making was established.
2. Faculty leadership within the SOE was strengthened and re-aligned.
3. Diversity (including poverty) became an area of special emphasis for the entire School of Education. (See [Standard IV](#)).
4. A coordinated, transparent system for promoting positive candidate dispositions and dealing with inappropriate professional dispositions was created.
5. Foundations courses for initial certification programs were reviewed, revised, and strengthened.

Data Collection and Analysis

When the School of Education first constructed a conceptual framework, the assumption was that it needed to be an extensive statement that provided mention of all major areas of skills and knowledge that were important to the School of Education. Thus, the first conceptual framework was two paragraphs long and included specific mention of knowledge, reflection, collaboration, diverse populations, critical thinking, assessment, and technology. The framework was accurate as a description but ineffective for its purpose. Not only was the statement unmemorable by candidates and faculty alike, but also it also lead to intersections and connections that were virtually impossible to assess with any degree of validity. While all of the key areas mentioned in the old framework remain vitally important to the School of Education, the faculty sought a new statement that better guided faculty and administration as they continued to mature and improve. The new conceptual framework simply emphasizes the desire of the school to prepare teachers who are both professionally competent and caring. All major decisions within the School of Education are made with these two goals in mind.

Developing more professionally competent teachers required that the SOE develop a more robust system for collecting, retrieving and analyzing data. Upon examination, three primary data-related needs became evident:

1. The school needed a much clearer vision of what types of data would allow faculty to make informed decisions about both candidates and programs. What types of data are needed to make what decisions?
2. Making data based decisions required an explicit set of competency measures, on which faculty may rely to inform them about candidate performance. What assessments can be used to accurately indicate what students know and are able to do?
3. With all the data required, the school needed to find and/or create one or more systematic ways to collect, organize, retrieve and analyze it. How can data be managed efficiently?

The School of Education chose two vehicles for handling essential data: LiveText and the School of Education Assessment System (SOEAS). LiveText is a commercially available program that is generally recognized as a reliable, affordable and user-friendly means for gathering data related to candidate work, instructor ratings of candidates, and School of Education working documents such as minutes. Candidates use LiveText to create products that are subsequently assessed by faculty on line. The data from the LiveText assessments are then compiled and shared with program committees and/or individual faculty for reporting and decision-making on a regular basis.

Beyond the candidate data, the School of Education needed a systematic means for organizing and accessing candidate data required for progress through the Checkpoints required for both initial and advanced programs. Early examinations of the existing "system" revealed that there really was no efficient system in place. Through work with campus technology experts and the administrative associate in charge of candidate records, the SOE developed the School of Education Assessment System (SOEAS). The SOEAS is a robust system for connecting candidate information available on the University database with essential School of Education data. The SOEAS does not interface with LiveText. The SOEAS allows program committees to collect the essential candidate data needed for completion of each Checkpoint. It also allows for specialized "queries" that may be needed for the completion of special reports and/or projects. (For a detailed description of the assessment system, see [NCATE Standard II.](#))

Realignment of SOE Faculty Leadership

The systematic development of competent and caring teachers also requires strong leadership and faculty involvement. The complex nature of data-based decision making and the accrediting process itself requires a greater effort and commitment by the entire faculty – not just the Dean or a few faculty members assigned to data and/or accrediting responsibilities. To improve both leadership and faculty involvement, the SOE created a special “Leadership Team” and a system of greater reliance on program committees to monitor and improve programs. The Leadership Team meets at least twice each semester and is composed of all program chairs, the Clinical Coordinator, the NCATE/Assessment Coordinator, the Associate Dean and the Dean of the School of Education. The team serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean and also provides experience with unit leadership for the senior faculty involved. The Dean and/or the team itself plan the meeting. Meeting minutes are distributed to all faculty members.

Probably the greatest change in unit organization is the delegation of responsibility for organizing, assessing, analyzing and improving programs to individual program committees. Program committees select and refine their key assessments and are responsible for collecting key data in LiveText. Program committees are responsible for systematic analysis of key assessments and analyzing the data for program improvement. These committees, for example, are responsible for identifying knowledge, skills and/or dispositions for which candidates need greater strength and then making program alterations to strengthen those areas. These committees have already made improvements in candidate advising, more consistent examination of candidate dispositions, and more systematic use of Checkpoint data. ([IIRE 2c: Matrix of Data Analyses by Program Committees, Program Committee Minutes](#)).

SOE Emphasis on Diversity

In August 2004, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education awarded Francis Marion University a Center of Excellence grant to establish a Center of Excellence for Teaching Children of Poverty (COE). The success of the COE has led to its centrality as a powerful mechanism to promote the development of “competent and caring” teachers not only in the area of children of poverty but beyond that to all aspects of student diversity. For an

extended explanation of the Center of Excellence and its role in promoting teachers who are able to work effectively with diverse students, see [NCATE Standard IV](#).

Promoting Professional Dispositions

Professional dispositions are related to both the competence and caring aspects of teaching – areas that must be taught and/or nurtured by the SOE faculty and programs. The development of a coordinated transparent system for promoting positive candidate dispositions and dealing with inappropriate dispositions continues to be an ongoing challenge to the School of Education. Until the NCATE process brought attention to dispositions issues, the SOE and its faculty handled candidate dispositions in an informal way with each instructor (and sometimes the Deans) dealing with issues in his/her own way. The SOE faculty realized that there were two primary areas in which professional dispositions of candidates needed to be made more explicit: (1) the regular assessment of dispositions of all candidates required for Checkpoints; and, (2) a systematic process for the identification and remediation of dispositions problems and/or potential disposition problems. Both areas have been addressed and the process for assessment and/or remediation systematized. Dispositional records are maintained electronically in LiveText and are discussed more thoroughly in [NCATE Standard I](#) and [NCATE Standard II](#).

Strengthening of Foundations Courses

The final area of unit improvement for developing competent and caring teachers is the SOE process for strengthening foundations courses for initial certification programs. This effort to improve foundations courses came about as a result of dialogue within program committees, assessment data, and input from the Leadership Team. These foundations courses are not the responsibility of any one program yet candidate mastery of their content impacts all programs. For this reason the SOE decided to create a special committee in 2009 to examine selected foundations courses with the goal of confirming what aspects of which courses were or were not contributing to positive candidate development. Thus far, this process has led to significant changes in the introductory courses (formerly EDUC 290/299 and now EDUC 190/191) and the planning and assessment course (EDUC 311). In the future, other courses will be examined and improved where necessary.

Prompt 3: Exhibits

Exhibits for Standard VI may be located at [NCATE Standard VI](#).

http://departments.fmarion.edu/education/NCATE/index_files/Page1996.htm