

Title II Report: Professional Education Programs 1999-2000 Cohort – Submitted April 2001

The preparation of professional education candidates at the University of Delaware is a university-wide commitment. The University offers 26 professional education programs for undergraduates and 15 programs at the graduate level through five colleges: Agriculture and Natural Resources; Arts and Science; Business and Economics; Health and Nursing Sciences; and Human Services, Education and Public Policy. A University-wide governing body -- the University Council on Teacher Education -- is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the preparation of professional educators. All professional education programs are guided by a unifying conceptual framework: to develop professional educators who are reflective practitioners serving diverse communities of learners as scholars, problem solvers, and partners.

The fall 2000 enrollment in the University's professional education programs totaled 2,134 (approximately 11% of the University's enrollment), which included 1,804 undergraduates and 330 graduate students.

National Accreditation and High Standards

The University of Delaware received initial accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in 1998, when they were judged to have met all accreditation standards. This is a level of excellence only rarely achieved by programs undergoing review. The individual professional education programs have also all received the State of Delaware "approved program status." In addition, the professional education programs have been recognized for meeting standards established by such national education specialty organizations as the Association for Childhood Education International, the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the International Reading Association, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The University's goals for professional education candidates are consistent with Delaware state standards, with the standards of the various national specialty organizations, and with the performance standards identified by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium as essential for all beginning teachers.

The University is a member of the Standards-based Teacher Education Project sponsored by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Council for Basic Education. This project encourages university education and arts and science faculty to share responsibility for teacher preparation with school administrators and teachers and to focus on the assessment of student learning. At the University of Delaware, we are examining the links between what our professional education candidates are learning and the content being addressed in the State's K-12 classrooms, where students are being required to meet the Delaware Student Content Standards.

High Quality Faculty and Students

Outstanding preparation for educators begins with highly qualified students who are taught and mentored by a professional education faculty committed to excellence.

Selection and Monitoring of Candidates. The admissions process to the University of Delaware and its professional education programs is highly selective. Over 1,700 applicants applied for admission to an undergraduate professional education program for fall 2000. Only 706 (41.5%) of these applicants were offered admission. The average combined SAT score for those offered admission into an undergraduate professional education program was 1163 and for those enrolled for fall 2000 was 1152. (University-wide, the average combined SAT score for all students enrolled in fall 2000 was 1154.)

After initial admission into a professional education program, program faculty carefully monitors a candidate's progress. All candidates are screened and must meet established program criteria for admission into upper-level courses and student teaching. Rigorous academic and field-based performance standards are established for all professional education programs and are reviewed, approved and monitored by the University Council on Teacher Education. Candidates' content and pedagogical knowledge as well as teaching skills and dispositions are assessed throughout their programs. Suitable candidates are encouraged to take honors courses and honors degree options.

Faculty Commitment to Excellence. UD's professional education faculty are known for their intellectual leadership in their fields and are committed to the integration of teaching, scholarship and service. They are "teacher scholars" who engage in the generation of new knowledge, integrate their scholarly expertise into their teaching, and share their expertise with candidates and with their professional education colleagues within and outside of the academic community. They serve as teaching models and mentors and provide students with opportunities to collaborate through classroom instruction and through research projects. UD faculty also partner with teachers and administrators in P-12 schools to work on projects, solve problems, provide professional development and other in-service training, and engage in research aimed at improving student learning. Many professional education faculty have been recognized nationally and internationally for their scholarship, and many have been recipients of UD Excellence in Teaching and Excellence in Student Advising awards.

Best Practice Preparation

Outstanding preparation for educators has always included both a strong academic background and a challenging variety of field-based experiences. Today's educators must also be able to incorporate new technology and resources into their classrooms and work in an ever-more diverse school environment.

Academic Preparation in Content Fields. A strong academic preparation in what they will teach is a trademark of UD's professional education programs. Our candidates complete a general liberal arts core of courses, an academic major in the subject they plan to teach, and a professional education component of courses designed to prepare them for the teaching

profession. Professional education candidates seeking to teach at the high school level complete degree programs in the college that offers the academic major (Arts and Science, Agriculture and Natural Resources, or Health and Nursing Sciences). The Elementary Teacher Education and Early Childhood Development and Education programs are offered in the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy. These majors complete a comprehensive program of study in the core academic areas of the elementary school curriculum: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the fine arts.

Graduated Component of Field-based Experiences. Learning through supervised, practical, real-world experiences is a hallmark of UD's professional education programs. As early as their freshman year, our professional education candidates begin a sequential program of experiences characterized by increasing involvement with, and responsibility for, children and youth in classroom settings. An on-line reporting system monitors UD candidates' completion of field-based experiences in a variety of classrooms with different age levels and with diverse populations. These experiences culminate in a 14- to 18-week full-time student teaching experience -- or 360 to 480 hours. University-based faculty and school-based teachers and administrators share the responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of the candidates. The faculty/candidate ratio during student teaching is approximately 1 to 7.

Integration of Technology and Education. UD has been recognized nationally as a leader in the use of technology on campus, winning the CAUSE Award for Excellence in Campus Networking and earning a top spot on Yahoo Internet Life's list of "America's 100 Most Wired Colleges." Students at the University expect to use technology routinely in their classes, going on-line for research and web-based homework assignments. UD's professional education programs, in particular, take advantage of the technological resources on campus and emphasize the development and use of technology to better educate children and youth in the classroom and to learn about specialized tools in adaptive technology for persons with disabilities.

Emphasis on Diversity. Preparing candidates to work with diverse populations and to serve the needs of all learners is an important element of our professional education programs. Diversity -- whether related to gender, ethnicity, disability, economic status, developmental level, learning style, or any other characteristics -- is treated as a potential source of enrichment. Throughout the curricula and field experiences, our candidates acquire the knowledge and skills to help all students learn.

This commitment to diversity extends to active recruitment and retention programs for students and faculty on campus. Two university-initiated programs, ASPIRE and the Delaware Teacher Recruitment Program, promote the recruitment and retention of a diverse corps of undergraduate students preparing to become teachers.

Unique Clinical Opportunities

UD professional education candidates can take advantage of three unique clinical sites as part of their graduated field experiences. Two are long established lab schools where UD faculty and students learn and teach in an environment that fosters best practice; the third is a new

direction in teacher education -- an intensive K-8 community-based clinical program. UD is also piloting an innovative vertical model for teacher candidates' field experience that it is hoped will further enhance the clinical component of their preparation and further strengthen the ties between the University and our cooperating schools and districts.

UD Laboratory Pre-School. A fixture on campus since 1934, the UD Laboratory Pre-School is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It offers half-day programs for 66 children in four age groups, from 2 through 5, including kindergarten. A special summer program works with younger toddlers.

Teacher training is, of course, a key component of the preschool. Early childhood development and education majors see firsthand how young children learn, develop and interact and discover how high-quality programs and teachers can help them grow. It also serves as a resource for teachers and other educators in the community, who frequently visit to observe its operations or to attend professional development programs offered by the staff.

The College School. The College School, located on main campus since 1988, offers children with learning differences unique opportunities to surmount academic, social or other problems they have experienced in their previous schools. With the high level of individual attention, made possible in large part by the involvement of UD professional education students, most College School pupils thrive. After an average of two or three years, the children normally move into a more mainstream educational environment.

The school benefits University students, too, with about 125 of them involved each semester in some aspect of the program. Most are enrolled in educational methods courses, which require practical experience in the classroom, and they spend time each week assisting College School teachers by working with individuals or small groups, teaching a lesson or tutoring. The College School is a valuable research site for faculty and students as well.

Milford Professional Development School. This new partnership between the University and the Milford School District in southern Delaware provides a unique opportunity for candidates in the last two years of the UD's Elementary Teacher Education major. Students are assigned to the same elementary or middle school in the district for their field experiences, and UD professional education faculty teach courses on-site in Milford. Students are thus a part of every aspect of school life and have an unparalleled opportunity to connect theory and practice in an actual school setting. This extended clinical experience will give them the knowledge and experience to be confident professionals as they begin their first year of teaching.

The Vertical Field Experience Model. In an effort to enhance students' field experiences and to build better partnerships with schools, CHEP's School of Education is piloting an innovative vertical model for field experience. Elementary Teacher Education major are grouped in cohorts (10 students from each year -- freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) that are mentored and supervised by the same student teaching coordinator for all field experiences. Furthermore, each cohort is assigned to a cluster of four or five schools in two school districts for all field experiences. Student teaching coordinators, who are all UD faculty

members, work closely with the teachers in those schools to insure the best possible field experiences for the teacher candidates and the best possible learning experiences of their pupils.

Career Success of Graduates

UD graduates are actively recruited. More than 250 school district personnel from across the country visit our campus annually to recruit our graduates. School district personnel comment on the high caliber of our graduates and of their preparation program. In addition, in response to surveys conducted over the last four years, our graduates indicate a high level of satisfaction with the preparation they received. On one of the recent surveys, more than 90% of our graduates reported that they felt they were well prepared to enter the teaching profession.

UD professional education graduates go on to successful careers. For example of the 19 Delaware Teachers of the Year for 2000-2001, 14 had earned either an undergraduate or a graduate professional education degree from the University; 4 had earned professional education degrees at both levels.

Licensure Requirements and Delaware Mandates

The University of Delaware prepares candidates for teacher certification in a variety of states and thus no one state's mandated tests are required for graduation. For that reason the University is termed a "licensure" institution. (A "gatekeeper" institution requires students to pass at least some of the tests mandated by a particular state prior to their admission to a teacher preparation program; an "exit" institution requires candidates to pass a specific state's mandated tests prior to their graduation.)

Although the State of Delaware requires Praxis I tests (in reading, writing and mathematics) for certification, only half of the 1999-2000 UD professional education program graduates (173 of 345 or 50.1%) took these tests. Why so few? For two reasons: because of their high SAT scores, many UD graduates were exempt from taking parts of Praxis I; and many UD graduates do not seek teaching positions in Delaware and therefore do not need to meet this state requirement. Of those UD graduates who took the Praxis I tests, 94% achieved a passing score.

Exempted Candidates. Many of the UD graduates are exempt from the Praxis I reading and mathematics tests based on their high school SAT scores. The State of Delaware SAT exemption policy allows students who achieve a minimum SAT I Verbal of 560 and minimum SAT I Mathematics score of 540 to exempt from the Praxis I reading and mathematics respectively. Of the 1999-2000 graduates, 147 or 42.8% were exempt from Praxis I Reading and 192 or 55.7% were exempt from Praxis I Mathematics.

Out-of-State Candidates. Almost two-thirds of UD 1999-2000 program graduates were out-of-state residents (64.5%). Many of these graduates sought teaching positions in states that did not require the Praxis I tests though they did require Praxis II tests, like New Jersey and Pennsylvania, or other state-specific tests developed in place of the Praxis series, like New York

and Massachusetts. Many of the graduates for whom no Praxis I tests scores were reported were graduates who took these other tests.