

SECTION V – USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO IMPROVE CANDIDATE AND PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

KSC Undergraduate Special Education Certification Program

Data for Assessments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be collected during the 2006-2007 academic year and reported in June 2007. At the time of this report the undergraduate special education option has just implemented the changes made across the assessments. These changes are designed to enhance aspects of program requirements, communicate expectations to students more explicitly, and bring more clarity to the grading system associated with the tasks. The informal data gathered from undergraduates and faculty over the past two years revealed the need to make the written directions for the assessments used for evaluation of pre-service teachers and program review more precise; further analyzing the steps involved in supporting completion of tasks and making criteria for meeting expectations more specific. The results of changes appear in this report and are reflected in revisions made to the Student Teaching and Practicum Handbooks, more intentionally highlighting the use of CEC Standards in direct instruction and reflection activities across program courses and emphasizing the use of rubrics and rating scales as tools for pre-service teachers' self-evaluation and faculty feedback to them. Existing assessment tools (portfolio, documenting the special education process, lesson planning, student teaching, supervision, and functional behavior assessment-behavior intervention plan) were piloted, revised, piloted again, and rewritten as needed. Each of the assessments focuses on using authentic products, using a work sample methodology to assess growth of pre-service teachers and effectiveness of the program.

The revised assessment descriptions and evaluation criteria are found in this report. These assessments provide more thorough coverage of CEC Standards and will help guide our future program development as the college moves from a three to four credit model and the Education program completes revisions to its preparation of general education teachers. Alignment of assessments with CEC standards will allow the special education certification option to systematically evaluate how it will undergo program revisions while continuing to build on the preparation of elementary and secondary classroom teachers.

The data from earlier versions of assessments and grading systems served as the basis for the current tools (assignment descriptions and rubrics or rating scales), which in turn offer the level of detail needed to inform future program development. Therefore, it was decided that the "old data" would not be included in this report as grades were the remaining evidence of student and program performance. However, these do not represent the desired qualities of expectations nor the criteria for measuring that are communicated through the present forms of assessments and rubrics/ rating scales.

1. Content knowledge

The courses cover a range of content knowledge through various activities, experiences, readings, and assessments. The revisions to Assessments 1 and 2 (Portfolio and Documenting the Special Education/ IEP Process) will yield a comprehensive treatment of the portfolio and more consistent analysis of the work associated with the special education process to provide evidence of program

effectiveness and gaps and thus guide improvements. These data will be compiled in June 2007. The comprehensive nature of the two tools offer two complementary samples of pre-service teachers' thinking, problem solving, reflection, and application of the range of CEC and program standards. The data will shed light on the content knowledge and provide direction for enhancing candidate performance in addition to informing program development.

2. Professional and pedagogical knowledge, skill, and dispositions

Examination of the data generated from Assessments 2, 3, 5, and 6 allow for examination of tasks critical to the role of the special educator. These data will help to examine pre-service teachers' application of CEC Standards, skills, and dispositions in the context of authentic tasks. The increased level of specificity of the criteria used to evaluate performance will offer the program and pre-service teachers (along with narrative feedback) explicit information to define specific points for revision and additional focus respectively. The tools that comprise the summative assessment for Assessment 4 (student teaching) will be used as indicators as to the extent to which the program meets its goals by examining whether there are patterns of gaps and/ or strengths in pre-service teachers' performance or whether the gaps and strengths are more idiosyncratic to individual pre-service teachers.

3. Student learning

Assessment 5, promises to provide the program with important information about pre-service teachers' dispositions to taking responsibility for the teaching-learning process, evaluating and analyzing own teaching practices in light of the impact on student learning. This is also an opportunity to evaluate the supervision process in terms of documenting the ways in which pre-service teachers check for student understanding throughout lessons, use assessment data they collect, reflect on their performance, and respond to constructive feedback.