

## Section V

**Evidence must be presented in this section that assessment results have been analyzed and have been or will be used to improve candidate performance and strengthen the program. This description should not link improvements to individual assessments but, rather, it should summarize principal findings from the evidence, the faculty's interpretation of those findings, and changes made in (or planned for) the program as a result. Describe the steps program faculty has taken to use information from assessments for improvement of both candidate performance and the program. This information should be organized around (1) content knowledge, (2) professional and pedagogical knowledge, skill, and dispositions, and (3) candidates learning.**

Our department is undergoing significant changes in part due to the NCATE original report suggestions and in part to a college wide change. As we gather data and as we use this data to determine areas that need to be strengthened, this informs our curricular changes. This is a time of tremendous growth and we have used the findings in the evidence to help assure we are moving in a positive direction.

### CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

The process of going through the NCATE accreditation process has most significantly impacted the manner in which we gather evidence to assure our candidates have strong content knowledge in the appropriate areas. We have, in response to suggestions from our original report, significantly increased the amount of time candidates are in the field, and now require candidates to successfully complete two semesters of Methods. This allows us to strengthen their content knowledge by closely paralleling our work in the college classroom in core content areas with their practice in the field.

All faculty teaching key assignments that provide evidence of content knowledge report their assessment data to a central source. The Methods faculty, who collect much of the data, meets on a monthly basis to discuss areas that may need more reinforcement, data tool adaption, and candidates' progress.

We have strengthened our existing program by adding two positions to help with the collection of evidence and use of evidence as well – a data collection person, and a half time faculty/NCATE coordinator with strong experience in this field. In addition, we are purchasing a computer system that will allow our candidates to build electronic portfolios wherein evidence of their content knowledge will be easily assessable.

### PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, AND DISPOSITIONS

We continue to emphasize planning especially in the core areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. We have increased our collection of data in this area, and are using our interpretation of the data to help our candidates become stronger in their lesson planning skills. Our initial data show steady improvement in planning as our

candidates move through our program, and we anticipate this trend will continue as we begin to gather more data as the curriculum changes are enacted.

We are making more effective use of our candidate dispositions form, assuring that the candidates are assessed in this area in their Methods courses and student teaching. We have had multiple meetings throughout the year to develop the new curriculum, assuring that the outcomes to key assignments in our newly developed courses adhere to the ACEI guidelines. We have strengthened existing coursework, and infused the ACEI standards throughout our new courses. We will continue to closely analyze data to determine if our candidates are, indeed, continuing to grow in these areas.

### CANDIDATE LEARNING

This is the core of our work at the college, and we continue to strive to assure our candidates are leaving the college with a strong knowledge base from which to begin their careers in elementary education. We recognize that we need to develop a more effective means of gathering data for licensure tests, and are instituting a policy change in this area. We are examining the potential of creating a liberal arts second major for our candidates, which could allow them to become very strong in one area of interest, i.e. math, science, etc., that would be directly applicable to their future work with children.

In collecting and analyzing the data we do have, we have evidence that our candidates do have acceptable levels of content knowledge across the broad field of subjects necessary for elementary school teachers. We will continue to build upon this base with our new courses, hopefully strengthening this.

### SUMMARY

Our college and our department have undergone and continue to undergo tremendous changes. As we have moved from a three credit model to a four credit model throughout the campus, our department has used this opportunity to create a richer educational program for our elementary education candidates. When coupled with the introspection that occurs throughout the accreditation process, the program has been able to effect changes that may not have been so easily undertaken in different circumstances. We have used the ACEI standards as a map in assisting us in our curricular changes, yet have still been able to maintain the uniqueness of our program that has earned it an excellent reputation for the past century. These factors interplay in making this a time of positive growth for our faculty, our program, and our department.