Use of Data for Program Improvement

For both initial and advanced programs, the Whitlowe R. Green College of Education Performance Assessment System collects data from each checkpoint and uses it to inform both the student and the program. Data summaries are compiled from the program requirements, state tests and electronic portfolio. The resulting data provides feedback to the student for the purpose of facilitating the candidate's growth during the preparation process. By providing these assessment checkpoints for candidates, the program exemplifies the conceptual framework. Candidate, program, and external data are aggregated across semesters and academic years and disaggregated by program area.

In addition, program data is disaggregated by standards, allowing the unit to identify successful or problematic areas. Using the evaluation process, the department reviews the data and determines areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and the impact on the program. Recommendations are then made to corresponding areas of the unit. This becomes the feedback loop in which aggregate and disaggregated data are reviewed for overall unit effectiveness. The feedback impacts decisions regarding assessment, curriculum, field and clinical experiences, faculty teaching, policy, and/or the development of new programs. This refinement process provides quality assurance for the program and focuses the direction of the unit toward improving the preparation effectiveness for both Initial and Advanced programs.

Assessment data is shared with unit faculty and staff, relevant institution faculty and staff, and with community stakeholders through regularly scheduled departmental meetings, retreats, and Teacher Education Committee, and Graduate Education Committee meetings. In addition, the unit meets annually in August for a two-day retreat. Data from both initial and advanced

programs undergo exhaustive review. Insights from faculty are shared and action plans for each of the student outcomes and program goals are designed to respond to areas of concern noted from the data.

These action plans are targets for immediate implementation for the next academic year and also become a part of the strategic planning process of the unit. The annual reports for the initial and advanced programs document planned changes in the programs resulting from the analyses, resources needed to implement the proposed changes, and means of assessing whether the changes have produced the desired outcome.

Candidates' performance is assessed through multiple strategies to assess proficiency levels. Candidates at all levels are required to reflect upon their teaching experiences and cite ways to improve their performance. Data from assessments such as GPA, internship Evaluations, electronic portfolios, and Student Opinion Surveys are used to generate student and faculty improvement plans as appropriate.

An evaluation of GPA also occurs at transition point II, advancement to candidacy. Candidates must complete 12 semester hours of required graduate courses with an average of at least 3.0. Candidates who do not satisfy this requirement are denied admission candidacy and advised of a course of action in order to correct any deficiencies or, in extreme cases, advised out of the program.

Counseling and Principal internships use evaluation instruments to assess candidate performance. The Counseling Interns Evaluation Instrument is designed to allow supervisors a means to provide feedback about intern performance. The instrument comprises seven categories with indicators for each category. Candidates are scored on a five-point scale ranging from far below expectations to far above expectations. The overall candidate scores range between 3.86 and 4.28. This shows that our Counselors perform well in the area of Content Knowledge.

The Principal Intern Evaluation Instrument also allows field supervisors a means to evaluate intern performance. The Principal Intern Evaluation is composed of 21 categories with indicators for each category. Candidates are scored on a three-point scale that includes Target, Acceptable, and Unacceptable. The composite average of these categories show that 94% of the Principal interns scored in the "Target" range with 6% scoring in the "Acceptable" range. These percentages suggest that most of our internship candidates perform well during their internship.

The Unit implemented an electronic Data Management System, TrueOutcomes, in the spring semester 2008. This system creates a comprehensive Professional Electronic Portfolio (PEP) that aligns with institutional, state, SPA, and NCATE standards within candidate's program areas. The PEP contains candidate-generated artifacts evaluated by the faculty using faculty developed rubrics for each artifact. By evaluating these portfolios, faculty members are able to identify areas of improvement for the student as well as areas for program and unit improvement by a faculty feedback termed "Closing the Loop." Artifacts include candidates' experiences, written and oral work, reflections, and evidence of professional interactions.

The Student Opinion Survey which is a university wide assessment instrument completed by students in each course at the end of each semester, is a collection of questions designed to evaluate the material presented in the course and the effectiveness of the instructors delivery. It affords our candidates the opportunity to provide feedback to faculty.