

OVERVIEW

Institution

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is the second largest public university in the state of Minnesota, serving over 16,000 students from more than 80 nations. SCSU began as Minnesota's third Normal School in 1869 and has long been committed to the preparation of teachers who will engage children in learning and who will help shape the world in which they live. Today SCSU is a regional, comprehensive university offering over 200 undergraduate and graduate programs of study, including two doctoral programs.

Located 65 miles north of the metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Cloud offers students urban, suburban and rural locations for clinical practice. The city of St. Cloud is uniquely situated at the intersection of three counties. The tri-county metropolitan area of nearly 200,000 residents is the fourth largest in the state.

SCSU recently completed a four year process of strategic program appraisal and reorganization. This process provided opportunities for faculty, administration, staff, and students to come together to re-examine and redefine our institutional goals and priorities. We take pride in our mission of preparing students for life, work and citizenship in the 21st Century (Exhibit I.5.f.1). Our reorganization has resulted in academic units that are more focused and are better able to provide students with the fundamental knowledge base necessary to become successful contributors, critical thinkers and problem solvers in our ever changing world. SCSU's identity is centered on four institutional learning commitments that are woven through everything we undertake and are clearly at the forefront of our conceptual framework. We are committed to providing students with opportunities for **active and applied learning, community engagement, global and cultural understanding** and environmental, organizational and social **sustainability**.

Innovations in clinical practice have long been a hallmark of St. Cloud State University, e.g., the Model School of the 1870's, the Lab School of the 1960's, co-teaching in student teaching and our reform efforts through the Teacher Preparation Initiative today. As we look back at the history of our institution, common themes emerge: commitments to developing effective educators and to providing students with opportunities for active and applied learning and promoting community engagement. When the Normal School opened in 1869, there were five faculty and 53 students. One building (Stearns House) housed college classes on the first floor, the original St. Cloud Model School on the second floor and student housing on the third floor. In 1892 student teaching in area schools began, and in 1913 a separate building was opened which would serve as the laboratory school until 1958. It was not until 1947 that the first non-education course was offered, with the first non-education degree being conferred in 1949. The first Master's Degrees were offered in 1957. In 1958 the campus laboratory school moved to a new location on campus, where it remained until closing in 1983.

Like most long-standing institutions, St. Cloud State has had a number of names and configurations. In 1921 the **State Normal School at St. Cloud** became **St. Cloud Teacher's College**. In 1953, when the legislature broadened the mission of teachers' colleges to accommodate increasing demand for

educational opportunities following World War II, St. Cloud Teacher's College became **St. Cloud State College**. The School of Education was created as a stand-alone unit within the State College, in 1971. In 1975, legislative action changed state colleges to state universities, and we became **St. Cloud State University**. Finally, in 2011, the University restructured from five colleges to two colleges, two schools within colleges, and four free-standing schools (Exhibit I.5.f.2).

Unit

The mission of our education unit is to "create an environment where all participants are critical, creative thinkers, lifelong learners and global citizens who advocate and work for justice and equality as they pursue their various roles". Our teacher candidates come from seven colleges and schools on our campus (Exhibit I.5.f.3).

In 2009 the Bush Foundation awarded \$40.5 million to 14 select institutions of higher education in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, to enhance and reform teacher education (Exhibit I.5.g.1). The Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT) is a unique partnership that crosses state borders, bringing teacher educators together as a community as they implement change. The vision of SCSU's Teacher Preparation Initiative (TPI) is to "maximize teacher effectiveness and increase student achievement by transforming and strengthening teacher education through collaborative partnerships between SCSU and P-12 school districts" (Exhibit I.5.g.2).

As part of our reform efforts, we created two important structures within the unit that address our commitment to P-12 partnerships. The Teacher Education Advisory Council (TEAC), is comprised of faculty, staff and candidates from teacher preparation programs at SCSU, along with P-12 teachers and administrators (Exhibit I.5.g.3). TEAC meets regularly to discuss unit issues and make recommendations for continuing improvement of our programs. The Executive Teacher Education Council (ETEC) brings together all campus deans along with area superintendents, to provide a forum for input on decisions related to our programs (Exhibit I.5.g.4). The result has been increased communication, collaboration and P-12 engagement in the preparation of high-quality educators. In June 2014, SCSU also took steps to affirm a formal teacher education unit at St. Cloud State (Exhibit I.5.g.5). This will enhance collaboration and communication across disciplines to better serve our candidates.

Programs

The unit offers 44 programs leading to a degree, certificate or licensure (Exhibit I.5.e.3). Catalog descriptions and examples of syllabi are provided (Exhibits I.5.a.1-I.5.b.6).

In spring 2014, the unit submitted 36 programs (both *initial* and *advanced*) to the Minnesota Board of Teaching for extensive review. The review process requires each program to demonstrate how they meet and assess candidate proficiencies on state standards, including evidence that data is used for program improvement. Our programs are still in the review process at this writing, but will be approved by September 30, 2014 (Exhibit I.5.e.4).

Other School Professionals: Our school counseling program is accredited by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and is due for reaccreditation in 2016 (Exhibit I.5.d.1). The Educational Administration programs are accredited through the Board of School Administrators (BOSA), who will be making a site visit in spring 2015 (Exhibit I.5.d.2).

The unit offers courses at two **off-site locations**: North Branch public schools and the Twin Cities Graduate Center. Our North Branch partnership dates back to 1998 and provides courses at both *initial* and *advanced* levels (Exhibit I.5.h.2). Classes are held onsite in local schools. We also offer *advanced level* educational administration courses at the Twin Cities Graduate Center, in Maple Grove, MN, providing easy access and affordable programming to educators in the metropolitan area. While individual courses are offered at this convenient, off-site location, entire programs are not yet offered off-site. (Exhibit I.5.h.3).

Our Library Media Specialist program is offered at both the *initial* and *advanced* level. Courses are offered face-to-face and **online**, and candidates choose the delivery method best suited to their needs. The Driver's Education program (*advanced*) is only offered online, and enrolls students nation-wide.

Conceptual Framework

The education unit's conceptual framework was initially developed in the early 1990's. The "Educator as Transformative Professional" framework described our shared vision and reflected the state, national and local educational philosophies and priorities at the time (Exhibits I.5.c.1-3). That framework served us well as a holistic and integrated description of teacher candidate role performance expectations and the processes involved in the development of these professional outcomes.

In recent years, the state of Minnesota updated requirements for teacher preparation programs to include a focus on literacy and technology standards. These changes, as well as the national development of new InTASC standards, 21st Century Skills and an emphasis on student outcomes in P-12 have created new demands on our teacher preparation program that propelled us to revisit our conceptual framework. A small working group (including education faculty and staff, content faculty and P-12 partners) was tasked with performing a critical review of the framework, and bringing the resulting recommendations back to the Teacher Education Advisory Council. During the 2012-13 academic year, TEAC met regularly and included the conceptual framework as an official agenda item at six meetings.

After the comprehensive review, it was determined that while the original framework was still relevant, it needed to be updated to include newer ideas and values. Strengths of the original model included: a clear focus on role performances as an important outcome for teacher candidates, a comprehensive view of the preparation process, reflection on important unit values in the roles that teachers would be expected to play and a careful depiction of learning as a process, including liberal education as a foundation for teacher preparation. On the other hand, weaknesses included: it was complex and hard to understand, there was no connection to P-12 schools and students, the language was outdated, changes made to the institutional mission and vision were absent, as were

newer concepts in teacher preparation that had evolved over the past decade. This analysis and ensuing discussions led TEAC to identify a new set of ideas and priorities that would guide the development of the revised conceptual framework for teacher education at SCSU.

Recommendations that emerged from TEAC included:

1. Use clear and updated language so that it would be easy to understand and easy for students and faculty to explain.
2. Reflect the changes at the university level and re-align our model with the current SCSU and School of Education mission and vision.
3. Illustrate the important connections and collaborative partnerships that we have established with our Teacher Preparation Initiative.
4. Make clear connections to P-12 student outcomes that reflect an emphasis on 21st Century skills.
5. Align framework with the new InTASC standards that emphasize ongoing professional growth and development.
6. Depict faculty and teacher candidates as co-learners in relation to teacher outcomes, preparing students to work with our co-teaching model as they move into their student teaching assignments.

Incorporating the recommendations above, the unit elected to adopt a modified framework, "Educating for a New Era" (Exhibit I.5.c.4). This new framework draws from a variety of sources in creating a clear image of our vision, values and educational philosophy. The model articulates our **institutional vision and unit commitments** to: access and opportunity, active and applied learning, community engagement, accountability that improves teaching, global and cultural understanding and excellence in teaching and learning. This clearly reflects the vision and mission of our institution and the new emphasis our unit has placed on meaningful accountability and collaborations with P-12 schools. It also draws on and is aligned with the new InTASC standards (Exhibit I.5.c.7).

Our revised conceptual framework also identifies **essential elements of effective teaching** and incorporates the multiple role performances of teachers in three critical domains. *Teaching*: as evidenced in our commitment to developing knowledgeable and skilled educators, reflective practitioners and innovative users of technology. *Leading*: as evidenced in our commitment to developing creative and flexible problem solvers and collaborative leaders. And *Serving*: as evidenced in our commitment to developing educators who are caring and ethical professionals and advocates for equity and justice in education. These commitments reflect the foundational roles from our original framework along with the roles of 21st Century educators. Faculty are seen as co-learners with teacher candidates, with the responsibility to model effective teaching, open-mindedness, curiosity and excitement about ongoing learning.

Lastly, our conceptual framework makes the direct connection to **P-12 learners** and delineates the competencies our candidates will facilitate, as their students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the 21st Century. We want our graduates to be effective educators, who guide learners to: display inquiry and enthusiasm for learning, thrive on diversity, construct knowledge and originate ideas, demonstrate understanding through authentic assessment, meet well-defined standards, cooperate and collaborate with others in multiple contexts and demonstrate technology literacy.

By including all three levels of commitment and performance expectations (from the institution/unit, the developing candidate and the P-12 learner) in our conceptual framework, we clearly reflect the new emphasis in the teacher education unit on collaboration with P-12 schools and accountability that matters (Exhibit I.5.c.5-6).