Executive Summary
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
The Educator as Transformative Professional

Vision, Mission, Philosophy
The College of Education strives to create an environment where all participants are critical, creative thinkers, problem-solvers, life-long learners, and global citizens who advocate and work for justice and equality as they pursue their various professional roles. We organize the above crucial roles of educators in terms of *transformations*, of ideas/ information, individuals, intermediate social institutions (e.g., schools, school districts, communities), and the larger polity. These transformative philosophies, goals and institutional standards are organized around the theme of the *Transformative Professional* and are supported by the appropriate knowledge bases cited in the extended discussion of the conceptual framework. A shortened version of the framework is found in these pages.

We believe that teaching and learning is made of significant transformations that fundamentally alter individuals and social institutions. Incremental change as measured by formal testing reflects only incomplete aspects of the changes wrought by the formal and informal interactions [with people, ideas, text and media] that characterize excellent education.

We believe that currently understood effective practices can be achieved by candidates. Education in the unit is seen as holistic, yet we believe that by subdividing pertinent discussions via the Conceptual Framework, candidates have a better chance of understanding education's complexities. Finally, while we believe that candidates can and should learn didactic information related to their disciplines and pedagogy, we also want to instill in them a respect for the dynamism of information and a vigorous skepticism about the permanence of current policies and conceptualizations in the field.

Specifically, the transformations that we embrace in the unit can briefly be described as follows:

1. We embrace the notion of social constructivism but only in the sense that we believe that knowledge (about teaching and learning) must be reworked and transformed (made personal) by candidates as they acquire it.

2. We believe that an excellent education program transforms individual learners. Candidates are transformed via acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of professional educators. Students in the schools are changed to become more sophisticated learners from their interactions with candidates. Professors and instructors rethink modes of instruction and even their belief systems as they interact professionally with candidates. Parents of public school students and school administrators are changed constantly by new information emanating from the unit.

3. Because we ask candidates to become excellent consumers of new information, they influence positive changes in schools and school districts in curriculum, pedagogy, and culture. We expect our candidates to bring a strong disposition to their careers in democratic values and racial/ethnic equity affecting practices and attitudes in schools regionally, statewide and nationally.

4. As students and intermediate social intuitions change as a function of the strengths brought to the field, we expect that our candidates will participate in societal change that increasingly

accepts multiple cultures and languages, that is increasingly participatory, and that reflects ever greater levels of fairness in interacting with students and families of color.

Candidate Proficiencies

In subdividing candidates' experiences into programming areas, we have identified seven *Knowledge Arenas* (Conceptual Framework, Area C) for our curriculum. Candidates access material in the following domains:

1. ***Subject matter*** (C-1) refers to the philosophies, sources, concepts, current understandings, and methods of inquiry that make up a discipline.

2. ***Pedagogy*** (C-2) refers to the set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the facilitation of learning. While pedagogy is related to subject matter, it extends far beyond content to the actions taken by educators (interviewing/assessing, speaking, writing, and questioning) in their professional roles.

3. ***Curriculum*** (C-3) refers to the organizational designs and entities employed by professional educators to demarcate (in the explanatory sense) and publicly explicate a body of subject matter.

4. ***Learner variables*** (C-4) include the inter- and intra-individual differences that characterize students. A partial list includes cultural background, experience, gender, health, age, language and learning styles; disability status may play a role in one or more of the above learner factors.

5. ***Context*** (C-5) refers to significant elements of schools, communities, the nation and the world that form the surround or backdrop to teaching and learning.

6. ***Philosophies and perspectives*** (C-6). Knowledge about the philosophies of education and epistemological approaches allow the candidate to appreciate styles of reasoning and to select models that allow for healthy transformations. Approaches promoted within the unit include humanistic, rationalistic, change-oriented, personalistic, content-centered, social-advocacy based, constructivist, outcome-based, and cognitive.

7. ***Research and inquiry*** (C-7). Educators employ structured approaches to problem resolution based on existing research traditions, including ecological, ethnographic, action approaches from the qualitative tradition. Candidates learn group and single-subject methods from the logical positivist tradition, including supporting statistical and measurement procedures.

The foundation for knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the unit were constructed by coordinating the culminating aspects of the Conceptual Framework with two sets of nationally recognized standards. The Principles by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) were used for the initial level, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Propositions used at the advanced level. The unit also developed diversity proficiencies and dispositions based on the conceptual framework and the national standards. To better understand the goals of the unit (and later the alignment between goals and assessments), it is important to be clear to our candidates about what we expect of them when they complete programs. This is best illustrated via the Conceptual Framework's *Role Performance Expectations* (Subdivisions A-1 to A-7):

1. *Content transformer (A-1).* Candidates continuously evaluate and modify pedagogy and instruction in light of their lived experiences, technology, and newly acquired information.

2. The *Inclusive Educator* (A-2) effectively considers diversity in the design, delivery, and development of learning.

3. *Humanistic educator (*A-3). Candidates display the disposition to deeply value all persons, thus treating them equitably—evidencing a regard and appreciation for the worth and dignity of individual human beings.

4. The primary transformation implied in the role of *Culture Transformer* (A-4) is that candidates develop dispositions and a knowledge base allowing them to embrace many cultures and subcultures and that they prove able to transform appropriate aspects of their classroom and school culture(s).

5. *Researcher* (A-5). We expect that candidates will adopt the stance of a systematic enquirer as part of their professional identity.

6. *Problem solver/Decision maker* (A-6). The transformative professional must effectively employ formal and informal data (quantitative and qualitative) in making decisions about curriculum, learning and behavioral outcomes, and planning methods to be employed with the individuals that he or she serves.

7. *Reflective practitioner* (A-7). Personal transformation requires deep and continual reflection. The candidate continually participates in healthy self-criticism regarding teaching and learning; in addition, the individual continuously and rigorously re-examines personally held and professionally accepted field-based assumptions.

Unit Assessment System

The conceptual framework also serves as the foundation for the Unit Assessment System. Items from unit-wide assessment instruments have been aligned with the *Role Performance Expectations* of the conceptual framework through NBPTS Propositions and the INTASC Principles. Program-level knowledge, skills, and dispositions are also aligned with standards developed by the Minnesota Board of Teaching. This has been completed at the program level through course syllabi. However, for the standards appropriate at the unit-wide level, namely the Standards of Effective Practice, an alignment matrix has been organized for the entire unit. A full description of the Assessment System is available under Standard Two.

All programs within the unit have clear transition points that serve as a roadmap for success for candidates and an accountability framework for the unit. Transition points at the advanced level are unique to each program; therefore, may vary across the unit. At the initial level, transition points may vary slightly from program to program; however, consistency has been observed across the unit. The discussion below is organized across the unit's standard transition points at the initial level.

Admission

- Grade point average on required introductory education courses (generally C or better)
- Grade point average on all courses assessed (Generally C or better)
- Praxis I (Pre-Professional Skills Test) taken. Referral to Praxis Center undertaken if score does not meet licensure standards

- Acceptable levels of knowledge, skills and dispositions related to field experiences during introductory education courses; these are assessed in the classroom and via checklists ratings during field experiences
- Essays and interviews (selected programs)

Prior to Admission to Capstone Experiences (Student Teaching)

- Grade point average maintained at appropriate level on required intermediate education courses (typically C- or better)
- Overall grade point average is maintained at required levels
- Knowledge, skills, and dispositions are assessed during classroom work by instructors
- Knowledge, skills, and dispositions are assessed during intermediate or advanced field experiences
- Knowledge assessed via work performance during courses tied to field experiences (skills domain)
- Portfolio assignments collected and assessed related to performance in classes (knowledge domain)

Completion of Capstone Experience (Student Teaching)

- Knowledge, skills, and dispositions assessed via Performance-Based instrument by cooperating teachers
- Knowledge, skills, and dispositions assessed via Performance-Based instrument by university supervisors
- Candidate self-ratings of knowledge, skills and dispositions collected near end of capstone experience at Professional Development Day (survey form)
- Ratings of unit operations collected by mail survey ('06-'07); to be collected via random sample of senior classes in subsequent semesters.
- Portfolios include work samples and demonstration of assignments reflecting knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified by members of the unit

Follow-Up

1. Ratings of candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions collected after student teaching from cooperating teachers via mail survey
2. Follow-up surveys mailed to candidates after two years
3. Follow-up mailed to candidates after five years

Changes and Revisions

The conceptual framework was initially developed in the early 1990's in concert with the professional community and continues to be reviewed and updated. During the initial development, the unit dedicated an entire year to gather input from faculty, staff, and the P-12 professional community to shape the shared vision. In 2003-2004, an ad-hoc Conceptual Framework Committee was formed to review the conceptual framework and discuss possible revisions. The members of the ad-hoc group met monthly during that period. After a full review of the model, some concern was expressed regarding the framework's complexity. However, in broad terms, the members of the conceptual framework committee endorsed it and requested that the committee be disbanded.

At the joint request of the NCATE Steering Committee and Dean Steffens during the 2004-2005 academic year, Associate Dean John Hoover interviewed faculty members about the conceptual model and set about to revise the narrative in light of the need for a clearer and more detailed interpretation of the model. In addition, Associate Dean Hoover was asked to create materials and

events that would reinvigorate interest in the framework. To that end, the *Role Performance Expectations* were aligned with INTASC Principles and Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards and the narrative was rewritten. In addition, posters were constructed and promotional materials were prepared. Finally, in 2006-2007, the unit revised the mission of the College of Education to better reflect current efforts and initiatives and align more closely with the conceptual framework. These changes were shared with the professional communities at the unit and program levels.