

### **STANDARD 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice**

*The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.*

#### **Collaboration between Unit and School Partners**

SCSU values collaboration with area schools in the development of the next generation of teachers. We know that candidates need “real-world” experiences in order to practice the skills and strategies they are learning in their coursework. Our school partners play a critical role in the development of these young teachers and provide rich feedback about program strengths and gaps that help us improve what we do. Together, we deliver and evaluate the clinical and field experiences necessary for success. Guiding the development of teachers and other school professionals requires collaboration between many people.

- **Field Experience Teachers** - host a candidate in a field experience prior to student teaching and complete an evaluation of the knowledge skills and professional dispositions the candidate demonstrates during that time.
- **Cooperating Teachers** - mentor and support our candidates in their culminating student teaching experience. They work collaboratively with university supervisors in the evaluation of the candidate during their sixteen week experience. Candidates in K-12 and 5-12 programs will have two placements, at two different levels (elementary and secondary, or middle level and high school). Early childhood candidates also have two placements at different levels (preschool and elementary).
- **University Supervisors** - observe candidates in the classroom setting, provide feedback and guide candidate growth. They are faculty in either tenure track, fixed term or adjunct positions who have expertise in P-12 education, with at least two years teaching experience (in a school) at the level they supervise. Supervisors participate in regular meetings with faculty representatives and the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE) to stay current with supervisory requirements (Exhibits 3.4.d.1-3).
- **Content Faculty Supervisors** - may also observe and evaluate candidates’ pedagogical content knowledge and skills. These discipline-specific faculty complete additional assessments and provide feedback to candidates.
- **On-site supervisors** - oversee the internships of our candidates in advanced programs and programs for other school professionals. On-site supervisors provide guidance and feedback to the intern and complete all required evaluations and assessments of candidate competency.

SCSU has been a leader in the national movement to implement **co-teaching** strategies in student teaching for the past decade, researching the impact co-teaching strategies have on candidate development and P-12 learner outcomes (Exhibit 3.4.h.1). Our P-12 partners have embraced this model and urged SCSU to prepare all candidates in these strategies (Exhibit 3.4.h.6). Cited as a “promising practice” in NCATE’s 2010 Blue Ribbon Panel Report, co-teaching has gained momentum as school and university partnerships nationwide have begun to reap the benefits of this design (Exhibit 3.4.h.4). In co-teaching, teacher candidates and experienced classroom teachers work side-by-side, sharing planning, instruction and reflection (Exhibit 3.4.h.2-3). P-12 students benefit from

having two professionally prepared adults in the classroom, and teacher candidates benefit from closer collaboration with their mentor teacher. Cooperating teachers receive preparation in the foundations of co-teaching and important collaboration strategies. University supervisors are also prepared in what to look for in co-taught classrooms. With four co-teaching modules strategically embedded in specific courses and a culminating session about co-teaching at the student teaching orientation, our candidates have the background they need to be successful in a co-taught classroom (Exhibit 3.4.h.5).

Personnel in the OCE work closely with co-teaching specialists and building administrators to make the best possible placement for each candidate. All districts in which we place teacher candidates sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Minnesota (Exhibit 3.4.a.2). The St. Cloud School District, the largest district in our immediate vicinity, has also developed a **liaison position** to work with SCSU on securing placements and mentorship opportunities for teacher candidates (Exhibit 3.4.a.3). The liaison acts as a point person for both the university and the district in regard to requirements and expectations or candidate concerns and makes personal visits to support cooperating teachers in their mentorship of candidates.

Every semester, the OCE organizes a **Professional Development Day** for candidates near the end of student teaching (Exhibits 3.4.a.4-5). This is an exciting opportunity for exiting candidates, with keynote speakers and breakout sessions tailored to the needs of new teachers. University faculty and P-12 teachers and administrators present sessions on a wide range of topics. Professional Development Days epitomize the partnerships between the university and area schools both in planning the event and delivering the content.

SCSU has benefitted from the Bush Foundation funded **Teacher Preparation Initiative** (TPI), the focus of which has been establishing meaningful partnerships with P-12 teachers and administrators in the work of developing highly qualified teachers. P-12 partners have been involved in the redesign of the conceptual framework, the development of proposals reforming our programs and supporting new teachers.

### **Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice**

Candidates at SCSU must meet entry criteria for clinical practice (Exhibits 3.4.e.8-14). SCSU implemented revised teacher education admission criteria in 2013, including revised eligibility for student teaching. An appeals process was also implemented, giving candidates the ability to present extenuating circumstances and plans for success.

Candidates in our programs have early field experiences in which they participate in all aspects of the classroom. Field experiences are aligned with course objectives and candidate performance is assessed (Exhibits 3.4.f.1-5 & 3.4.f.8-12). Candidates have experiences at multiple grade levels over the course of their program (Exhibit 3.4.b.10). The OCE makes over 500 field experience placements each semester (Exhibits 3.4.b.1-7).

Candidates receive an orientation to student teaching prior to the culminating clinical experience (Exhibits 3.4.e.15-16). Our OCE places over 250 candidates in student teaching placements each semester (Exhibit 3.4.b.9). Criteria for cooperating teachers and university supervisors are well

established and posted on the OCE website (Exhibit 3.4.c.1). In addition, handbooks are available for candidates and cooperating teachers, which outline expectations for assessment and support throughout the experience (Exhibits 3.4.e1-7). OCE hosts regular meetings for university supervisors to provide information, support and other resources (Exhibits 3.4.d.1-3). Department liaisons also work with the OCE on issues related to field experiences (Exhibit 3.4.d.5).

University supervisors complete a minimum of three observations in any given 8-week block. Currently, candidates in elementary and early childhood student teach for 8 weeks in one semester, followed by an additional 8 weeks the following semester (for a sixteen week total placement). Candidates in secondary programs student teach for 16 consecutive weeks (which may be in two sites, depending on the scope of their license). Summative Assessments are completed at the end of student teaching by both the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. This assessment aligns with the skills and dispositions defined in the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice. Three way conferences (cooperating teacher, university supervisor and teacher candidate) occur at least three times during the student teaching experience. In Spring 2014, 97% of candidates placed successfully completed student teaching (Exhibit 3.4.g.1).

*Advanced Programs:* Candidates in advanced programs complete practicum experiences in their specific area of study (i.e., developmental disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, parent education). Candidates are assessed at the end of their practicum (Exhibit 3.4.f.13).

*Other School Professionals:* Candidates in programs for school counseling and administrative positions complete internships under the supervision of a professional licensed in the same discipline. On-site supervisors and university supervisors collaborate in the supervision and assessment of program candidates, which are aligned with the competencies required for licensure (Exhibit 3.4.f.15-18).

### **Knowledge, Skills and Professional Dispositions to Help All Students Learn**

Each clinical experience site used by the SCSU is coded in terms of their diversity status. Current codes are based on state and national trends: Free or Reduced Lunch  $\geq$  40%; Students of Color  $\geq$  26%; Limited English Proficiency  $\geq$  7%; Special Education  $\geq$  15%. Highly diverse settings are those that meet or exceed the above thresholds in two or more domains; diverse settings are those that meet or exceed the above thresholds in at least one domain, low diversity settings are below the above thresholds in all domains. Candidates are placed in at least one highly diverse site during the course of their program. Of the candidates completing their programs in 2013-14, 88% had been in three or more diverse placements over the course of their preparation at SCSU (Exhibits 3.4.g.2&3).

Candidates at SCSU are assessed by cooperating teachers and university supervisors throughout their student teaching experience. The Summative Assessment of Student Teaching (Exhibit 3.4.f.6) is aligned with state standards and the unit's conceptual framework. Candidates in our programs also complete an edTPA during their student teaching experience, which encompasses candidate competencies in planning, instruction and assessment.

**STANDARD 3: Target Level Performance**

St. Cloud State University is performing at the target level on Standard 3a, **Collaboration between Unit and School Partners**. We have formalized partnerships with six area school districts (St. Cloud, Sartell-St. Stephen, Sauk Rapids-Rice, Monticello, Holdingford and ROCORI) through the Teacher Preparation Initiative (TPI). While we have always had close connections with area schools, the TPI funding has facilitated the integration of P-12 teachers and administrators in the work of reviewing, transforming and delivering our teacher preparation programs leading to deeper, more focused partnerships. P-12 partners actively participate in every TPI working group and focused team, offering critical feedback, valuable insights and “real world” experience as we reflect on the needs of P-12 learners and our role in developing the teachers to meet those needs. Examples of ways in which we collaborate with school partners follow.

- **Conceptual Framework** - The conceptual framework subcommittee included one P-12 administrator and two university faculty members (one education, one content). As a working group of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC), the conceptual framework subcommittee brought all recommendations and revisions to the larger body, which included additional P-12 members, for discussion and endorsement.
- **Reviewing Teacher Preparation Programs** - P-12 teachers have been an integral part of the TPI “Prepare Working Group”, charged with: Forming a P-16 partnership to examine and align curriculum at all levels; Investigating authentic field experiences beginning with students’ first semester on campus; and Exploring 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge, and skills needed for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. As a result of the research, reflection and leadership of this group, a number of major changes have been or are in the process of being implemented.
  - *Enhanced Field Experience Proposal* was developed by the Prepare Working Group after extensive study of the existing field experiences in each program, with varied greatly in both length and connection to coursework. The resulting recommendation of this working group provides a framework for field experiences that will better integrate them with methods courses or other relevant coursework, contain specific, measurable outcomes, focus intentionally on authentic assessment and involve multiple opportunities for individual and programmatic feedback (Exhibit 3.4.a.1). This work has been the cornerstone of many of the advances that have led us to target level performance.
  - *Mini-grant opportunities* have been made available through TPI, to each program/licensure area to bring together an appropriate mix of faculty, students, staff and P-12 teachers to review programs and recommend appropriate change. A requirement of this funding was to involve P-12 teachers with licensure in the area being reviewed, who have been cooperating teachers. It was also required that faculty outside the program area be involved (Exhibit 3.4.i.1). Mini-grants have been provided to: Early Childhood Education, Information Media, Languages and Culture, Vocal and Instrumental Music, Science Education, Social Studies, Special Education, Teacher Development, Teaching English as a Second Language and Visual Arts (Exhibit 3.4.i.2).
  - After thoroughly reviewing the Minnesota Standards of Effective practice and the existing professional education sequence, a group of dedicated faculty and P-12 colleagues made a recommendation for an *Educational Foundation Core*. The new core would incorporate many existing courses, but would provide a new focus for all

candidates regardless of licensure area, on Social Justice, Differentiation, Context for Learning, Teacher Identity and Efficacy, and Teaching and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These areas of emphasis align with the MN Standards of Effective Practice, the Conceptual Framework and the InTASC Standards. Course requirements, field experiences and candidate outcomes have been articulated for each semester. Candidates would be required to create a portfolio that would consist of evidence of outcome mastery (Exhibit 3.4.i.7).

- The TPI Prepare Working Group has also proposed enhanced criteria and expectations for *clinical faculty* that will go through the approval/implementation process in 2014-15 (Exhibit 3.4.c.2).
- **Mutual participation in Professional Development** - A P-16 work group met over the course of seven months to plan and deliver the first common professional development day in the St. Cloud area. Educational leaders in six school districts and the teacher education unit committed to a common day of shared learning, held on June 11, 2014. (Exhibits 3.4.i.3-5). The day featured key note speaker Kathy Flaminio, who spoke about the practice of mindfulness and social emotional learning, led participants to discover the impact of stress on both educators and students and develop practical interventions to enhance overall well-being. Following the key note address, participants attended their choice of two break-out sessions in the morning and two in the afternoon. Sessions covered a wide range of interests and grade levels. Approximately 125 participants attended and rated the day as very helpful in their professional development. The overall mean quality rating was 3.48 (of 4), with 93% viewing the presentations as of moderate to high quality; the commensurate results for “utility” were 3.38 (of 4), with 87%, viewing utility as moderate to high. The five highest-rated sessions for quality seemed to reflect skills that could be applied to the classroom (Exhibit 3.4.i.6).

Each semester SCSU also hosts a Professional Development Day for teacher candidates in their final semester of student teaching. This full-day experience is possible through collaboration with partner districts. Break-out sessions feature P-12 and university experts and are tailored to the needs of new teachers. Topics cover a wide range of self-identified candidate interests, including classroom management strategies, positive reinforcement, integration and creative use of technology in teaching and learning, meeting the needs of diverse students, and stress management (Exhibits 3.4.a.4-9).

- **Shared Expertise to Support Candidate Learning** - Through the co-teaching in student teaching model, our candidates are supported by both the supervising faculty and the cooperating teacher during their clinical experience. In co-teaching, cooperating teachers share their expertise with candidates through co-planning and joint reflection. Candidates are able to develop their skills at the elbow of a mentor teacher, receiving support and guidance throughout the process.
- **Joint determination of placements** - St. Cloud State University is fortunate to have a joint powers agreement in place with the St. Cloud Area School District for a teacher on special assignment to work directly with the Office of Clinical Experiences on the placement and support of candidates in our largest local school district (Exhibit 3.4.a.3).

There are elements of standard 3b on which we have also achieved the Target level of performance.

- Field experiences at SCSU are designed to provide candidates with a variety of field experience settings in which they can apply and reflect on their knowledge, skills and dispositions. The Office of Clinical Experiences ensures that candidates preparing for licensure have at least one experience at each level (pre-primary, elementary, middle, or secondary) within the scope of their license. Field experiences happen in both school and community settings, with a variety of age ranges. Candidates also have at least one placement in a diverse setting during their program, providing them the opportunity to develop and reflect on their ability to differentiate instruction so all students learn.
- During field experiences, candidates are observed, and observe others. Field experience evaluations are provided by cooperating teachers in many of the longer field experiences. These observations and assessments help guide the candidate's development and provide the university faculty critical information about strengths and areas for growth.

### Activities that have led to target level performance

In January, 2010, the Bush Foundation entered into a ten year initiative to transform the way teachers are recruited, prepared, placed and supported. Fourteen teacher preparation institutions in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota were invited to participate in the initiative and form the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT). The Bush Foundation committed to investing \$40 million over ten years to ensure that the NExT institutions had the resources needed to be the catalyst for change.

St. Cloud's Teacher Preparation Initiative (TPI) is a P-16 collaborative between education faculty, Arts and Science faculty, P-12 school districts, and candidate support services across campus (e.g., Office of Clinical Experiences, Admissions, Career Services). Our work is centered on four pillars of teacher preparation: **recruiting** candidates who will be excellent teachers, **preparing** candidates for the schools and classrooms of the future, **placing** novice teachers in schools that will support their growth and success and **supporting** teacher induction. Including P-12 stakeholders as partners in this work and grounding all recommendations in evidence and best practice have been hallmarks of our local initiative. Five working groups were created to study current practice, research best-practice and make recommendations for comprehensive programmatic change.

- RECRUIT. This working group is charged with examining current recruiting strategies, recommending new and improved strategies, examining admission criteria, recommending new admission criteria and developing recruiting and admissions materials. This group is also tasked with developing recommendations specifically around growing high need areas of teacher preparation e.g., special education, STEM education, teaching English as a second language and men in early grades.
- PREPARE. This working group is charged with exploring new models for teacher preparation and integration of all required standards. They are tasked with exploring ways to enhance collaboration and reduce isolation, enhance clinical experiences and develop a common foundation of knowledge that meets the needs of future educators and still fits within the credit limit.
- SUPPORT. This group is charged with investigating feasible and sustainable models for comprehensive induction in P-12 districts and at SCSU. They explore common professional development as a model of shared resources, using technology to observe teaching and

- provide mentoring and professional development in remote locations, and making recommendations regarding other best practices to support SCSU graduates.
- TECHNOLOGY. This working group is charged with determining the professional development needs of our teacher candidates and P-16 faculty related to effective utilization of technology in teaching and learning. Recommendations from this group have centered on the development of a comprehensive plan to incorporate International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for teachers and assisting other working groups in meeting their goals through technology.
  - ASSESSMENT. This working group is charged with identifying current teacher preparation and P-12 assessment practices, studying best practices in teacher evaluation and learner outcomes, recommending methods to coordinate assessment and data collection P-16, and making recommendations about ways to improve assessment practices across the partnership.

The funding St. Cloud State has received from the Bush Foundation has enabled faculty and staff to engage in a meaningful review and study of practices related to teacher preparation with our P-12 partners. Our focus has been on developing meaningful partnerships that benefit both higher education and P-12. In addition to this level of partnership, the Bush funding has afforded us opportunities to collaborate with other teacher preparation programs in our region. A sense of community has developed, with institutions sharing information, assessments, strategies, successes and challenges. Our focus on partnerships has been instrumental in energizing faculty and staff to continue the difficult but rewarding work of transformation.

#### Timelines for attaining/sustaining target level performance

St. Cloud State University continues to move toward target performance in Standard 3c. The recommendation coming from the working group focused on preparation of our candidates includes a common educational foundation core, in which candidates would have more varied and integrated field experiences throughout their program of study. This proposal will be phased in over several semesters, beginning in Spring 2015.

- In the first semester, the field experience would bring together candidates from a variety of disciplines, being placed in cohorts of 3-6. This initial field experience would consist of one morning or afternoon per week, for a total of 10 weeks, with five weeks in elementary and five at the middle school/high school level. This clinical experience would support candidates in early exposure to students different from themselves (e.g., linguistic differences, special needs), opportunities to reflect, exposure to different age levels and a beginning understanding of the various roles of a teacher.
- The second semester would include a 20 hour field experience in which cohorts of 3-6 candidates would work as a team. This experience would be community based and would facilitate candidates' understanding of differences in learners and learning strategies and would include a focus on communication skills.
- The third semester would include another 20 hour field experience focusing on assessment practices in P-12 classrooms. Again, students will be placed in cohorts and begin to understand accountability, assessment, using data to inform decision-making and integration of technology in the classroom.
- Candidates would complete an additional discipline-specific experience prior to student teaching, in which they would focus on the scope and sequence of curricular design.

This proposed educational foundation core will help keep our momentum moving toward target in Field Experiences. Not only will these enhanced field experiences provide our candidates with well-designed opportunities that are integrated into our programs, it will also provide candidates with additional opportunities to engage as members of instructional teams with both peers and mentor teachers. Candidates working together will have opportunities to critique and reflect on each other's practice and their effects on student learning.

**STANDARD 3: Areas for Improvement**

St. Cloud State University had no areas for improvement cited in this standard during the last review.