University of Nebraska at Omaha

Institutional Background Information

The University

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) is part of the Nebraska University system that includes the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska-Kearney, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The system is governed by an elected state Board of Regents that has designated UNO the metropolitan university for the state.

UNO is made up of seven colleges: Arts and Sciences (A&S); Business Administration (CBA); Communication, Fine Arts and Media (CFAM); Education (COE); Information Sciences and Technology (IS&T); Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS); and the Graduate College. The university offers 110 bachelor degree programs, 42 masters programs, and six doctoral programs. The institution is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and follows the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) pathway for continuous improvement. The faculty and administration are committed to meeting rigorous standards of academic quality. Programs throughout the campus hold accreditation from national and professional organizations. Under the chancellor's direction, the university has an ongoing strategic planning process that brings together faculty, students, staff, administration, and the community. The strategic plan has three main goals: placing students at the center of the enterprise; providing high quality educational programs; and actively engaging in the community.

The College of Education

The College of Education (COE) is organized into five academic areas: Counseling (COUN); Educational Leadership (EDL); Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER); Special Education and Communication Disorders (SECD); and Teacher Education (TED). The college offers bachelor, master, specialist, and doctoral degree programs. Each semester, the college enrolls approximately 1,500 undergraduate candidates and 850 graduate candidates with diverse backgrounds.

The college and programs within the college are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the State of Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), and the American Library Association/American Association of School Librarians (ALA/AASL). The School Psychology program (in A&S) is accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). All preparation programs within the college adhere to the national standards promulgated by their professional organizations.

The college's academic excellence is founded on and realized in the dedication and commitment of its diverse and dynamic faculty and staff. The faculty endorses the broad concept of scholarship that encompasses discovery, integration, and application (See Boyer, 1990*). The faculty has a distinguished record of achievement in teaching, research/creative activity, and service. Faculty members model the ideals of the dedicated practitioner, reflective scholar, and responsible citizen that the college seeks to instill in its candidates. The College of Education has a strategic planning process that aligns with the university's efforts. Within the college, each department/school establishes mission, vision, and purpose statements that align with the college and the university strategic plans. The strategic plans within the college parallel the university's and the college's primary goals. Each academic area places candidates at the center of the enterprise, provides high quality preparation programs, and promotes active engagement in the community.

*Boyer, E. L. (1990). Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate. Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching.

The Teacher Education Department (TED)

TED has initial programs in elementary and secondary education. The InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards serve as the framework for these programs. At the advanced level, TED offers programs in elementary education, secondary education, and literacy. The Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) have been adopted as a framework for these programs. Both the initial and advanced programs are aligned with specialized professional association (SPA) standards as reflected in Nebraska Rule 24 requirements.

Section 1: Contextual Information

1a. Describe the standards for admission, retention, and completion of the endorsement, including required GPAs and minimum grade requirements for the courses accepted for the endorsement.

Standards for Admission

Information about program admission, progression, and completion is available to pre-education and education majors in a variety of formats, as well as through events, academic advising, and electronic communication.

Gateway #1 Pre-Education Admission
- Prospective first-year students meeting the "assured" admission status may apply for admission to the College of Education as a pre-education major by indicating their preference on the UNO Application for Admission. Only students with "assured" admission status are eligible for entrance into the College of Education.
- Prospective transfer students with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.50 may apply for admission to the College of Education as a pre-education major by indicating their preference on the UNO Application for Admission.
- Students transferring to the educator preparation program in the College of Education from another college on the UNO campus must meet all of the conditions and formally apply for admission to educator preparation.

Gateway #2 Formal Admission to Educator Preparation Program
- Admission to UNO
- Application for formal admission to educator preparation is open to students three times each year. The established deadlines for admission to educator preparation are March 1, June 1, and October 1.
- Individuals seeking initial educator certification must formally apply for admission to educator preparation. All of the requirements below must be met to apply for formal admission to the program.
    - Complete the University General Education Fundamental Academic Skills requirements (ENGL 1150 Composition I, ENGL 1160 Composition II, MATH 1310 Intermediate Algebra, SPCH 1110 Public Speaking, or the equivalents) and EDUC 2020 Foundations of Education and EDUC 2030 Human Relations (or the equivalents). Individuals are eligible to apply for admission in the semester in which they are enrolled in EDUC 2020 and EDUC 2030, if all other requirements have been met. All fundamental academic courses and education courses must be completed with a grade of C or better before acceptance into the educator preparation program.
    - Earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 for completed post-secondary coursework.
    - Provide evidence of a minimum score of 173 on all sections of the Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST).
- Application Procedures
    - All application materials must be submitted together as a packet including: the application, PPST scores, unofficial transcripts, Personal and Professional Fitness Statement and the Professional Disposition Statement.
    - Each individual completes a personal essay during a timed, proctored session.

- o Essays are read by a faculty committee. Based on the rating by faculty, individuals are accepted or deferred for formal admission. Individuals who are deferred may reapply during subsequent application periods.
- All individuals formally accepted into the educator preparation program complete a background check. Background checks are conducted in the time frame and by the vendor determined by the College of Education. Students are responsible for background check costs.
- Accepted candidates attend a required educator preparation orientation. The orientation is a 2-hour event designed to support candidates' understanding of the scope and sequence of field experiences, the role of advising, and the impact of involvement in professional organizations. Candidates apply this information to build their plan of study and professional resume.
- All individuals formally accepted into the educator preparation program are required to purchase LiveText™ Assessment & Accreditation Management System, a web-based interface that documents progress in regard to the program standards.

Standards for Retention

Gateway #3 Professional Coursework and Practicum Experiences
- Grade Point Average The minimum GPA of 2.75 must be maintained. If a candidate's GPA falls below the minimum requirement, the candidate has one semester to raise the GPA to the required minimum. If the 2.75 minimum is not reached, candidates are not permitted to continue in the educator preparation program. A grade of 'C'; or better is required in all professional education, major, and endorsement coursework. GPA is monitored every semester. Candidates who fail to successfully complete all components of this gateway must appeal to continue in the program.
- Practicum Experiences Candidates must successfully complete all required coursework and practicum experiences. Candidates who receive a grade lower than 'C' may re-enroll in that course for one additional time for a total of two attempts. Candidates who are removed from or who withdraw from any field, practicum, or clinical experience must appeal to be allowed to repeat the experience. If the appeal is granted, the candidate must reapply for a placement. Candidates may repeat such experiences only once.

Gateway #4 Clinical Practice (Student Teaching) Interview (CPI)
- Candidates must complete all coursework for the degree before beginning clinical practice. During the semester prior to clinical practice, candidates participate in a clinical practice interview. This interview consists of two parts. First, the candidates meet with an academic advisor to confirm all degree requirements, review information regarding content testing, and review the clinical practice calendar and obligations. The candidates are then interviewed by the Field Experience Coordinator, Practicum Coordinator, or a designated field experience professional. At the end of the semester, a final check is made to determine that all requirements have been met to begin clinical practice. The interview information is shared with supervisors who will be working with the candidates throughout the clinical practice semester.

Standards for Completion

Gateway #5 *Clinical Practice and Assessment Presentation*
- During the clinical practice semester, candidates complete a performance-based assessment, known as the Assessment Presentation. The presentation rubric outlines the expectations of the candidates' assessment knowledge, skills, and impact on P-12 learning. The 10-12 minute presentations are evaluated by experienced educators using a standard rubric. All candidates must satisfactorily complete the assessment presentation requirements.
- The final clinical practice evaluation is completed by the candidates, the cooperating teachers, and the university supervisors. Candidates must receive a grade of "Satisfactory" in clinical practice. Upon the conferring of the degree and verification of appropriate testing, candidates are eligible to be recommended to NDE for certification.

1c.Describe all field experiences required for the endorsement, including the number of hours for practicum experiences and the number of hours/weeks of clinical experience or internships.

Practicum experiences begin for candidates immediately after formal admission to the educator preparation program. Each endorsement program has a sequence of beginning, intermediate, advanced, and final practicum experiences prior to the semester of clinical practice. Each of these experiences builds in complexity and each level is a prerequisite for the next. The scope and sequence of practicum experiences and the associated performance assessment were built to align with the clinical practice evaluation tool. This tool (aligned with InTASC, Nebraska Teacher Performance Framework and the COE Conceptual Framework) serves as the basis for assessing the candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions for the candidates from the intermediate practicum through clinical practice.

In **Beginning Practicum** (EDUC 2010), candidates observe the developmental levels of K-12 students and the culture and context of schools. The practicum consists of a total of four observations in the following settings: early childhood, special education, elementary, and secondary. The early childhood and special education observations take place via a synchronous video feed. The elementary and secondary observations take place in a classroom in one of the Omaha-area school districts.

In **Intermediate Practicum** (EDUC 2524), candidates are concurrently enrolled in Applied Special Education (EDUC 2510) and Planning for Effective Teaching (EDUC 2520). This sequence is taken the semester immediately after completing Human Growth and Learning (EDUC 2010). During this semester, candidates complete a practicum in an urban school. These practicum hours are split between the candidates' endorsement area and special education. The practicum includes a community orientation, known as the Culture Walk, as well as an orientation in their assigned schools. In this experience, candidates collaborate with classroom teachers and gain initial experience in delivering small group and whole group instruction. University instructional coaches serve as a resource and a bridge between theory and practice by enabling reflection to accelerate candidates' learning. Candidates complete a minimum of four structured reflections connecting this experience to the course content. A performance-based evaluation is completed by the classroom teacher and the candidate.

In courses with **Advanced Practicum** experiences, candidates meet expanded expectations and requirements to apply their learning in K-12 classroom situations. Candidates collaborate with classroom teachers and deliver small group and whole group instruction. Emphasis is placed on planning, classroom management, instructional strategies, literacy practices, and one-on-one or small group data collection. A performance-based evaluation is completed by the classroom teacher and the candidate.

In courses with **Final Practicum** experiences, candidates move toward independence in facilitating K-12 learning. Candidates collaborate with classroom teachers and deliver small group and whole group instruction. Expectations to demonstrate content-specific knowledge and pedagogy are added at this level. Candidates are responsible for implementing effective instructional and assessment strategies. A performance-based evaluation is completed by the classroom teacher and the candidate.

In **Clinical Practice** (TED 4600), candidates participate in a full-day 16-week experience. Candidates have completed all required coursework and met all other requirements before participating in this experience. Clinical practice immerses teacher candidates in the classroom environment. Working closely with the cooperating teachers and university supervisors, candidates demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for effective teaching as defined in the InTASC standards. Candidates are formally observed and receive written feedback a minimum of five times by the university supervisors. Required seminars and journals increase communication, prompt reflection, and monitor progress throughout the semester. A formal three-way evaluation by the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the candidate is completed at midterm and again at the conclusion of the

experience. In a required assessment presentation, candidates demonstrate knowledge of assessment strategies and their impact on K-12 student learning.

[Table 1c Field Experiences for Initial Candidates](#)

1d. Provide information about program completers for two academic years.

[Table 1d Completers](#)

1e. Attach Student Advising Sheet as Appendix A

Pre-education majors and formally admitted educator preparation candidates are assigned professional academic advisors. Pre-education advisors assist the students in the transition to university life, general education coursework, and the preparation for formal admission into educator preparation. At the time of formal admission to educator preparation, candidates meet with the assigned academic major advisor to develop an individual plan of study. The plans identify the coursework remaining for the degree and the standards expected as the candidate moves through the educator preparation program.

[Appendix A1: Academic Advising Worksheet](#)
[Appendix A2: Sample Plan of Study](#)

Section 2: Key Assessments and Findings (Limit 12 pages). Provide the following for each endorsement included in the folio:

2a. Table of Key Assessments to identify the key assessments which are included in the unit's assessment plan for the endorsement area. Include the type/form of each assessment, a brief description of each assessment, and when each assessment is administered in the program. If any of the Key Assessments are different for subject endorsements within the field, provide a separate table for each. (See explanations in Attachment C and example in Attachment D)

Key Program Assessment #1a Content Knowledge EECIA (Elementary & Elementary Special Education)

The Praxis II *Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (EECIA) exam has been adopted by the Nebraska Department of Education as the standardized test for all elementary and elementary special education candidates to document candidate knowledge and to become NCLB qualified. The minimum score is 159. EECIA questions assess basic understanding of curriculum planning, instructional design, and assessment of student learning. Questions pose particular problems that teachers might routinely face in the classroom, and some questions are based on authentic examples of student work. Questions are set in the context of the subject matter commonly taught in the elementary school: reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, and physical education (ETS, 2006*). In order to be recommended for certification through UNO, elementary and elementary special education graduates must have an EECIA score on file either with the Office of Student Services or with NDE.

Key Program Assessment #1b GPA Comparison (For Secondary Education)

GPA is used to measure content knowledge in the endorsement area for secondary education majors. Courses in the major that reflect content competency have been identified. The GPAs of educator preparation candidates have been compared with those of non-education students in the identified courses.

*Educational Testing Service. (2014). *Praxis: For Test Takers: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.* Retrieved from http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/0011

The courses used for the comparison were identified in consultation with colleagues in the colleges of Arts and Sciences and Communications, Fine Arts, and Media to document content knowledge. The courses represent the range of knowledge requisite for each endorsement.

Key Program Assessment #2 Content Knowledge and Content Application
Content knowledge is monitored throughout the program. Content knowledge for the elementary education program is based on liberal arts requirements including the Fundamental Academic Skills and the Distribution Requirements. The Fundamental Academic Skills (15 hours) include English and Writing, Mathematics, and Speech. The Distribution Requirements include coursework from the following areas: Humanities/Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Natural & Physical Sciences, and Diversity. Secondary programs, including middle grades, also complete the content hours required of the endorsement. During clinical practice, candidates are evaluated on content knowledge and application. The clinical practice evaluation section on content knowledge includes items that reflect candidates' ability to synthesize content knowledge in a K-12 classroom setting.

Key Program Assessment #3 Learner and Learning Environment

Candidates are given developmentally appropriate instruction and application opportunities throughout the program. The process begins in the professional education sequence block, Human Growth and Learning (EDUC 2010), Foundations of Education (EDUC 2020), Human Relations (EDUC 2030), Applied Special Education (EDUC 2510), Planning for Effective Teaching (EDUC 2520), and Intermediate Field Experience (EDUC 2524). Knowledge and skills are refined in other upper-level major coursework and in methods courses. Candidates' progress is monitored through class assignments and practicum experiences. The clinical practice evaluation is the summative assessment related to the learner and the learning environment. Items from the professional knowledge section are related to the needs of specific learners as well as the broader context of the learning environment. Items from the classroom management skills section are related to establishing and maintaining a productive learning environment within a K-12 classroom.

Key Program Assessment #4 Instructional Practices

Through carefully designed instruction throughout the program, candidates establish the knowledge base for planning, writing objectives, engaging learners, promoting student thinking, differentiating instruction, monitoring student progress, reflecting, and assessing. Candidates apply this knowledge in the intermediate practicum experience and expand their skills in methods courses and in advanced and final practicum experiences. The clinical practice evaluation is the summative assessment used to measure the candidates' performance in instructional practice. The instructional skills section and the assessment skills section of the clinical practice evaluation are used to measures the candidates' performance in instructional practices.

Key Program Assessment # 5 Assessment Presentation

The Assessment Presentation documents candidates' assessment knowledge and skills as well as candidates' impact on K-12 student learning. Candidates give a 10-12 minute presentation supported with a one-page lesson summary and five PowerPoint slides. Each candidate's presentation is evaluated by two experienced educators trained to use the Assessment Presentation rubric. Beginning in fall 2013, the rubric categories changed to reflect the College of Education's standard rubric format, and the evaluators electronically scored the presentations using LiveText™. The use of LiveText™ provides candidates immediate access to their scores and allows for deeper data analysis. Rather than providing one overall assessment presentation score, this method reflects candidate performance on each element from each evaluator.

Key Program Assessment #6 Professional Responsibility

At the time of admission to the program, candidates formally sign the Professional Disposition Statement and the Personal and Professional Fitness Statement. Professional dispositions are monitored throughout the program in

courses and practicum experiences. The items in the professional relationships and professional responsibilities sections of the clinical practice evaluation are used for the summative assessment for professional responsibility.

Key Program Assessment #7 Clinical Practice Final Evaluation and Follow-up Surveys (Overall Proficiency)

The College of Education draws information regarding overall proficiency of its graduates from two sources - the clinical practice evaluation and follow-up surveys. Those surveyed include graduates of educator preparation programs during their first two years of service and employers of graduates of the program.

The clinical practice final evaluation is completed at the conclusion of a 16-week clinical practice experience. Using a four-point rubric, performance is rated by the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor. The instrument is categorized in the following sections: A) content knowledge, B) professional knowledge, C) basic skills, D) instructional skills, E) assessment skills, F) classroom management skills, G) professional relationships, and H) professional responsibilities. Each section consists of multiple items. As noted in Table2a, specific sections of this instrument serve as key assessments. Data from the entire clinical practice final evaluation, including all items of sections A-H, is included in Key Assessment #7, Overall Proficiency.

The College of Education follow-up surveys were originally developed at UNO (Schulte, 2006*) and revised in 2013. The same surveys are used with both graduates and employers of those graduates. Using a four-point scale from Not Prepared (1) to Well Prepared (4), the surveys measure competencies in the following areas: content knowledge, professional knowledge, instructional skills, assessment skills, classroom management skills, professional relationships, professional responsibilities, and inclusive practices. Items on the survey are aligned with the InTASC principles, specialty program standards, and NDE Professional Education Competencies. Beginning in spring 2014, NDE initiated follow-up surveys for institutions with educator preparation programs and their employers. Employers of program graduates are surveyed and results are reported to the institutions.

Table 2a Table of Key Assessments

2b.Data tables with summarized data for each key assessment. Provide completer data for at least two complete academic years. Report the data separately by levels/tracks (e.g. baccalaureate, post baccalaureate, alternate routes, Masters, Ed. Specialist, or Doctorate).

Table 2b1a: Content EECIA
Table 2b1b: Content GPA Comparison
Table 2b2: Content
Table 2b3: Learner/Learning Environment
Table 2b4: Instructional Practices
Table 2b5: Instructional Practices (Impact on Student Learning)
Table 2b6: Professional Responsibility
Table 2b7a: Clinical Practice Final Evaluation
Table 2b7b1: Graduates Follow-up Survey
Table 2b7b2: Employer Follow-up Survey

NOTE: Candidate data must be presented for each endorsement included in the folio which has 5 or more completers in 2 years. For low enrollment endorsements, please provide the following statement in place of data tables: *"There were fewer than five completers for this endorsement during the last two years, therefore, to ensure candidate privacy, data are not provided".*

*Schulte, L.E. (2007, November). *The development and validation of a teacher preparation program follow-up Survey.* Journal of Statistics Education.

2c. Attach copies of assessment instruments as Appendix B. Key Assessment Instruments and/or Scoring Rubrics

Appendix B: Key Assessment Instruments and Rubrics

B1: Content

EECIA

GPA Comparison

B2: Content

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Content Knowledge Section, page 1

Clinical Practice Guide

B3: Learner/Learning Environment

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Professional Knowledge Section, page 2

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Classroom Management Section, page 4

B4: Instructional Practices

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Instructional Skills Section, page 3

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Assessment Skills Section, page 3

B5: Instructional Practices

Assessment Presentation Guide

Assessment Presentation Rubric

B6: Professional Responsibility

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Professional Relationships Section, page 4

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation: Professional Responsibilities Section, page 5

B7: Overall Proficiency

Clinical Practice Final Evaluation

Graduate Follow-up Survey

UNO Employer Follow-up Survey

NDE Employer Follow-up Survey

2d. Provide information about findings or interpretations resulting from data analysis. Although data is not required for low-enrollment endorsements, any institutional analysis and summary statements regarding these programs should be addressed or included. Describe changes made to endorsement preparation as a result of findings.

Summary of Findings

Key Assessment 1a: Content EECIA

Data from first-time test takers' indicated that more than 92% of elementary education and elementary special education candidates exceed the minimum score requirement on the EECIA.

Key Assessment 1b: Content GPA Comparison

Data indicate that secondary candidates achieve comparable average GPA to non-education students in identified content coursework for the endorsement. In the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, and social sciences, secondary candidates achieve higher GPAs.

Key Assessment 2: Content

Data from the Content Knowledge section (page 1) of the Clinical Practice Final Evaluation show that approximately 94% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their cooperating teachers. Approximately 97% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their university supervisors. Data for specific endorsement areas reflect similar patterns. Disaggregated data by endorsement area are provided in Data Table 2b2.

Key Assessment 3: Learner/Learning Environment
Data from the Professional Knowledge (page 2) and Classroom Management (page 4) sections of the Clinical Practice Final Evaluation show that approximately 91% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their cooperating teachers. Approximately 97% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their university supervisors. Data for specific endorsement areas reflect similar patterns. Disaggregated data by endorsement area are provided in Data Table 2b3.

Key Assessment 4: Instructional Practices
Data from the Instructional Skills and Assessment Skills sections (page 3) of the Clinical Practice Final Evaluation show that approximately 88% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their cooperating teachers.   Approximately 91% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their university supervisors. Data for specific endorsement areas reflect similar patterns. Disaggregated data by endorsement area are provided in Data Table 2b4.

Key Assessment 5: Instructional Practices (Impact on Student Learning)
Data from the Assessment Presentation show that the overall ratings of approximately 61% or more of all candidates were either outstanding or strong (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) and ratings related to impact on student learning of approximately 84% or more of all candidates were proficient or developing (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014). Data for specific endorsement areas reflect similar patterns. Disaggregated data by endorsement area are provided in Data Table 2b5.

Key Assessment 6: Professional Responsibilities
Data from the Professional Relationships (page 4) and Professional Responsibilities (page 5) sections of the Clinical Practice Final Evaluation show that approximately 93% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their cooperating teachers. Approximately 96% or more of all candidates were given ratings of either proficient or developing by their university supervisors. Data for specific endorsement areas reflect similar patterns. Disaggregated data by endorsement area are provided in Data Table 2b6.

Key Assessment 7a: Clinical Practice Final Evaluation
Data from the Clinical Practice Final Evaluation show that approximately 97% or more of all candidates were given overall ratings of satisfactory or better (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) and approximately 98% or more were given overall ratings of either proficient or developing (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014) by their cooperating teachers. Data also indicate approximately 99% or more of all candidates were given overall ratings of satisfactory or better (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) and 100% were given overall ratings of proficient or developing (Fall 2013 or Spring 2014) by their university supervisors. Data for specific endorsements areas reflect similar patterns. Ratings for each Clinical Practice Final Evaluation item, disaggregated by endorsement area, are provided in Data Table 2b7a.

Key Assessment 7b1: Graduate Follow-up Survey
Data from the program-administered Graduate Follow-up Survey show that on the 35 items surveyed, average ratings ranged from 2.80 to 3.80 using a four-point scale (1= Not Prepared, 2=Needs Improvement, 3= Adequately Prepared, 4=Well Prepared). The highest rated item (#25) was "I understand and apply professional and ethical standards of practice." The lowest rated item (#33) was "I actively collect and use data to monitor student progress toward IEP goals and objectives and to implement necessary adjustments for success."

Key Assessment 7b2: Employer Follow-up Survey
Data from the program-administered Employer Follow-up Survey show that on the 35 items surveyed average ratings ranged from 3.32 to 3.82 using a four-point scale (1= Not Prepared, 2=Needs Improvement, 3= Adequately Prepared, 4=Well Prepared). The highest rated item (#21) was "The teacher acts in an equitable manner to all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural beliefs, socioeconomic status, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or disabling condition." The lowest rated item (#31) was "The teacher adapts curriculum and instructional strategies for students who use alternative communication technology or are non-native speakers."

Strengthened Admission, Retention and Completion Requirements

- In response to calls at the national and state level to ensure the quality of students applying to educator preparation programs, COE took two action steps. In 2011, the minimum GPA for formal admission to educator preparation was raised from 2.50 to 2.75. In 2011, the minimum passing score on the PPST was raised from the state minimum of Reading 170, Math 171, and Writing 172 to a required score of 173 in all areas.

  - In addition, the admissions essay component was revised to a spontaneous format with a focus on pedagogy.

Improvements in Instruction on Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

- The Rule 24 endorsement matrices are reviewed annually and course requirements are updated to meet current standards.

- Preparing candidates to effectively use technology in the instructional/learning process has been an ongoing focus in educator preparation. Based on discussions with our Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC) school partners and results from surveys of faculty and students, the department identified technology-based knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in P-12 classrooms. This information, along with mapping of the ISTE-NETS standards to courses and practicum experiences, revealed that although we are strong in modeling and assigning the use of technology tools, we need to further enhance the candidates' abilities and skills in effectively using these tools with P-12 students directly. To that end, more interactive training sessions on understanding technology tools, additional support in using technology-based learning applications, and increased opportunities to implement lessons utilizing technology supported instruction in P=12 classrooms are being integrated in to methods courses and the associated practicum experiences.

- In considering best practices in preparing students to work in diverse classrooms, Culture Walks were implemented as part of the EDUC 2524 Intermediate Field Experience. Pre- and post- surveys have guided the evolution of the walks as an important component of preparing educators to recognize the strengths of the community and how they relate to supporting K-12 student learning.

- Beginning in Fall 2012, information on the Nebraska state-wide assessment system (NeSA) was integrated into appropriate courses in the educator preparation program.

- Writing intensive courses in the program (EDUC 2010 Human Growth and Learning, EDUC 2520 Planning for Effective Teaching, TED 4350 Teaching Reading and Language Arts: Elementary) were identified to ensure a strong focus on developing teacher candidates' professional writing skills.

- In response to feedback from school partners and consistent with current research, the faculty redesigned preparation coursework to include practicum experiences that closely align theory with practice. Instructional coaches were hired to support candidates in their practicum placements.

Elementary Education

- To increase teacher candidate skills in reading instruction, the department implemented a six credit hour reading and assessment block that includes a tutoring placement in a K-3 classroom. Children's Literature (TED 2360) was revised to include a strong emphasis on the use of technology tools to support literacy.

- To strengthen math content knowledge, candidates must complete three mathematics courses. Two of the courses, MATH 1310 Intermediate Algebra and MTCH 2000 Math for Elementary Teachers I must be completed prior to admission to educator preparation. The third course, MTCH 2010 Math for Elementary Teachers II must

be completed prior to enrolling in the advanced practicum block which includes TED 4330 Teaching of Math – Elementary.

- In collaboration with our Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC) school partners, the department piloted the blocking of coursework (TED 4340 Teaching of Science – Elementary, TED 4330 Teaching of Math – Elementary, and TED 3350 Teaching/Assessing Reading in Elementary Schools) with advanced practicum experiences. This advanced practicum block provides candidates more classroom experiences and enhances performance-based assessments of the candidates' content knowledge, instructional skills, and professional conduct. In addition, coursework (TED 4350 Teaching Reading and Language Arts – Elementary, TED 4320 Teaching of Social Studies – Elementary) and final practicum experiences were blocked further strengthening the pairing of coursework with practicum experience.

- Consistent with the increased emphasis on early childhood education (ECE) at the university and across the state, several improvements have been initiated in the early childhood program. In collaboration with our MOEC school partners and the leadership of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, the ECE preparation program coursework and practicum experiences were extensively revised and reorganized. These revisions directly address workforce needs within the state and profession and align with national/NDE standards for preparing ECE professionals. Furthermore, these changes provide a foundation for development of a new inclusive practices endorsement in special education that meets NDE requirements (and state needs) for preparing ECE professionals to serve all children birth through kindergarten.

Secondary Education

- Significant changes were made in course sequence and content. TED 3690 Literacy and Learning and TED 3550 Art and Science of Teaching: Secondary Schools are blocked and include a practicum experience focused on content area reading and classroom management. This advanced practicum block is a prerequisite (rather than a co-requisite) for TED 4000 Special Methods in the Content Area. This allows the advanced and final practicums to provide more consistent, developmental, and systematic experiences.

Improvements in Assessing Candidate Performance

- The performance-based evaluations for intermediate, advanced, and final practicums are sequenced to reflect the developmental progression of learning at each level. In courses with practicum experiences, the performance-based evaluations constitutes 30% of the course grade.

- Assessment instruments are aligned with the three central principles (Dedicated Practitioner, Reflective Scholar, and Responsible Citizen) in the revised College's Conceptual Framework, with the InTASC Standards, and with the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework.

- The College of Education follow-up surveys were revised to align with InTASC standards and the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework to provide additional data on our candidates' success during their initial years of teaching. Findings from this survey were shared with both school partners through the MOEC Human Resources Task Force, and with faculty for program consideration.

- The Clinical Practice Evaluation was revised to align with the InTASC standards, the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework, and NDE/SPA standards. This instrument assesses candidates in the following areas: knowledge (content knowledge and professional knowledge), skills (basic skills, instructional skills, assessment skills, and classroom management skills) and dispositions (professional relationships and professional responsibilities). Midterm and final evaluations are completed by the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the candidate. The midterm administration serves as a formative assessment to identify an individual candidate's accomplishments and areas in which a candidate may need additional opportunities and support. The final administration serves as a summative assessment for individual candidates,

and data from the final administration are analyzed for program review. In addition, the clinical practice evaluation served as the framework for creating the intermediate, advanced, and final practicum evaluations.

Assessment Tools

In spring 2013, the College of Education began using LiveText™, a commercial assessment tool. Implementation began in targeted undergraduate courses and practicums as well as selected graduate programs. In fall 2013, the College began using LiveText™ to collect data related to key assessments including Key Assessment #2, Content; Key Assessment #3, Learner/Learning Environment; Key Assessment 4#, Instructional Practices; Key Assessment #5, Instructional Practices (Impact on Student Learning); Key Assessment #6, Professional Responsibilities; and Key Assessment #7, Clinical Practice Final Evaluation. As key assessments were transferred into LiveText™, the College established a common rubric structure to be used across these assessments.