

Georgia Southern University
Standards-Based Teacher Education Project (STEP)
Proposal Submitted February 2000

Executive Summary:

The University will participate in the Standards-based Teacher Education Project (STEP) as part of a state and national initiative to ensure that teacher candidates have content knowledge and pedagogical skills in sufficient depth to bring students from diverse groups to high academic standards. The Teacher Education Advisory Council (TEAC), the institution's "functional unit" for educator preparation made up of faculty from each of the colleges (the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Science and Technology, the College of Health and Professional Studies, and the College of Business Administration) and public school teachers, will coordinate the project.

Working with program faculty and department chairs, TEAC will identify two programs a year for participation in institutional analysis. Existing Program Action Teams (PATs), along with other interested TEAC members, will be asked to conduct the institutional analysis of their programs, using guidelines provided in this proposal. PATs were formed as part of the P-16 initiative and can provide continuity and sustenance to the project. [Note: PATs are collaborative program advisory committees that serve in the departments of the College of Education. The PATs conduct annual reviews and make recommendations for continual program improvement. PATs consist of education faculty in the program area, key arts and sciences faculty who are involved in the planning and delivery of the program, and exemplary teachers in the particular teaching field.] The PAT charge will be broadened as they conduct the institutional analyses, and they will report back to TEAC with their recommendations for program and course change. PATs will also devise action plans for implementation of their recommendations.

TEAC will submit a summary of the recommendations to the Provost who will discuss them with the Deans' Council. After endorsement is provided by the Provost and Deans, the curriculum approval process will begin in the various departments across campus. The accountability system developed for assessing teacher candidates' knowledge of content will be included in the performance-based student assessment systems and the program and unit assessment plans that are currently being developed in the College of Education. Each year two programs will participate in the institutional analysis, and a system will be in place for continuation.

It is expected that the Standards-based Teacher Education Project will help the University achieve goals and address concerns that already exist, including performance-based assessments and higher pass rates on the Praxis II certification test.

The amount of funding requested is \$8,000 a year for three years plus travel funds to support faculty and teacher participation in state and national STEP meetings.

Goals/Outcomes:

The proposed project is designed to achieve the following goals:

- A. Undertake an “institutional analysis” to determine how well liberal arts and education curricula provide teacher candidates with sufficient depth of knowledge.
- B. Redesign courses and experiences for teacher candidates, as needed, so that teacher candidates are better able to bring students to high levels of achievement.
- C. Plan and institute an accountability system to determine how well teacher candidates know the content of the subjects they will teach and how effective they are in achieving positive learning gains with students.

The outcomes that will be realized upon actualization of the above goals include:

4. Teacher preparation programs that support P-12 academic standards
5. An ongoing process for systematically analyzing and aligning teacher preparation programs with P-12 academic standards
6. Redesigned courses and experiences in teacher preparation programs
7. Program assessment systems implemented to ensure
 - (a) teacher candidate content knowledge,
 - (b) teacher candidate content pedagogy,
 - (c) overall effectiveness of teacher candidate to achieve learning gains with students

Activities, Timeline, and Implementation Plan:

The following activities will help actualize the objectives:

Institutional Analysis of Content Preparation:

- *Teacher Education Advisory Council.* The Teacher Education Advisory Council (TEAC) is the “functional unit” that oversees teacher preparation programs at the University. TEAC is made up of representatives from each of the program areas in the College of Education, a representative from each department of the four other colleges on campus which participate in teacher preparation, and a set of exemplary public school teachers. TEAC will serve as a steering committee for the STEP project. Progress reports and recommendations will be submitted to TEAC for review before submission to the Provost and to the appropriate college and department for implementation.
- *Faculty Task Force on Teacher Preparation for P-12 Standards / Program Action Teams.* For each program area, TEAC will charge a task force made up of key faculty and P-12 teachers who serve on the program’s Program Action Team, or PAT, and other TEAC members interested in participating. [Note: The PATs are collaborative program advisory committees that now serve in the departments of the College of Education. The PATs conduct annual reviews and make recommendations for continual program improvement. PATs consist of education faculty in the program area, key arts and sciences faculty who are involved in the planning and delivery of the program, and

exemplary teachers in the particular teaching field.] Membership of each PAT-Faculty Task Force will include a balance of education faculty, arts and sciences faculty, and exemplary teachers in the content field under analysis. The PAT-Faculty Task Force will be responsible for: (a) conducting the institutional analysis of content preparation in the program, (b) establishing a standards-based framework for preparing teacher candidates in content knowledge and content pedagogy, (c) recommending course/field experience changes, and (d) creating an accountability system to ensure content knowledge and teaching effectiveness. The accountability system will address new teacher assessments, align with P-12 academic standards, and incorporate multiple assessment measures. Areas of analysis might include:

- Entry and exit requirements
- Core curriculum requirements
- Program content requirements
- Consistency of course syllabi with approved course outlines
- Required content course delivery of key assumptions, questions, approaches, and applications of the discipline
- Preparation in pedagogical and assessment practices connected to content
- Linkages by faculty of discipline-based content courses and pedagogy courses
- Preparation for Praxis II examination
- Performance assessments

After the recommendations of the PAT-Faculty Task Force are reviewed by TEAC to validate the institutional analysis process, the task force will develop action plans for implementing any needed program and course redesign. The PAT-Faculty Task Force will carefully review the recommended accountability system and develop an action plan for its implementation. Arts and sciences faculty members on the task force will serve as liaisons for their respective departments outside the College of Education and communicate the task force recommendations and action plans to their departments.

Redesign of Courses and Experiences:

- *Deans' Council.* Representatives of TEAC will submit the recommendations and action plans to the University Provost. The Provost will present them to the Dean's Council for discussion and endorsement.
- *Curriculum Approval Process.* The recommendations with action plans will be submitted to the appropriate department chair in the College of Education, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, College of Science and Technology, College of Health and Professional Studies, and College of Business Administration to begin the curriculum approval process. Program changes and course outline revisions will be formally proposed and submitted to the appropriate curriculum committees at the department, college, and university levels.

Accountability System:

- *Assessment Plans.* Based on the recommendations of the PAT-Faculty Task Force, each program area will implement a performance-based assessment plan that will ensure teacher candidates' knowledge of content of the subjects they will teach. The performance-based assessments will extend beyond course grades and Praxis II examination results. Baseline data will be gathered and used to longitudinally compare improvement in teacher candidate content preparation.
- *TEAC / Faculty Task Force Post-Review of Program Evaluations.* TEAC and the faculty task force groups will review program evaluation data to assess the impact over time of changes made in programs related to teacher candidates' content preparation. This process will constitute a cycle of reflection and reevaluation.

Timeline and Implementation Plan

- Spring 2000:* TEAC will review existing data on the quality of content preparation of teacher candidates in the various teacher education programs. With input from department chairs and program faculty, two program areas will be identified for institutional analysis. TEAC will form a Faculty Task Force on Teacher Preparation for P-12 Standards (using existing Program Action Teams) for each of the two program areas. The task forces will gather information related to the programs for the analysis. Representatives will attend any state or national meetings related to STEP.
- Summer 2000:* Task force members will engage in an intensive analysis of the programs related to the content and pedagogical preparation to support P-12 standards, as identified above.
- Fall 2000:* The PAT Faculty Task Force for each of the two programs will report to TEAC. Recommendations will then be forwarded back to the PAT task forces for the development of action plans.
- Spring 2001:* Recommendations with action plans will be forwarded to the Provost. Once endorsed by deans, the respective departments will prepare curricular changes for approval in the department, college, and university committees. Program changes, including performance-based accountability system, will be implemented the following fall.

During Spring term, two other program areas will be selected by TEAC for institutional analysis, with input from department chairs and program faculty. The analysis cycle will follow the same timeline (Spring-to-Spring). Year Two and Three of the STEP project will follow in the same pattern with at least two program areas selected for analysis each year.

Narrative Description of Overall Strategy:

The STEP project will build upon work already begun. TEAC is established to as a collaborative functional unit for the University and is the logical entity to direct this work. The P-16 initiative instigated the formation of collaborative advisory committees, Program Action Teams (PATs) for each of the program areas. The PATs are the natural setting for conducting the institutional analysis of the programs and will be charged by TEAC for that task. During conversion to the semester system, implemented in Fall 1998, the College of Education seized the opportunity to review its admission requirements and significantly raised them. Instead of “rolling over” existing programs and courses, each of the teacher education program were redesigned to better align with P-12 academic standards (QCCs), state and national content standards, and Praxis II examination topics. Most of the programs implemented some forms of performance-based assessment, although cohesive assessment systems for measuring content knowledge preparation are incomplete. The proposed activity will allow the University to use existing structures, with added dedication and focus of the faculty task forces, to accomplish the needed institutional analysis of teacher preparation programs. Hopefully this exercise will result in better content preparation of teachers as evidenced in student, faculty, and teacher supervisor surveys, performance assessments, and Praxis II scores. It will provide additional avenues for participation and shared ownership in the teacher preparation programs.

Assessment Plan:

TEAC will conduct post-reviews to determine what progress has been made in the activities of the task forces, PATs, and departments and will evaluate the success at accomplishing the above outcomes. Program evaluation data will be forwarded to TEAC to assess the effectiveness of programs in preparing teachers in content knowledge and pedagogical skills to support P-12 standards. The program evaluation data will be a part of Program Assessment Plans which will include database reports, graduate and employer survey responses, field experience evaluations provided by students, university supervisors, and supervising teachers, etc. The College of Education’s Unit Assessment System will also include measures related to content preparation of teacher candidates. The program and unit assessments are currently being developed; the accountability system produced through STEP will be incorporated into the Program Assessment Plans and the Unit Assessment System.

Continuation Plan:

TEAC is a standing committee and will continue the established institutional analysis process in a systematic way every five years. Systems that do not already exist that may be necessary will be put into place to sustain the process. The program and unit assessment systems that are currently in development will incorporate the accountability system, an outcome of this project.

Evidence of Institutional Commitments to Sustain Initiative Following Granting Period:

The University will support the efforts of TEAC and the PAT-Faculty Task Forces by promoting active participation of faculty and rewarding participation through the annual faculty evaluation process. Release time will be provided faculty when necessary. Identified changes that are recommended by the task forces and supported by TEAC will be supported by the Provost. Deans and department chairs will be encouraged to support the institutional analysis and resulting curricular changes. The Provost and Deans will encourage and financially support faculty travel to state and national meetings related to the project.

Budget Narrative

PAT-Faculty Task Force members will be paid a summer stipend to work more intensively on the institutional analysis. This is due to heavy teaching loads of University faculty and availability of public school teachers to participate fully during the academic year. A team of six TEAC and/or task force members will participate in the state STEP meetings for each of the two program areas involved in institutional analysis during the year. This number may be adjusted if more than one meeting is scheduled and availability of BOR funds to cover travel expenses. The University could cover the cost of key administrators involved in the STEP project (i.e. Provost, Deans, Department Chairs). A team of three TEAC and/or task force members will participate in the national STEP meeting for each of the two program areas involved in the analysis that year. The University will provide any office supplies and materials needed to support the work. Years Two and Three budgets will be similar to Year One.