

**Review Committee Report:
Curriculum and Instruction Master of Science in Secondary Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School**

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Review Committee Members:

Stephanie van Hover, Professor, University of Virginia (Chair), svanhover@virginia.edu

Martha Bigelow, Professor, University of Minnesota mbigelow@umn.edu

Rochelle Gutiérrez, Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, rg1@illinois.edu

Scott Straus, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, sstraus@wisc.edu

Overview:

The committee appreciated the opportunity to serve as program reviewers for the MS in Curriculum & Instruction - Secondary Education Program. The charge from Dean Diana Hess asked us to focus on “evaluating the quality and function of the academic programs” and that this report, rather than reiterating the self-study, should “provide feedback and accentuate noteworthy topics... with particular regard to program quality and student learning.” The self-study identified 4 questions to focus our inquiry:

- How well does the dual certification and accelerated design of the master's program enable students to master learning outcomes? How well does it prepare them to teach in their content areas and/or ESL?
- How do students experience the program? Are changes needed in the program design or structure to enhance student experience and toward the goals of subject area and ESL dual licensure?
- The program has recently hired faculty associates to increase program coherence and capacity and to support faculty and students. Based on your early experience, how is that model working?
- How well are the programs serving high demand areas of teacher certification and the communities who have the highest levels of need for qualified teachers?

We utilized the template provided by University of Wisconsin-Madison to synthesize our assessment of the M.S. in Curriculum & Instruction-Secondary Education.

A. **A summary of the activities of the review committee and materials reviewed;**

The activities of the committee included the following:

- **Introduction & Orientation:** Dean Diana Hess outlined the charge for the committee and provided historical background on the shift from an undergraduate secondary teacher education program to the graduate-level M.S. program. She identified enrollment targets, described the role of the Faculty Associates (and the possibility that the title might change to Teaching Professor) and provided information about the “Pledge” that will provide financial support to those teacher education students who agree to teach in Wisconsin for several years.
- **Content Area Meetings:** Reviewers attended assigned content area meetings (Stephanie & Scott: Social Studies & Science; Martha: ESL; Rochelle: Math & English). Program faculty and faculty associates described the course sequence, field experiences, capstone and roles and responsibilities of faculty associates. Reviewers asked participants to reflect on programmatic strengths and challenges.
- **School Context Partners:** Reviewers met with school context partners, seven middle- and high- school teachers who serve as cooperating teachers for the program. After initial introductions, reviewers asked participants to reflect on programmatic strengths and challenges.
- **Teacher Education Supports:** Reviewers met with multiple “teacher education supports” including faculty and staff from the Teacher Education Center, Faculty Associates, and Student Teaching Supervisors. These meetings focused on understanding the programmatic structures and supports and the different roles and responsibilities. Participants also reflected on strengths and challenges of the program.
- **Alumni:** Reviewers met with two groups of alumni: a) 2020 graduates and b) graduates from previous cohorts. In this meeting, we asked participants to tell us where they taught and to reflect on the strengths and challenges of the program as well as identify recommendations for change.
- **Exit Meetings:** Reviewers met with program leadership and Dean Diana Hess. The meetings focused on clarification of lingering questions.

The materials reviewed by the committee included the following:

- **Self-Study:** The “5-year Initial Program Review Self-Study” which followed the guidelines and template provided by the Graduate School. The Self-Study outlined four specific questions.
- **Additional Materials:** As the visit progressed, site reviewers asked for additional information (which was provided by Joey Lubasi) and reviewed the following:
 - Capstone Titles

- Full Survey Results
- Observation Protocols
- Budget Overview
- Application/Admission Numbers
- Course Overview with Instructors
- Title & Descriptions of Courses

B. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program:

The site review visit surfaced both strengths and weaknesses of the program. We summarize these below and used the framing questions identified in the self-study to focus our assessment.

Strengths of the Program

Programmatic Goals & Vision: Conversations with participants in addition to the data included in the self-study report indicate that the decision to shift from an undergraduate secondary teacher education program to the M.S. was a good one. Some of the original reasons for the shift were to boost enrollment, attract a more diverse group of students, and increase the cohort effect of having students move through the program. This program is very desirable to the teacher candidates as well as school partners because of the length (14 months) and the fact that it includes two licenses - a content area (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, or Social Studies) and English as a Second Language (ESL). It is remarkable to offer a program that permits teacher candidates to obtain two credentials in two dramatically different fields. Additional strengths related to the content and structure of the program include the following:

Epistemology & Social Justice: The program's inclusion of epistemology courses (which interrogate the content area in terms of social justice and diversity) are a unique addition that reflect the overall vision of the program and give students a chance to see how their specific subject matter has historically evolved into what it is today. Alumni also identified the emphasis on social justice and equity as a strength of the program. One graduate said they appreciated the "unapologetic lens regarding problems with education in America."

The Cohort Model: The cohort model is clearly a strength of the program. All of the alumni identified the cohort as a strength. One graduate mentioned "I met great people who shared what you were going through" and others reiterated the close relationships built during the program. It was clear each cohort received exceptional support from Joey Lubasi and the Faculty Associates.

Student Experience, Placement Rates & Administrative Excellence: The students we interacted with liked the program and described positive experiences. The program has a high job placement rate, and alumni credited the program for obtaining their preferred post-graduation job. All students mentioned the support of Joey Lubasi, who supported the students from the beginning of the program through graduation. One member of the review team summarized what we heard as “all roads lead to Joey” and we were all struck by the warm relationships between current students/alumni and Joey.

Connection between Theory & Practice: All stakeholders mentioned the emphasis on the connection between theory *and* practice, with faculty associates serving as bridges. One faculty associate mentioned that the program is designed to “mirror the growth and development of a new teacher” which is a clear strength of the program. Various stakeholders also emphasized the teacher candidates’ willingness and ability to engage in reflective praxis as a way of developing as teachers and creating a strong professional identity. This reflective practice seems to be supported by students having been exposed to theoretical concepts and framings in coursework so that they can analyze how those concepts play out in classrooms in which they are observing or teaching. One graduate reflected that he “appreciated [the program] creating a space to discover what we believe about education and giving him a solid confidence and grounding to move forward in a profession that is really tough and difficult to navigate...the philosophical grounding allowed me to figure out the more technical pieces.”

Strong Field Component: All stakeholders mentioned the strong field component as a strength of the program. Specifically mentioned as a strength was the summer practicum which, in non-COVID times, provides a community-based placement in which students interact with diverse groups of students. Mentor teachers mentioned learning from their students and enjoying the opportunity to work with the program. One described students as “creative, reflective, and engaged” and another said the students were “focused, asked very good questions about content and practice.”

Inclusion of ELL Pedagogies: The inclusion of ELL pedagogies was also mentioned as a strength because teacher candidates. It seems that the ESL methods classes and work with English learners offered an opportunity for teacher candidates to learn a wide range of general teaching strategies for differentiation and scaffolding content and language learning.

Programmatic Autonomy: While the majority of teacher education programs spend enormous energy responding to external accrediting bodies (e.g., CAEP), this does not seem to be the case

at UW-Madison, with the exception of their state accreditation process. And, while EdTPA was frequently identified as a challenge, it seems to be a *past* challenge and the door seems open to re-inventing how teacher candidates demonstrate progress towards programmatic/state objectives. In sum, the external reviewers all noticed, with some envy, that UW-Madison's Secondary Teacher Education program seems to have extraordinary freedom and autonomy to innovate. This is a strength of the program and offers exciting opportunities for innovation, making changes quickly, and to think collectively and differently about teacher preparation.

Faculty Associates: The Faculty Associates in this program are a strength. Later in this report we reference issues (challenges) related to equity, power, positionality, and consistency in relation to faculty associates but that should not distract from or diminish the impressive work and enormous contributions the Faculty Associates make to the program. It is very evident that the Faculty Associates are the backbone of the program and contribute enormously to its success. Their responsibilities include, but surely are not limited to, recruitment, admissions, summer epistemology, summer practicum, fall seminar, spring seminar, supervision, capstone, and general support of students, plus Teacher Education Center meetings, meetings regarding a new performance-based assessment, and liaisioning with teachers. They also teach some other courses (e.g., ESL, methods within content area, classroom management courses). They help translate theory into practice, teach courses, support and liaison with mentor teachers and student teacher supervisors as well as ensuring students fulfill the expectations of the final performance assessment (portfolio and capstone). The alumni identified the Faculty Associates as the "go-to people", the instructors they most appreciated in the program and graduates were able to identify specific ways in which the Faculty Associates had supported their growth including high quality teaching, support with placements, and problem-solving small- and large-issues. In sum, the Faculty Associates support students in all ways, from recruitment to advising to support throughout the program.

Supervisors: In addition to the faculty associates as strong school-based practitioners, the program benefits from impressive field-based supervisors. The supervisors bring content expertise, many years of teaching experience, and are clearly very grounded in their role of supporting pre-service, novice teachers. We noted that relatively low numbers of teacher candidates (approx. 5-10) are assigned to the content area supervisors, and higher numbers assigned to the ESL supervisors (21). They in turn are supported through regular meetings. The alumni cited their supervisors as a great source of support during field placements, offering everything from lesson plan review to instructional coaching to negotiating relationships with mentor teachers.

Revenue, Load & Strategic Support: The program is an autonomous, revenue-generating program, a "131" program in the university's parlance. The program has proven to be

financially healthy and viable, with program net revenue exceeding expenses each year of existence and thereby providing funds back to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The financial health of the 131 program should not be taken for granted and is an important success. Additionally, the implementation of the program seems not to have detracted from the other goals of the School of Education and the C&I department. The faculty do not seem to be overtaxed, and so neither their research programs or their instruction and advising to PhD students has suffered as a result. That success is in part due to the crucial role that the Faculty Associates play in the program, further highlighting their centrality and emphasizing the need for proper mentoring, job description, and compensation.

Areas for Consideration and Improvement

Imbalance of the 2 Licenses: We heard from every group we met with that there is an ongoing struggle to offer teacher candidates balanced field experiences and coursework in both licensure areas, or, as one person said, offering a “true dual certification program”. We heard repeatedly that teacher candidates do not get similar levels of field experiences, observations or academic preparation in ESL as they do in their content area preparation. We were surprised that many of the candidates we spoke with were not introduced to WIDA in their preparation, given that UW-Madison is home to WIDA, that the WIDA consortium includes most states in the US, and that WIDA is widely used in ESL assessment and instruction and common in inservice and preservice teacher development.

The imbalance has also seemed to result in a homogenization of English learner profiles. Not being attentive to the different needs of a variety of English language learners could have a deleterious impact on the decisions related to curriculum, instruction and programming for English learners in K-12 schools. While we did not probe deeply, we noticed that there was no mention of how English learners differ. Learning about SLIFE, LTELs, newcomers, etc. would help teacher candidates nuance the claim we heard repeatedly that “good teaching strategies for English learners (or sped) are good strategies for all.” Of course, this may be true of English learners who have reached the highest WIDA levels, but can’t be the case with, for example, English learner newcomers or those who are in the initial stages of developing alphabetic print literacies. We assume teacher candidates are exposed to teaching strategies that prepare them to teach in ways that are linguistically additive and support multilingualism, but we did not hear anyone talk about this way of approaching ESL instruction.

Mentor teachers raised concerns about the depth of knowledge of teaching candidates in terms of their ability to recognize the diversity of language learners, assess and interpret utilizing WIDA, and apply ESL strategies into the regular education classroom. One teacher, for example stated, “it feels like the ESL is an add-on...and I wonder why it is not an additional methods class

and why it has to be a certification.” Another observed that some students were “fired up about the ELL certification and others were going through the motions” and they wondered if “more quality instruction would come out of ELL being an option rather than a required bundle.” Another mentor teacher said “it feels tacked on” and that the content areas were “in their silos.” The ELL mentor teachers also mentioned that students were not WIDA literate, which was an essential skill. Similarly, while students described the ESL focus as a strength and draw of the program they also highlighted the imbalance of the two licenses. One said, “we didn’t get the technical grounding one might desire in ESL” and another said “A lot of us have ended up teaching ESL clusters or even sheltered classes. I think preparedness to teach ESL really depended on individual student teaching experiences. I definitely struggled with my sheltered classes [in my first year] and had to lean heavily on my colleagues.” Another said, “in my student teaching experience I had no access to the newcomer level class and that’s what I was teaching the following year. It was a rough year. I felt like, that’s when I doubted the most, it was such a learning curve.”

This imbalance between the two licenses is a completely predictable issue given the compressed nature of the program. Furthermore, we understand the desirability of having an ESL credential in addition to a content area license. Nevertheless, we see the program’s strong commitment to equity to be at odds with releasing novice teachers with possibly inadequate preparation in ESL to schools. With their credential, they could be in the position of being *the* ESL specialist in a school, including an elementary school, or in charge of leading an ESL department, as was the case with one of the alums we spoke with. We are confident that these issues can be resolved by the very competent instructional staff. We couldn’t help but also generate some suggestions in the section “advice to the Dean and Program” based on ideas from those we had the opportunity to speak with.

Role of Faculty Associates: The Faculty Associates are absolutely a strength of the program and should continue to be a part of it. Our review surfaced some challenges related to the role, including clarity of role, the workload, the reporting line, and issues related to status. One Faculty Associate aptly described their work as “human focused”, “relationship based”, “time intensive”, and “intellectually rich and stimulating”. However, other Faculty Associates referred to their position as “an interesting sidecar” or “worker bees.” They all seem to strongly identify as teacher educators. They feel that they have good relations and enjoy a great deal of appreciation from their faculty counterparts. However, given the structure of departmental meetings and the way research faculty are evaluated for tenure can mean that “there’s a dichotomy created between intellectual work that is about securing grants, publishing, etc. and the work we do” (as if it is not intellectual). We found the long list of their responsibilities to be quite daunting, and they seem to be everything to everyone. The title “Faculty Associate” is misleading, and we (in the recommendations) encourage the School to consider adopting

“Teaching Faculty” or some equivalent title to clarify the role and position of Faculty Associates in the department.

Role of the Teacher Education Center: It seems that the Teacher Education Center (TEC) was just getting off the ground when Covid-19 pandemic hit and, as a result, is still in the process of developing its identity. The faculty/part-time director is tasked with a variety of roles, including convening bi-weekly meetings of the faculty associates, faculty, and others. The TEC also serves as an accrediting liaison with the state (Department of Public Instruction), archiver of teacher candidate data, convenor of supervisors for training, and coordinating body for 14 licensure programs across various departments at the undergraduate and graduate level, among other things. The existence of the TEC is much needed and certainly an asset and a strength in this secondary, dual licensure program. As a program in a research-intensive institution, and as the place where many types of data are housed, we contemplated the role the TEC could play in facilitating research on the programs.

C. Advice to the program, dean, and/or provost for improving the program

The reviewers were impressed with the structure, content, and administration of the Secondary Teacher Education program. As noted above, we identified many strengths. We also described challenges and, in this section, offer some issues for Dean Diana Hess and all the stakeholders to consider with the recognition that the four reviewers are external to the School of Education and are interpreting information from our own lived experiences.

Address the Imbalance Between 2 Licenses:

The imbalance between the 2 licenses emerged as an area that should be addressed. We recommend the following:

- **Collect Additional Data:** Our questions about whether candidates are prepared to be ESL teachers are based on our brief conversations with graduates and clearly speculative. This issue would surely benefit from additional research. We think this would be a particularly rich area of inquiry given the program’s strength in helping teacher candidates develop a strong professional identity. Is this identity largely within the realm of the content area? How do they fare in terms of developing ESL-centered teacher identities? Could the Teacher Education Center facilitate this research?
- **Curriculum Review and/or Retreat:** According to conversations with TEC personnel and secondary teacher education personnel, there are regular meetings to review syllabi and discuss programmatic goals. We suggest a focused retreat on the ESL issue, with a review of existing syllabi to map out what students are learning, when they are learning

this content, and to determine meaningful ways to integrate attention to ESL methods in the content area seminars and content area methods courses. While more ESL depth through curricular integration was one suggestion, this would require a great deal of curriculum development work. We are not suggesting more parsing of ESL content, but rather an exploration of what it would look like to deepen the coursework, expand field experiences, co-teach some of the content methods classes with an ESL teacher educator (as is frequently done in strong high school ESL service models), or in some way offering more ESL expertise to the instructors in the content areas. Perhaps some teacher candidates should forgo the ESL license and others should seek only the ESL license.

- **Collaborate with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research & WIDA:** The reviewers are envious of the fact that WCER and WIDA are housed at Wisconsin and see this as a natural source of collaboration. A brief review of the WCER website indicates WIDA offers professional development and outreach and closer relationships could strengthen students' knowledge.

Address the Role of Faculty Associates:

- **Clarify reporting, load, mentoring:** When asked about who they report to in terms of annual performance reviews, there was a pause. It seems that the Department Chair is technically the person they report to, but their performance is monitored more informally by Joey Lubasi. Given the importance of the faculty associates position in the overall program, the chains of supervision should be clarified. It would seem to us that the Faculty Director of the program would have the most hands-on interaction with the Associates and should serve as the Supervisor to the Associates. Perhaps the department has a preference for the Department Chair or the overall administrator, a position held by Joey Lubasi, to serve as supervisor. Either way, the lines of supervision should be clear and clarified. Similarly, the position description should be clear too--and perhaps the department could use the current campus-wide TTC effort to define position descriptions as an opportunity to gain clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Associations.
- **Recruitment, Qualifications, Retention & Diversity:** Once the title is clarified (again, we suggest Teaching Faculty), we recommend requiring a terminal degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) in conjunction with extensive practice-based 6-12 experience. We also wonder about recruiting candidates who have an ELL/Content Area background in order to strengthen the theory and practice bridge. The terms and expectations of this position should be clear in order to recruit the highest quality candidates. We see these positions as essential to the program, and as a position that should be very desirable to candidates

interested in working as teacher educators rather than researchers. We encourage UW to think about addressing job security, status, and burnout.

- **Support for Programmatic Growth:** The Faculty Associates seem to bear a great deal of responsibilities; the enrollment projections in conjunction the Teacher Pledge and the addition of World Languages suggest that perhaps the program will need to invest in additional supports and might consider additional hires to ensure program quality is maintained.

D. Recommendations for future directions

We outline our specific advice to the program and the school above. Our recommendations are that the program could benefit from reflecting on two questions:

- 1) How can new assessments show teacher reflection and learning?

The teacher education program (writ large) is so very fortunate to have freedom from CAEP and other accrediting bodies that constrain innovation. We suggest the program reflect on what innovation can take place-- particularly as EdTPA will no longer be required. We recommend thinking about the capstone and the proposed portfolio as opportunities to engage in innovation.

- 2) How can the program design align to core commitments to equity?

We suggest the secondary teacher education program reflect on the core identity -- it seems that this is a content-disciplinary focused program with a strong strand of social justice and attention to equity. The ESL focus seems, as stakeholders mentioned, "tacked on". We recommend a deep dive into "who are you, really?" and to align the portfolio and capstone to the core mission and focus of the program.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve as reviewers for the Secondary Teacher Education program and are happy to answer any additional questions.