



## Compliance Audit Report Summer of 2009 St. Mary's University Initial Teacher Certification Program

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), "An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff." Per TAC §228.1(c), "All educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title." The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code rules required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details.

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Program Specialist, Sandra Jo Nix, conducted a Texas Education Agency Compliance Desk Audit of St. Mary's University during the summer of 2009. The focus of the compliance audit was the initial teacher certification program. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

### **SCOPE OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT:**

The scope of the audit was restricted solely to verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227, §228, §229,

### **Data Analysis:**

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency via Survey Monkey along with requested verifying documents. Because student records contain confidential information and could not be transmitted to TEA, student records were checked by the program using a check list supplied by TEA. In addition, electronic questionnaires developed by TEA were sent to St. Mary's University stakeholders. Fifty-four (54) stakeholders responded to the questionnaires: Nine (9) advisory committee members; ten (10) student teachers, clinical teachers, interns; five (5) field supervisors; seven (7) principals; and fourteen (14) cooperating teachers/mentors responded. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric aligned with Texas Administrative Code. After the review of the information, the program

specialist arranged a telephone debrief to cover the findings of the audit. The findings were incorporated into the original survey monkey form and sent to the program. This summary report provides the findings and recommendations resulting from the audit.

## **COMPONENT I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs- Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20**

### **FINDINGS:**

The thirteen member advisory committee represents a balanced membership with four different types of roles present. The advisory committee meets the required number of times per academic year as evidenced by minutes and agendas presented at the document review. Through the questionnaires returned from the Advisory committee, the members indicated they were well aware of their roles and felt they were contributing to the program. However, all of the advisory committee members responded on their questionnaire that they had served on the committee for six to twelve months. Staggered terms of committee membership could ensure continuity of knowledge from year to year. In the document review, it was noted that there was a concerted effort to inform the advisory committee members of their roles and responsibilities. The education of the members leads to a knowledgeable and helpful group.

**Based on the evidence presented, St. Mary's University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.**

## **COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10**

### **FINDINGS:**

St. Mary's University has met all compliance requirements for admission criteria. The University utilizes an application, interview, written assessment, letters of recommendation, and acceptable scores on pre-admission testing. The University exceeds the required grade point average for entry into the program. The program publishes admittance criteria in an appropriate manner. Also, record management meets compliance requirements.

**Based on the evidence presented, St. Mary's University is in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.**

### **COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30**

#### **FINDINGS:**

St. Mary's University's faculty is well qualified and experienced to delivery educator preparation. Of the eight vitas presented in the document review, seven were certified Texas teachers.

St. Mary's University delivers its curriculum in a face-to-face format and does not offer any online courses at this time. Fifteen course syllabi were submitted in the document review. Nine of those submitted addressed reading at various grade levels. All syllabi indicated course intent through stated goals, objectives, course overviews, schedule of assignments, textbook information, and expectations. The courses were aligned with standards, competencies and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). It was noted in reviewing the syllabi, that lesson planning requiring use a particular strategy was frequently expected from the students. Student Teacher Seminar Schedules including activities and calendar events were also included in the document review. Assessment and feedback for the students were appropriate for the courses presented. In reviewing the self-report, the Essential Components for Educator Preparation Curriculum chart and each syllabus, St. Mary's had included the 17 PPR topics into their curriculum. However, it was suggested in the student teacher questionnaire that a greater emphasis be placed on motivating students and conducting parent conferences. The six hours of test preparation are embedded into their coursework. One respondent to the student teacher questionnaire reported that throughout the program, there were PPR type questions incorporated into all the exams. Seventy-one percent of cooperating teachers/mentors felt that the teaching candidates were well prepared in the area of technology. Concurring, seventy-eight percent of the student teachers responded on their questionnaire that they were offered instruction in the use of technology in the classroom.

**Based on evidence presented St. Mary's University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.**

### **COMPONENT IV: Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training (TAC) §228.35**

#### **FINDINGS:**

St. Mary's University exceeds 30 hours of field-based experiences by requiring 61 hours. Many of these experiences are embedded directly into specific courses, thus providing a contextual basis for the observation. Students reflect on their field-based experiences by recording field notes, keeping journals, lesson plan reflections, and hourly logs.

According the Schematic of Program Hours in the document review, St. Mary's reported 301 program hours prior to student teaching. Student teaching requires 12-13 weeks.

St. Mary's faculty members also serve as field supervisors. The program requires cooperating teachers be certified in the same grade and content area and have three or more years of teaching. The cooperating teachers are provided two training opportunities. The first is a handbook review at an orientation session; later a meeting

is held to discuss observations, protocol, and evaluation procedures plus other topics. Training was confirmed by responses to the cooperating teacher/mentor questionnaire.

Since the field supervisors are also faculty members, they attend reading seminars, conferences, and workshops to keep abreast of the latest scientifically-based information. Field supervision of candidates meets the requirements of first contact, number of observations, feedback, and conferencing. However, it was noted in the self-report that a copy of the field supervision observation form was not provided to the campus administrator. It is required by TAC §228.35(f) that a copy is provided. Adequate support is provided to students who are struggling with the program.

**Based on evidence presented, St. Mary's University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – Program Delivery and On-Going Support.**

## **COMPONENT V: Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40**

### **FINDINGS:**

Processes are in place for evaluating the program and curriculum by using internal and external data. Information and input are gathered from faculty, advisory committee members, human resource directors, current students, and completers of the program. St. Mary's ASEP scores have been 98% for the past three years.

Student's progress is monitored by their grades, advisory and faculty interactions, and performance in the field. Readiness for certification testing is determined by their performance in their coursework and practice tests.

A process exists for students to address grievances.

St. Mary's University is in compliance for records management.

**Based on evidence presented, St. Mary's University is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.**

## **PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

Program Compliance Recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency compliance audit. If the program is out of compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. General Recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only.

**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:** In order to meet requirements of Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs, the following recommendations must be implemented immediately:

TAC 228.35(f) Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training

- Provide a copy of the candidates' written observation reports to the campus administrator beginning the fall of 2009.

**OTHER PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Stagger the terms of the advisory committee members in order to ensure continuity from year to year. This should be done as soon as possible
- Review your curriculum to ensure adequate coverage of motivation techniques and parent conferencing.