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**Date:** February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
**To:** Greg Heileman, Associate Provost for Curriculum  
**From:** Liz Keefe, Special Education Program Coordinator  
**Re:** Special Education Program Response to APR Reviewers Recommendations

The Special Education Program had our APR visit October 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. The evaluation team included Dr. Martin Agran, University of Wyoming; Dr. Jacki Anderson, California State University East Bay; and Dr. Carole Conn, University of New Mexico. The Special Education Program received the report from the APR review team on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013. The Special Education Program discussed this report and the recommendations during our faculty meetings in Spring 2013. An action plan was developed in Fall 2013 in response to these recommendations. The APR review was positive overall and none of the recommendations were considered "do or die". Each of the recommendations and our program response will be discussed in this document.

### **Faculty Salary, Teaching and Productivity Expectations, and Service Commitments**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** The APR evaluation team compared the salary and workload of special education faculty at UNM with peer institutions. They concluded that while faculty increases at all ranks were recommended, this was particularly important for the associate and full professor ranks because these salaries are significantly lower than at peer institutions. At the time of the APR visit, Special Education still had a 3-3 teaching load. The APR team recommended that this should be immediately reduced to a 3-2 load but that a 2-2 load would be more in line with peer institutions.

**Special education faculty response.** The special education faculty appreciate these recommendations but faculty teaching load and salary are not within the control of the program. Budget decisions are made at the COE and University level. A 3-2 load was implemented for the 2012-13 academic year. A further reduction to a 2-2 load is not within the control of the special education program. A number of program faculty are actively pursuing research, personnel preparation and leadership grant opportunities that could result in a 2-2 or 2-1 load for some faculty if course buyouts or reassignments are funded.

### **Curriculum/Instruction and Course and Program Offerings in the Doctoral Programs**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** The team had multiple recommendations about the Ph.D and Ed.D programs. They recommend discontinuing the Ed.D. since no students have been admitted for over two decades. There were many recommendations about improving the Ph.D. program procedures in many areas.

**Special education faculty response.** The faculty concur with the recommendations and are in the process of revising all of the Ph.D. procedures. We are looking at admission procedures and competencies as a first step.

### **Licensure Programs**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** The team had recommendations in three areas. First, the Dual License Program was recognized as strong overall, and they recommended adding further requirements for student teaching site selection based on school systems in addition to individual principal and/or teacher characteristics. Second, they supported the decision to try establish a graduate certificate for the Educational Diagnostician Program. Third, the team recommended eliminating the Ed.S. program due to low enrollment.

**Special education faculty response.** The Dual License program does try to place students in exemplary school sites however it can be challenging to place all students in schools implementing all best practices such as PBS and inclusive education. It will continue to be our goal to place all students into schools that model evidence based practices for students with and without disabilities.

Since the APR visit, the Transcribed Graduate Certificate in Educational Diagnosis (EDAG) has been approved and is enrolling students. We have made the program more flexible and worked hard to recruit students. These efforts have had great success and the EDAG certificate has a strong first cohort.

The faculty have not made a decision regarding the Ed.S. program.

### **Pursuit of a Lab School or Collaborative Relationships with Charter Schools**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** The evaluation team noted that, “Lab schools can be useful vehicles for field experiences as they are often under the university jurisdiction, or have such close ties and agreements with the university that the faculty can have a strong influence on the practices in the school. Thus, providing the opportunity for experience with current best practices. The disadvantage is that lab schools may be isolated, perhaps on the university campus, and not representative of more typical public schools.”

**Special education faculty response.** At the graduate level most of our student are teaching in their own classrooms on a *Pre-Level 1 Intern License*. They complete student teaching in their own classrooms. The program has no control over where these students are hired by the local school districts and the idea of a Lab School is not feasible.

At the undergraduate level, we have between 25-40 students completing student teaching. This would be too many for a lab school concept. However, the Dual License Program does develop long term relationships with a small number of schools which serve as student teaching sites for our students (see recommendations and response already discussed under the License section).

Dr. Keefe and Dr. Collier are exploring the development of a “consortium” at the American Sign Language Academy (a charter school). This could involve a collaboration across special education, general education, TESOL, bilingual, education diagnosis, counseling, and health education to develop an interdisciplinary clinical experience model across the continuum of teacher preparation from initial license to advance preparation.

### **Cohesion**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** The team encouraged special education faculty and staff to continue and expand efforts to increase the cohesion of the program as a whole. They suggested that there is a need for better alignment and understanding of core values among faculty and students and recommended consideration of more shared learning experiences for students across concentrations. A review of both concentrations reveals that there are very few core classes students jointly take.

**Special education faculty response.** The faculty have worked to identify more courses that could be taken in common across concentrations at the M.A. level. Concentration II

currently has a Form C and several Form Bs in process through the UNM curricular system. This results in the addition of SPCD 510 *Special Education Law* as a shared requirement across the program. Concentration I added Concentration II courses as options for the advanced development area on their M.A. advising form.

### **Alumni and Follow-Up Data**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** Alumni follow-up data had not been available since 2007. The need for follow-up data was also expressed by the special education faculty.

**Special education faculty response.** The special education faculty are working with the academic advisor to reach out to graduates from the last three years in an attempt to gather some follow-up data from alumni. Faculty are also exploring the possibility of establishing an advisory board.

### **Diversity**

**APR evaluation team recommendation.** A task force should be developed to address recruitment and support of diverse students. The team noted that the special education program was already aware of and working on this issue.

**Special education faculty response.** The faculty are working to recruit and retain more diverse students at all levels. Faculty in the undergraduate program have a sub-group who are working with the academic advisor on strategies for recruitment of diverse students from two year colleges and from UNM. In 2012-13 the Dual License Program had increased diversity and more students participating in the La Raza graduation ceremony than any other program at UNM. Two faculty are participating in a statewide recruitment taskforce. Recruitment and support of diverse students at undergraduate and graduate levels will be an ongoing initiative for the special education faculty.

cc: Ruth Luckasson, Nancy Middlebrook, Bessie Gallegos