

I. OVERVIEW OF FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

This accreditation self-study is being undertaken during a critical time of transition in the University's history. In June 2006, the University's President, Dr. Catherine R. Gira, retired after serving as president for fifteen years. After a semester long national search, Dr. Jonathan Gibraltar, former President of Farmingdale State University of the State University of New York (SUNY) system, was appointed president beginning July 1, 2006.

During 2005, the University underwent a reform of its undergraduate education program. The changes reflected an increased understanding by the university community that assessment is a key component in the process of teaching, learning, and curricular reform.

At the level of the Professional Education Unit, the former Dean of the College of Education, retired in February 2006. The associate dean was appointed interim dean of the College on March 1, 2006 and has served in that capacity since that time. Under the new leadership, the Professional Education Unit is undergoing preparation for a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)/Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) continued accreditation visit, a restructuring of the Professional Development School (PDS) model, a refinement of the diversity initiatives within the Unit, and the development of a Unit-wide core of the professional *Dispositions* that align with the Conceptual Framework in a manner consistent with the Education Unit's philosophy of professional education.

University Mission

The current official mission statement that defines the essence of Frostburg State University (FSU) was approved by both the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission in 2005

Frostburg State University has provided paths to success for students for over 100 years. Founded in 1898 to prepare teachers, the institution today is a public, comprehensive, largely residential regional university offering a wide array of affordable programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The only four-year institution of the University System of Maryland west of the Baltimore-Washington corridor, the University serves as the premier educational and cultural center for western Maryland. At the same time, it draws its student population from all counties in Maryland, as well as from numerous other states and foreign countries, thereby creating a campus experience that prepares students to live and work in a culturally diverse world.

The University is distinguished by a scenic campus encircled by mountains, its excellent academic programs, its nationally acclaimed community service programs, and its vital role in regional economic development initiatives. As a result, it holds the distinction of being one of the University System institutions most closely woven into the fabric of the surrounding area.

Frostburg State University is, first and foremost, a teaching institution in which students are guided and nurtured by dedicated, highly qualified faculty and staff. Faculty engage in wide-ranging research and scholarly activity with the ultimate goal of enhancing student learning. The academic experience of undergraduates includes a rigorous general education program in the liberal arts and sciences, including development of core skills. Major areas of specialization are offered in education, business, science and technology, the creative and performing arts, and selected programs in the humanities and social sciences. The University provides numerous opportunities for students to engage in community service, leadership development activities, undergraduate research, and internships. These activities serve as experiential laboratories in which students apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations. Graduate programs provide specialized instruction for students involved in or preparing for professional careers.

Frostburg State University continues to define its core mission as providing pathways to success – in careers, in further education, and in life – for all of its graduates.

Institutional Identity and Characteristics

With both a culturally and ethnically diverse student population, faculty, and staff, FSU provides unique programs and a stimulating learning environment to the entire state. Students are afforded a supportive environment in which to expand their knowledge, understanding, communication skills, and appreciation for cultural diversity. Couched within a liberal arts tradition, academic programs promote intellectual growth with a diverse learning environment that equips learners with critical thinking abilities essential to effecting civic responsibility, developing global understanding, and leading to constructive change.

The Unit

Mission

The Professional Education Unit is committed to preparing professionals who provide excellent instruction, service, and leadership to a diverse and global community.

Vision

The vision of the Professional Education Unit at Frostburg State University is to build upon its rich history of teacher education and position itself as a national exemplar of quality professional preparation programs.

Profile

Students: Candidates in the Unit are drawn primarily (84%) from Maryland, followed by Pennsylvania (10%), West Virginia (4%), New Jersey (1%), and Virginia (1%). Candidates in Maryland are drawn mainly from the Allegany (24%), Anne Arundel (4%), Baltimore (3%), Carroll (3%), Frederick (6%), Garrett (8%), Montgomery (7%), Washington (16%), and Prince Georges (3%) counties. 10% of our candidates come from other counties in the state. (Office of Information Services)

In fall 2006, 516 undergraduate candidates and 395 graduate candidates were enrolled in all programs in the Education Unit. The Unit has a student-to-faculty ratio (in relation to internships) of 60 to 12 for an average of 5 per supervisor. The average class size is 13.00. This year 100 percent (100%) of the PreK-8 teacher candidates will complete an extensive internship experience in Professional Development Schools. (Source: Office of Field and Clinical Placement)

Faculty: In the fall 2006, the Professional Education Unit consists of sixty two (62) faculty members. (This figure represents full-time, part-time, tenured, and non-tenured faculty members within the Unit.) Of these, forty four percent (43.5%) are male and fifty six percent (56.5%) female. Ninety three percent (93.5%) are white, with three percent (3.2%) African/African American, one percent (1.6%) Hispanic, and one percent (1.6%) Asian. Of the full-time faculty in the Unit, eighty one percent (81%) hold doctorates, and 15% are in advanced stages of their doctoral work. Of the sixty two faculty members, four (4) are housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the rest are in the College of Education.

Table I.1, below, presents the figures for full-time faculty members. All faculty members are highly qualified in the areas in which they provide leadership and instruction. Most members

of the faculty have many years of PreK-12 classroom experience, and most hold terminal degrees.

Table I.1: Full-Time Faculty by Rank and Tenure Status, Administrators, and Graduate Teaching Assistants in the Professional Education Unit

Academic Rank	Number of Tenured Faculty	Number of Non-Tenured Faculty	
		On Tenure Track	Not on Tenure Track
	Fall 2006	Fall 2006	Fall 2006
Professors	9	0	0
Associate Professors	11	0	0
Assistant Professors	4	5	0
Instructors	0	2	0
Lectures	0	0	7
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Graduate Teaching Assistants	25		
Administrators	4		

Programs (on-campus and off-campus)

The programs offered in the Professional Education Unit by the College of Education are outlined in Table I.3, below in this section.

The Professional Education Unit extends beyond the main campus to offer M.Ed. and MAT programs at the University System of Maryland in Hagerstown (USMH). Additionally, the undergraduate Early Childhood and Elementary Education interns have the option of completing their internships in the Professional Development Schools (PDS) located in Washington and Frederick Counties. The off-campus programs and individual courses are identical in content and structure as their counterparts on main campus. The courses are taught by a combination of on-campus faculty, FSU Educational Professions faculty located in the USMH, qualified PDS faculty, and adjuncts. Faculties at both locations often use distance learning, blended (combined face-to-face and online courses), and online supported technologies to facilitate dialogs between main campus and off-campus candidates.

The Master of Education programs have a long tradition in Hagerstown. Beginning with the Curriculum & Instruction program in 1989 in the former FSU Hagerstown Center, M.Ed. programs grew to include courses in Reading, Administration & Supervision, and Special Education. By the time the programs moved into the USMH building in January 2005, all courses in each of the following programs were offered: Curriculum & Instruction, Special Education, and Administration & Supervision. Reading offered all courses except the clinic. These programs continue to grow at USMH.

The MAT Elementary and Secondary programs are offered at the USMH location. The MAT Elementary program began in 1999 and continues to offer the complete program only in Hagerstown. The Secondary program began in 2003 on the Frostburg campus; and it was initiated in Hagerstown in 2005.

Technology is a critical part of the delivery strategies for off-campus programs. Several courses, such as: EDUC-640, CUIN-660, and REED-620 & 637 consistently use distance learning. With the advent of blended courses, instructors have utilized blended instruction for the following courses: EDUC-590 *Special Topics in Education* for the A& S program, SPED-601/603, CUIN-614/615/618, and 621. The REED-617, CUIN 615, and SPED 561/602 courses are occasionally offered through complete online delivery. Additionally, both MAT programs rely

heavily on web-enhanced instruction (Blackboard) to continue communication and delivery when candidates are working in their PDSs.

Major Changes

Other institutional changes occurred over the past several years that have impacted the Professional Education Unit. Among the most significant is the declining enrollment of students throughout the entire University. Many feel the lack of marketing and failure to maintain active relationships with feeder institutions has had a negative impact on the number of students applying to the institution. The new president and the new Professional Education Unit Head are both actively working to reverse the recent decline in enrollments. Several traditional predictors of enrollments seem to indicate the beginnings of a change in the positive direction. A new Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management has been hired who will provide leadership in areas of enrollment and retention. A Vice President of Marketing and Media Relations position has been created, and a search for a highly qualified professional is underway. The individual accepting the latter position will offer leadership in raising the visibility and image of the institution.

At the Unit level, the Master of Arts in Secondary Education program was created since our last accreditation visit to provide pedagogical and professional preparation for career changers and students who are in secondary majors with large content credit hour requirements. This major currently is available to prospective secondary school teachers wishing to teach English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Earth Science, Chemistry, Art, or Foreign Language.

In the fall of 2006, the Faculty Senate approved offering the Early Childhood Education program at the USM in Hagerstown Center. Cohorts to this program are expected to be candidates from the local area that for one reason or another cannot travel away from the region. The first group of candidates will begin coursework in the fall of 2007.

Finally, the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation is being reorganized to make Recreation into its own department. Presently, the two areas are being administered by co-chairs, one for Health /Physical Education (HPE) and one for Recreation, as we transition into the new configuration. The main purpose for this division is to give both HPE and recreation their own identity which will support the different missions of the two departments.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theme of our conceptual framework *Linked Hands, Heads, and Hearts: Building Powerful Learning Communities* has not changed since the last NCATE visit. The Unit conceptual framework, first drafted in January 1999, was approved by the Unit faculty and Steering Committee in September 1999. University and Education faculty, and PreK-12 faculty reviewed the document in July 2000, which resulted in minor revisions and changes in wording of indicators under the Unit outcomes of the conceptual framework. After final revisions, the conceptual framework was approved by the Steering Committee and Unit faculty in October 2000.

The Unit has a single conceptual framework for initial and advanced programs. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles and the Institutional Performance Criteria of the *Maryland Redesign of Teacher Education* were considered and incorporated.

Mission and Vision

Consistent with and guided by the University and Unit mission statements, as well as the newly created *Institutional Learning Goals*, the Unit outcomes associated with the Conceptual Framework clearly and consistently communicates its committed to preparing professionals dedicated to success, capable of providing leadership in the classroom, committed to continually assess and reflect on their own practices, motivated to collaborate with their professional communities, and driven to advocate for their profession; and who can positively impact the education profession and improve the learning of PreK-12 students.

Philosophy and Goals

Professional programs are designed to reflect the current knowledge base that supports each program content and effective practices, based on national standards and research that meet the needs of the state and the region. The program development process fosters the building and enhancement of collaborations with the professional community, including the faculty in liberal arts and sciences. Program implementation requires the necessary administrative support to enable candidates, college, and Unit faculty to accomplish outcomes and to enhance learning/scholarly opportunities for candidates, graduate assistants, faculty, and staff. Program delivery promotes the implementation of technology plans that lead to technological fluency for students in all programs. A general assumption is that the Education graduates are skilled practitioners who are prepared with essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their fields of specialization and commit themselves to serve the cause of social justice.

Knowledge Base and Candidate Proficiencies

The Professional Education Unit believes that students deserve teachers who are totally committed to the profession and who display advocacy for children and their communities. We believe that these totally dedicated teachers link the resources of home, school, and community to build powerful classroom learning environments. The conceptual framework is much like a metaphor that expresses the major attributes—knowledge, skills, and dispositions—that our graduates should exhibit. These *attributes* represent the six *outcomes* described in the Conceptual Framework, and that the Unit expects its graduates to demonstrate in their professional fields. They are:

- I. Dedicated Professional
- II. Instructional Leader
- III. Continuous Assessor
- IV. Educational Advocate
- V. Collaborative Bridge Builder
- VI. Reflective Decision-Maker.

I. Dedicated Professional

Indicators:

- I.1 exhibits a solid base of content and professional knowledge and continues to build upon that base as a life-long learner
- I.2 possesses a sound knowledge of curriculum as influenced by local, state, and national standards
- I.3 exhibits professional dispositions (e.g. caring, ethical, passionate, and responsible)
- I.4 communicates effectively in spoken, written, visual, and technology-assisted forms of expression

I.5 adheres to professional codes of ethics and strives toward professional leadership

The dedicated professional candidate is knowledgeable, ethical, committed, passionate, responsible, caring, and a life-long learner. This person possesses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to practice at a high quality level; acts on a set of principles that result in positive interactions with others; makes long-term promises and keeps them; can be counted on to make a worthwhile contribution to his or her learning community; accepts and uses new data, and continually seeks new knowledge and develops new skills and dispositions.

II. Instructional Leader

Indicators:

- II.1 promotes active learning
- II.2 communicates high expectations for all students
- II.3 creates effective learning environments
- II.4 manages student behavior appropriately
- II.5 accommodates for a range of differences in culture, developmental levels, and learning styles
- II.6 models innovation and creativity in teaching
- II.7 uses a variety of instructional/educational strategies
- II.8 develops activities which promote problem-solving and critical thinking
- II.9 uses technology appropriately to promote learning
- II.10 exhibits skills in long-range and short-range planning
- II.11 uses a variety of questioning strategies

An instructional leader maintains an energetic process of getting others to understand, contribute to, and commit fully to meet agreed-upon outcomes. Instructional leaders can be students, teachers, parents, and other members within and outside of the educational environment. All members of the school community become leaders in some way.

III. Continuous Assessor

Indicators:

- III.1 demonstrates understanding of the concepts, purposes, strategies, and best practices of assessment
- III.2 uses curriculum standards as indicators of student learning to create or select appropriate assessments
- III.3 uses various assessment strategies to accommodate all learners
- III.4 creates and/or uses multiple assessment measures that are authentic to real world situations
- III.5 uses technology to facilitate the collection and interpretation of data
- III.6 collects, analyzes, and uses assessment data to improve instruction/learning
- III.7 demonstrates understanding of how classroom assessment contributes to the process and purpose of educational research
- III.8 monitors and reports student/school progress effectively and professionally

As continuous assessors, candidates are expected to effectively use formal and informal methods within the classroom and school to measure student learning. These assessment strategies may take the form of very objective instruments or more authentic, real life tasks. Candidates also are expected to aggregate, analyze, and use results of performance data to inform their instruction.

IV. Educational Advocate

Indicators:

- IV.1 embraces the belief that all students have the right and the ability to learn
- IV.2 exhibits enthusiasm for the subject matter he/she teaches
- IV.3 participates in organizations that promote the professions of education
- IV.4 is committed to equal access to quality public education for all students
- IV.5 encourages programs that work to ensure safe school, home, and community environments
- IV.6 supports initiatives to make schools technologically rich environments for learning
- IV.7 values the increasingly diverse nature of current and emerging school populations

Graduates of all Professional Education Unit programs are expected to be actively engaged in activities that improve and enhance the lives of all those in the educational community. Throughout the undergraduate and graduate programs, candidates are encouraged to become actively involved in change that will increase everyone's right to learn, lead to enhanced subject matter development, add to the development of all educational professions, strengthen public education, enrich their communities, assure the benefits of education to all, and seek ways in which technology can enhance learning through constructivist teaching.

V. Collaborative Bridge Builder

Indicators:

- V.1 promotes cooperative learning opportunities
- V.2 links subject matter within and across disciplines and grade/school levels
- V.3 builds effective school/home/community partnerships
- V.4 creates powerful learning communities within and beyond the classroom and the school
- V.5 treats all students and members of the educational community equitably and respectfully

To be successful, teachers must work collaboratively with others within the school and throughout the larger community. For the education of the child to be effective, a team of school teachers, support staff, and administrators along with parents and members of the community need to be involved.

VI. Reflective Decision-Maker

Indicators:

- VI.1 views classroom instruction as a continuous set of decision-making opportunities
- VI.2 exhibits ability to identify and analyze classroom/school problems
- VI.3 monitors effectiveness of one's own practices/decisions
- VI.4 strives for continuous self-improvement as measured by learner success data
- VI.5 encourages students to engage in thoughtful, productive self-criticism
- VI.6 analyzes results of research-based best practices for planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment

All educators are involved in making decisions as part of the educational community in which they operate. In order to ensure that these decisions are not thoughtless and reactive, educators need to spend quality time reflecting on those decisions and their effect on the learner and other members of the community. Educators who are reflective decision-makers will see their world and their work through multiple lenses; they will value self-reflection and strive to support reflection among their colleagues.

Conceptual Framework Revision and Changes

The Conceptual Framework at Frostburg State University has provided the underlying philosophy and goals for all programs in the Unit since its inception in 2000. Developed through surveys and consensus work, the Conceptual Framework became part of program handbooks, syllabi, and Unit assessments such as student intern evaluation forms. In addition, it became the structural organization of the candidates' required initial certification portfolios. Candidates are introduced to the Conceptual Framework (including the expected outcomes of the Conceptual Framework) at the beginning of their program coursework and build upon that knowledge throughout the program. As the Conceptual Framework became more the driving force of the Unit, several issues arose:

- With the demands of No Child Left Behind, more assessment became included in teacher responsibilities. Therefore, additional modifications were needed under the area of the Continuous Assessor section of our Conceptual Framework to ensure candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A Unit-wide committee was formed and worked to propose a new set of indicators. The Educational Professions Department and the Health and Physical Education and Recreation Department subsequently approved the changes and intern forms will reflect the changes in spring2007.
- The current conceptual framework was modeled on the initial teacher education programs, and does not adequately reflect the graduate programs.

To update and revise the Conceptual Framework and create more applicable indicators for advanced programs, the *Conceptual Framework* committee was formed with representation from undergraduate and graduate program stakeholders. The revision work began in the spring 2006 semester. The revision process covers the review of the mission, vision, purposes, and components of the conceptual framework. The committee has solicited feedback from all faculty in the Unit as well as stakeholders in the public schools, examined models from other institutions, compiled the input gathered, and analyzed the results. The committee is ready to circulate drafts of new Vision and Mission Statements to the Unit members for their review and study. The goal is to keep the conceptual framework as an evolving structure that reflects the development of programs in the Unit. At the time of the writing of this report, the conceptual framework revision is a work in progress.

Assessment of Candidate Performance

All programs within the Unit have identified learning goals that relate to professional standards, state content standards, and student learning outcomes. Programs utilize a variety of assessments to measure outcomes: standardized tests, comprehensive exams, internship evaluations, entrance and exit interviews, creation of integrated and concept units, service learning projects, and developmental and showcase portfolios. The Unit has a comprehensive system to assess candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The sequence of the Unit's system for all candidates includes admission to the University, and decision points that are program-specific and determine the movement of candidates through the program. The assessment system also describes the process for data collection, tabulation, and analysis; program changes/improvement; evaluation of Unit operation and checking for evidence of fairness, accuracy, consistency, and non-bias.

The Unit conducts follow-up studies and focus groups to evaluate the preparation of its graduates. The follow-up surveys and focus groups enable the Unit to seek suggestions and recommendations to improve programs, to demonstrate how well practices follow the

conceptual framework and Unit outcomes, and to share aggregated results with leadership teams and advisory councils.

EVIDENCE OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Shared Vision

The Unit's conceptual framework, designed with the assistance and participation of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty and Pre-K-12 representatives, conveys a vision for the preparation of quality educators. This framework supports and guides planning and instruction. It also serves as a guide for assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher candidates and other school professionals in the Unit. This conceptual framework is based on faculty beliefs about those attributes that were already evident in excellent students completing the professional education program and what additional attributes and outcomes would make already strong students into excellent professionals. The Conceptual Framework reflects a collective professional judgment about what graduates should know, be able to do, and be disposed to do in order to insure the positive impact on the students with whom they will work.

Coherence

The Conceptual Framework has been consistently used by faculty members in the professional education programs as a guide for redesigning the programs, syllabi, assessments, and early field and intern evaluation forms. Major course assignments and assessments across programs provide evidence that all candidates can demonstrate each of the six attributes included in the Conceptual Framework. All course syllabi within programs of the Unit follow a specific format. This ensures uniformity in the communication of student learning outcomes, congruence with the conceptual framework, and assessments of each course outcome. Rubrics are utilized for a majority of course assessments. Course assessment data and course/faculty evaluations are continually utilized to revise syllabi.

Professional Commitments and Dispositions

The Conceptual Framework itself incorporates the knowledge, skills, dispositions that Unit faculty value. The Unit's professional commitments to knowledge, teaching competence, and student learning are evident in the *Building Powerful Learning Communities* section of our theme, in the listed outcomes and in the indicators under each outcome. In addition, the *Linking Heads, Hands, and Hearts* component of our theme provides the basis for the six outcomes which incorporate professional dispositions.

Different indicators under all six outcomes emphasize the importance of initial and advanced candidates being proficient in the knowledge and skills of their specialties, and being reflective practitioners to secure effective learning environments for their students. The alignment of programs and performance assessments with the conceptual framework further validates the Unit's commitments to knowledge, teaching competence, and student learning. Also, the numbered items under the outcomes provide the foundation for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions found in the syllabi.

Revisions and Changes

During the past two years, the Unit's desire to assess a core set of the professional dispositions led to the creation of the *Professional Dispositions* committee in the spring of 2006. This committee charge is to analyze, assess, and monitor the knowledge base and skill

development of professional dispositions common to all programs. The committee's revision process includes review of research, assessment strategies, programs, and models that would help in the design of a Unit set of professional dispositions. The Unit is examining the key formative assessments within each program to determine their approach for measuring their candidates' growth at critical points in their development.

The goal is to design a disposition assessment model that evaluates candidates' development of professional dispositions as they move through the programs. These formative data also allows for the evaluation of the Unit and programs effectiveness in helping candidates develop appropriate professional dispositions. (A detailed description of the revision process is filed in the documents room.)

Commitment to Diversity

The Unit's commitment to diversity is immersed in the context of the University's commitment to diversity. The University's program of general education requires that each student enroll in a course that explores issues of identity and difference. Opportunities for individual exploration in issues of identity and difference are offered in the courses listed under the General Education Program in the 2005-2007 undergraduate catalog.

The concept of diversity is woven throughout the Conceptual Framework. The Unit's Conceptual Framework provides a basis for conceptual understanding of how knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to diversity are integrated across the curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, assessments, and evaluations. This is confirmed at the initial and advanced levels through course syllabi that document an emphasis on diversity, required field experience and practicum settings with diverse student populations, the intern evaluation instrument, and other assessments that evaluate candidates' ability to work with and assist all students, and disposition assessments that rate candidates' respect for cultural and individual differences. Detailed accounts of how candidates in the initial and advanced programs demonstrate the expected dispositions are described throughout this report.

In addition, *Diversity*, defined as the "College of Education's commitment to serve and advance the cause of social justice", is one of the four focus areas for assisting candidates in achieving the goals described in the three-year Strategic Plan for the College of Education, (2005 College of Education 2005 Strategic Plan)

Commitment to Technology

The Unit recognizes that technology plays a crucial role in teaching and learning. Our commitment to technology is infused into outcomes I, II, and III of the Conceptual Framework. Technology is used in the preparation and delivery of instruction, communications, management of instruction, assessment, and data management. Initial certification candidates are required to demonstrate their skills in using technology by meeting the Maryland Teacher Technology Standards (MTTS). They are evaluated on technology knowledge, skills, and dispositions throughout their coursework and their internships. Advanced program candidates are required to use technology appropriately in their disciplines in coursework and clinical experiences. Candidates in initial certification programs use TaskStream, an electronic assessment management system, for lesson planning, design of websites, and submission of major program assessments. Through TaskStream, faculty can grade assessments, and data from these assessments can be aggregated.

Candidate Proficiencies Aligned with Professional and State Standards

All programs and syllabi reflect the conceptual framework and appropriate professional program standards. The following table depicts the alignment of the Unit's Conceptual Framework with the NCATE Standards and the *Maryland Redesign of Teacher Education* Components.