**Standard 3: CANDIDATE QUALITY, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTIVITY**

*The provider demonstrates that the quality of candidates is a continuing and purposeful part of its responsibility from recruitment, at admission, through the progression of courses and clinical experiences, and to decisions that completers are prepared to teach effectively and are recommended for certification. The provider demonstrates that development of candidate quality is the goal of educator preparation in all phases of the program. This process is ultimately determined by a program’s meeting of Standard 4.*

3.1 Plan for Recruitment of Diverse Candidates Who Meet Employment Needs

The College of Education (COE) is dedicated to providing highly qualified, effective teachers for our state, our region, and the country. While data indicates approximately 85% of our graduates accept teaching positions in South Dakota, we are cognizant of the need to prepare teachers for a wider range of service. (Note: Of the remaining 15%, many are Minnesota residents attending DSU because of proximity, family ties, and program reputation. They go back to their home state upon graduation as reported in the *Graduate Outcome Data*.)

As part of the DSU Strategic Plan, the COE identified plans and goals to recruit candidates who will complete the education program and enter the teacher work force. During the 2014-15 academic year, an Education Expo was held as a focused *Discover DSU Day.* This was the first time a day was dedicated just to those interested in the teacher preparation programs. Approximately 30 potential students spent the day with COE faculty, students, and staff to better understand the programs and opportunities within the teacher preparation program. All of the high school seniors attending that event completed the application to DSU that day. Plans are underway to hold an Education Expo Day in the fall of 2015 and moving forward. The success of the Education Expo is attributed, in part, to the hands-on experiences and interaction with current college students and faculty. While more data is needed to determine if this program will be effective in the long run, preliminary attendance numbers, and resulting application numbers, are certainly encouraging.

During the first semester, all freshmen participate in GS 100, a Freshman Orientation program, in which students are placed in small groups facilitated by their academic advisor. The group meets weekly in an effort to help students begin to build relationships with their academic advisor and others in the same major. Topics of discussion include calculating GPA, exploration of volunteer opportunities, understanding the program check sheet, study habits, teacher education clubs, tutoring opportunities, and preparing a class schedule for the next semester. GS 100 has proven to be an effective way for faculty to get to know their new advisees and provides candidates with tools needed to be successful college students.

The latest census figures shows South Dakota’s population as 83.3% Caucasian, 8.9% Native American, 3.4% Hispanic/Latino, 1.2%Asian, and 1.9% African American (two or more races are 2.1%). In land mass, South Dakota is the 17th largest state in the US; in population it is ranked at 46th. Of interest is SD has the nation’s largest population of Hutterites and German is the state’s 4th most spoken language after English, Spanish, and Lakota. Approximately 35% of our incoming freshman classes come from the Lake+6 Area (Counties of Lake, Brookings, Kingsbury, McCook, Miner, and Moody). University-wide, about 75% of students come from South Dakota, so DSU is very regional in scope.

In the teacher education program students are predominantly Caucasian, with Native American, African American, and Asian students noted. We are well aware our teacher candidate body does not reflect the diversity of America’s P-12 student body; we are more in line with the demographics of the state of South Dakota where approximately 85% of our graduates teach upon graduation.

The COE demonstrates knowledge of the community, state, regional, and national needs for hard-to-staff schools and shortage fields by remaining in close contact with partner schools to assist as needed, and serving on community, state, regional, and national committees. Close ties are established with the South Dakota Department of Education in an effort to remain current with state teacher needs and best practices in teacher certification. Within the COE, the teacher shortage areas are often discussed and teacher candidates are encouraged to discuss options with their academic advisor or the Director of Field Services. Students often enter the COE with the idea of becoming an elementary teacher; some change their majors to elementary education/special education after consultation when they understand the areas of demand and job opportunities. The placement rate for all education majors remains consistently high. The STEM fields are supported through faculty intervention, the Women in STEM group, and certain grant opportunities. Placement rates for the past three years available show the COE’s commitment to providing teachers to the state and region.

During the 2013-14 academic year, the Governor of South Dakota instituted a scholarship program to support candidates going into high-needs areas of special education and STEM. The Critical Teaching Needs Scholarship awarded 19 scholarships across all public, private, and tribal universities in South Dakota. Of the 19, four students were DSU teacher education candidates; three were elementary education/special education majors and one a math education major. The program continued during the 2014-15 with four College of Education students awarded. Again, three elementary education/special education majors and one math education major were selected.

Occasionally the SD Department of Education (DOE) requests the COE assist a district to help a teacher add endorsements or complete programs needed by the district. We analyze the candidate’s transcripts to determine coursework, field experiences, and testing needed to meet certification requirements. This example demonstrates our willingness to address local and state needs and a willingness to work with the DOE and districts to meet staffing needs.

The Career Placement Office maintains a job bank where current DSU alumni can access announcements for teaching positions. In addition, superintendents and principals contact the COE office to inquire about soon-to-graduate candidates.

Current placement rates can be found in the evidence guide, but of note is the elementary education/special education program with virtually 100% placement year after year. Graduates of this program are sought after for positions in special education, but also in the elementary classroom because of their knowledge and skills in working with children with disabilities, as well as working with students who do not qualify for services. Principals seek teacher with the additional preparation in working effectively with all learners. The College of Education is proud that many student teachers have signed contracts well before the completion of the student teaching semester.

3.2 Admission Standards Indicate That Candidates have High Academic Achievement and Ability

The COE admission to teacher education process systematically reviews candidate progress and brings forth the application data to the Student Assessment and Monitoring (SAM) Committee for action. The SAM Committee consists of COE administrators and faculty, the DSU Registrar, a representative from the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Office, area principals, cooperating teachers, and an education major.

Throughout the program candidates are monitored in field experiences and college classrooms for knowledge, skills, and dispositions conducive to effective teaching. Check points include a) GS 100, b) EDFN 295, c) Admission to Teacher Education, d) Level III Completion, e) Admission to Student Teaching, f) Student Teaching, and g) program completion, as well as monitoring of GPA and field experiences in selected courses. Copies of evaluation forms and data tables, along with discussion, is available in the evidence section.

As shown in the data tables, the cohorts meet the criteria of grade point average and performance on nationally normed ability/achievement assessments. Most COE students took the ACT prior to high school graduation; a few have taken the SAT.

The data tables indicate the GPAs for the cohorts are above the CAEP minimum requirements of 3.0 with averages of 3.28, 3.26, and 3.22 during the reporting years. Average ACT scores are slightly higher than the 2014 South Dakota average ACT score of 21.9. The national average ACT score was 21.0 in 2014 showing the cohorts were slightly higher than the national average, too.

As noted in the *Application for Admission to Teacher Education* packet in the evidence section, the COE has admissions requirements candidates must meet in order to progress in the program. To be admitted to the teacher education program a candidate must meet the requirements for grade point average, successful completion of key courses with a grade of “C” or better, complete volunteer hours requirement, successfully complete an interview with a faculty member and a senior COE student, prepare an electronic portfolio with artifacts, and successfully complete the Praxis CORE exam.

The *Application for Admission to Student Teaching* process and packet is another check point in which data is collected to determine if a student is accepted into the capstone experience of the program, student teaching. Candidates must maintain stated cumulative and major GPAs, complete coursework with a grade of “C” or better, complete the Level III field experience successfully, and have all coursework completed prior to the student teaching semester.

3.3 Additional Selectivity Factors

*Educator preparation providers establish and monitor attributes and dispositions beyond academic ability that candidates must demonstrate at admission s and during the program. The provider selects criteria, describes the measures used and evidence of the reliability and validity of those measures, and reports data that show how the academic and non-academic factors predict candidate performance in the program and effective teaching.*

The COE measures effective attributes and dispositions through the Dispositions Survey that is administered at three key points during the teacher preparation program. Incoming freshmen complete a Disposition Survey during GS 100 and this serves as a baseline to show growth and development throughout the program. At the end of the Level III field experience, the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and candidate rate the candidate’s dispositions. At the end of student teaching, the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and candidate rate the candidate’s dispositions. Candidates are able to access the information in the database and see how they were rated by others and how they rated themselves for comparative purposes. If a candidate exhibits dispositional areas of concern in an education course, the course professor can fill out a dispositions referral in order to formally address the area(s) of concern.

Another way the COE measures effective attributes and dispositions is by using requiring completion of a *Disclosure of Convictions for Certification in South Dakota* as part of the Admission to Teacher Education application process. Candidates disclose any convictions of crimes, either felony or misdemeanor (except for minor traffic violations) including convictions involving drugs and alcohol. Court documents supporting the disclosed information must be provided as part of the application process. It is possible that this disclosure could lead to the candidate counseled out of the program. The Director of Field Services monitors the disclosures and meets with individual students as needed.

As part of the Admission to Teacher Education process, candidates sign the *Expectations for Professional Conduct* form which says they will abide by the COE’s expectations for professional dispositions such as working with others, meeting deadlines, attending class, being punctual, and following the South Dakota Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers. They also submit two *Professional Performance Appraisal System* recommendations completed by faculty, one of whom is their academic advisor.

Another measure used by the COE upon Admission to Teacher Education application is the interview. Candidates are interviewed by a faculty member and a senior education student. The interview focuses on effective dispositions of teachers, the COE Conceptual Framework and key topics from the three introductory education courses. The interview results help students identify areas of strength and areas of potential concern as they progress through the program.

Candidates going through the Admission to Student Teaching process update the *Disclosure of Convictions for Certification in South Dakota* form and submit recommendations from faculty and the Level III university supervisor. These documents address character issues and dispositional attributes of the candidate and serve as another measure that demonstrates the candidate’s readiness to progress to student teaching and program completion.

Candidates who apply for student teaching must submit to a criminal background check as mandated by South Dakota state law. Each person hired by a school district (or student teaching in a district) must undergo a criminal background investigation by means of fingerprint checks by the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). While this does not address dispositions it is another measure the COE uses to determine a candidate’s readiness for the classroom.

3.4 Selectivity During Preparation

*The provider creates criteria for program progression and monitors candidates’ advancement from admissions through completion. All candidates demonstrate the ability to teach to college and career-ready standards. Providers present multiple forms of evidence to indicate candidates’ developing content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and the integration of technology in all of these domains.*

Candidates are carefully monitored throughout the program and records are maintained through individual student files as well as by electronic means in the database. Level I, II, and III observations and/or evaluations by university supervisors and cooperating teachers monitor student progress through a series of courses and field experiences. Students are rated on the Conceptual Framework Concepts, based on the work of Charlotte Danielson, the InTASC Standards, and program specific SPA standards. During Level IV, student teaching, candidates receive feedback from scripted observations performed by the university supervisor and from daily feedback from the cooperating teacher.

At any point in the program a candidate may be referred for academic, dispositional, or field experience performance issues. The candidate works closely with professors, cooperating teachers, and the Director of Field Services to remediate any area(s) of concern. Referrals are made through the Starfish system used by the university, by use of dispositional referrals at the college level, and by discussion with the Director of Field Services. Formal professional development plans can be utilized to assist the candidate, as well as informal measures of additional observations, focused content coursework, or additional field experience.

Candidates use the Common Core State Standards to develop lesson plans for K-12 delivery. Candidates receive extensive training on lesson plan writing to measure their understanding of the link between the standards, objectives, lesson delivery, assessment, and reflection on student learning. Lesson plans are evaluated in various classes that include Level II field experiences in which students deliver lessons in selected classrooms. Lesson plans are more extensively evaluated during the Level III semester and student teaching experiences so candidates demonstrate mastery of lesson planning and the importance of following standards in effective ways. Candidates show their impact on student learning through the use of the Teaching Work Sample.

Candidates must pass the Praxis content exam in their major area of preparation prior to student teaching. No candidate may begin student teaching without a passing score on their Praxis content exam. They must also pass the Praxis PLT exam as a means to determine preparedness in the area of pedagogical knowledge. Candidates cannot be certified as teachers without passing scores on the Praxis content exam and Praxis PLT exam.

Technology is central to the mission of Dakota State University; all education majors complete coursework that leads to an endorsement in K-12 Educational Technology and they are often viewed as technology leaders in the buildings in which they student teach. Technology is infused into all education courses and students are able to use software and hardware effectively and integrate technology into the lessons they teach in K-12.

3.5 Selection at Completion

*Before the provider recommends any completing candidate for licensure or certification, it documents that the candidate has reached a high standard for content knowledge in the fields where certification is sought and can teach effectively with positive impacts on P-12 student learning and development.*

The South Dakota Board of Regents, who govern the public universities in the state, mandated that all teacher candidates pass the Praxis content exam in their area of preparation prior to student teaching. This exam is standardized and demonstrates the candidate’s knowledge of content. In order to be certified in South Dakota, a candidate must successfully pass the Praxis content exam in their major area of preparation and the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) pedagogy exam.

The COE uses the Teaching Work Sample (TWS) project to measure positive impact on P-12 student learning and development. No candidate can pass student teaching without successfully completing the TWS at the expected level.

Extensive lesson planning helps candidates understand the relationship between Common Core State Standards (CCSS), lesson objectives, lesson delivery, and assessment. Daily reflection on lessons allow the candidate to systematically analyze what went well in a lesson, what may not have gone well, and any factors that may have impacted student learning. Analysis of the lesson and assessment results drive the planning of instruction for subsequent days. The Student Teaching Assessment Form (STAF) includes a section on content and pedagogical knowledge and candidates tend to be rated proficient in these areas.

3.6 Professional Conduct

*Before the provider recommends any completing candidate for licensure or certification, it documents that the candidate understands the expectations of the profession, including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant laws and policies. CAEP monitors the development of measures that assess candidates’ success and revises standards in light of new results.*

At the beginning of the student teaching experience, candidates attend a series of seminars, one of which is to go over the *Student Teaching Handbook*. The “Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers” is discussed in depth and covers a teacher’s obligation to students, obligations to the public, and obligations to the profession. Candidates sign a verification form that they know, understand, and will follow the items outlined in the *Student Teaching Handbook.*

Candidates attend a “Credentials File” workshop and the Director of Career Placement covers the process of applying for, interviewing, accepting, and fulfilling a contract. The Career Placement Office hosts “Practice with the Pros,” a mock interview event in which candidates have the opportunity to take part in a practice interview with an area principal or superintendent. Administrators routinely discuss the protocols for accepting a contract and what to expect during the first year of employment.

The *Student Teaching Assessment Form (STAF)* contains a section on professionalism; this allows the COE to monitor candidate performance while in the field. As noted earlier, dispositional referrals can be made through Starfish SPED 100 and EDFN 338 are introductory education courses and each covers relevant laws and policies governing education in the United States.