



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

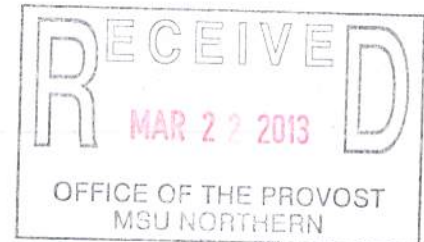
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MEMORANDUM

March 20, 2013

TO: Dr. Christine Shearer-Cremeau, Dean
College of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Nursing
Montana State University-Northern

FROM: Dr. Linda Vrooman Peterson, Administrator
Accreditation and Educator Preparation



SUBJECT: State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report

The State On-Site Accreditation Focus Review Team has completed the State Exit Report of the February 6-7, 2013, state accreditation review of the Professional Education Unit (Unit) of the College of Education at Montana State University-Northern (MSU-N). The State Exit Report includes the narrative summaries of the focused review and the required next steps. The report is attached.

Please examine the State Exit Report and corresponding Narrative Summaries correcting errors and omissions. Return those corrections and omissions to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) within 30 days from the receipt of the State Exit Report. The Unit may write a rejoinder to the report as needed.

The team recommends to the Superintendent of Public Instruction approval of the advanced graduate programs in School Counseling and Instruction and Learning of the Professional Education Unit of the College of Education at MSU-N. The Office of Public Instruction will monitor the ongoing progress of the collection, analysis, and regular and systematic use of data to improve both candidate performance and program quality.

The time line of the approval process is outlined below.

- April 19, 2013 – Unit provides corrections, omissions, and rejoinder, as necessary
- May 24, 2013 – Final action presentation before the Board of Public Education (BPE) – Great Falls
- January 15, 2014 – First annual outcomes report due to the Office of Public Instruction

For more information, contact Linda Vrooman Peterson by telephone, (406) 444-5726, or by e-mail, lvpeterson@mt.gov.

cc: Dr. Rosalynn Templeton, Provost, MSU-N
Audrey Peterson, Focus Review Team Chairperson
Dennis Parman, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction
Nancy Coopersmith, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction

Attachments

**State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report
Professional Education Unit at Montana State University – Northern
February 6 - 7, 2013**

Audrey Peterson, Chairperson

February 6-7, 2013 a three-person team conducted an on-site accreditation focus review of the Graduate Education Programs at Montana State University-Northern (MSU-Northern). The purpose of the focused on-site review was to verify whether those standards previously determined as being “met with weakness” now adequately meet the standards. Listed below are the standards the review team examined during the focused on-site visit.

- ARM 10.58.305 Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
(Advanced Program Met with Weakness)

- ARM 10.58.601 Program Planning and Development (Met with Weakness)

- ARM 10.58.603 Assessment of Advanced Programs (Met with Weakness)

While the graduate programs at MSU-N have consistently provided assessments of student competencies in a wide range of assignments and strategies, review teams in past visits have been unable to document the presence of a coherent system for collecting and aggregating the data from these assessments. Such a system, tied to selected meaningful assessments, provides authentic data, which over time, reveal overall program successes and challenges, and also clarify for faculty specific program areas deserving further attention in curriculum and/or candidate performance.

During this focused accreditation review, the three-person team examined the evidence provided by the Graduate Education Programs and interviewed faculty, administrators, and current and graduated candidates of the specific programs being reviewed.

The review team was able to verify the existence of a plan for collecting data at salient points in the program, including the addition of standardized exit assessments and post-graduation surveys to be completed by program graduates and their employers. The types of data to be collected tie to program objectives and professional standards. As well, the areas of concern identified in the December 10, 2012 memo have been addressed, and the additional materials requested in the memo of January 18, 2013 have been provided.



The report of the February 2013 focus review team's findings follows.

ARM	TITLE	STATUS
ARM 10.58.305	Assessment System and Unit Evaluation	MET w/Notation
ARM 10.58.601	Program Planning and Development School Counseling Instruction and Learning	MET w/Notation
ARM 10.58.603	Assessment of Advanced Programs School Counseling Instruction and Learning	MET w/Notation

Next Steps

- Because there are still no aggregated data available for review, the graduate programs at MSU-N must populate their assessment system with data and report outcomes regularly and systematically to their stakeholders.
- Beginning January 2014, the graduate programs at MSU-N must annually report outcomes to the Office of Public Instruction.
- The graduate programs should move from the use of a spreadsheet for recording data into database applications that offer opportunities for deeper data analysis and comparisons.
- Attention is needed to bolster the governance of the graduate programs in the overall MSU-N structure. Because it seemed to the review team that the graduate faculty members are running these programs in isolation with few to no other participants from MSU-N, the team recommends clear and obvious placement of these programs in the institutional governance structure with better implementation of the oversight and support (e.g., resources for data management) inherent in that governance structure. Further, in keeping with this oversight, MSU-N would do well to assure that the larger professional community is involved as resources for these programs, and to assure that Advisory Boards are well organized and meet regularly. In conducting interviews the team became aware of almost universal good will and enthusiasm among area professionals for working with these graduate programs on advisory boards; as supervisors; as reviewers and contributors to development of forms, surveys and other instruments; and as recipients of the information that assesses the success of candidates and programs. The team also found considerable confusion among area professionals about the purposes of the activities they currently are part of, when they meet, and what their roles are.



- With regard to the program preparing School Counselors, MSU-N is urged to follow up on policy recommendations to the Graduate Council from the November 2012 site visit. Because the Counselor Education program has a dual focus but also results in the granting of licenses to those who will become School Counselors, it is essential that the program give emphasis to developing the professional identity of the school counselors, including the understanding and promoting of the school counseling role, the joining of professional associations, attendance at meetings for school counselors, and keeping up with school counseling literature.



**State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report
Professional Education Unit at Montana State University – Northern
February 6 - 7, 2013**

Narrative Summary Report

ARM 10.58.305 ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AND UNIT EVALUATION

Area for Improvement: The advanced programs must design, develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system that includes aggregation of data in addition to the existing array of disaggregated individual student data.

Sources of Evidence: Status Update: Graduate Programs, December 10, 2012; General Meeting Overview with Rosalyn Templeton, Christine Shearer-Creman, Darlene Setters, Curtis Smeby, and John Foley; Interviews with Debra Bradley, Enrolled Candidates and Graduates of School Counseling and Instruction and Learning Programs; Advisory Council; Site Supervisors

Summary of Findings: The advanced graduate programs have developed an assessment system, a plan for collecting data at salient points in the program, including the addition of standardized exit assessments and post-graduation surveys to be completed by program graduates and their employers. As required by ARM 10.58.305 (1)(a), the professional community has been involved to some extent in development of this system. As required by ARM 10.58.305 (1)(b), the Graduate Education Program faculty have mapped the plan to collect and use regular comprehensive information ... regularly and systematically compiled or summarized for analyses to improve candidate performance, program quality or unit operations. The advanced graduate faculty have begun to focus their data collection on the key assessments tied to the standards and to analyze, share and use data to evaluate the efficacy of courses, program and clinical experiences as required by ARM 10.58.305 (1)(c).

Areas for Improvements: Recommend moving from use of a spreadsheet for data reporting into database applications, which provide opportunities for deeper data analysis and comparison.

Accreditation Recommendation

Meets Standard with Notation—Advanced Graduate Programs



**State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report
Professional Education Unit at Montana State University – Northern
February 6 - 7, 2013**

Narrative Summary Report

ARM 10.58.512 SCHOOL COUNSELING K-12

Area for Improvement: A stronger program identity for K-12 school counseling is recommended, with caution against having the larger clinical/agency focus eclipse the school counseling focus. Candidates are encouraged to join state and national professional associations and to attend conferences to promote professional “educator” identity and to stay current on trends in contemporary K-12 School Counseling Profession.

Sources of Evidence: Status Update: Graduate Programs, December 10, 2012; General Meeting Overview with Rosalyn Templeton, Christine Shearer-Creman, Darlene Setters, Curtis Smeby, and John Foley; Interviews with Enrolled Candidates and Graduates of School Counseling Program; Advisory Council; Site Supervisors; and District Administrators

Summary of Findings: Current and graduated candidates spoke highly of the dual-purpose program of school counseling. However, the graduate faculty stretched by teaching and advising duties appear to have limited time to offer adequate direct supervision of the program and current candidates. In addition, it is essential that the program give emphasis to developing the professional identity of the school counselors, including the understanding and promoting of the school counseling role, the joining of professional associations, attendance at meetings for school counselors, and keeping up with school counseling literature.

Areas for Improvements: Finalize and disseminate an employer survey of the School Counseling graduate program to establish external perspective of how well the program meets the needs of the regional school districts and how well the candidates are meeting the needs of K-12 students.

Accreditation Recommendation

Meets Standard with Notation—School Counseling K-12



**State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report
Professional Education Unit at Montana State University – Northern
February 6 - 7, 2013**

Narrative Summary Report

ARM 10.58.601 PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Area for Improvement: The advanced graduate programs must develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system connecting the conceptual framework and program objectives with student outcome performances. Resulting data must be aggregated and shared with internal and external constituencies.

Sources of Evidence: Status Update: Graduate Programs, December 10, 2012; General Meeting Overview with Rosalyn Templeton, Christine Shearer-Creman, Darlene Setters, Curtis Smeby, and John Foley; Interviews with Debra Bradley, Enrolled Candidates and Graduates of School Counseling and Instruction and Learning Programs; Advisory Council; Site Supervisors; District Supervisors

Summary of Findings: The ARM 10.58.601(1)(e) requirements are met. The advanced graduate program faculty have developed an assessment system that outlines a plan for collecting data at salient points in the program. To meet the standard, the graduate faculty have begun to focus their data collection on the key assessments tied to Professional Educator Preparation Program standards and to analyze, share and use aggregated and disaggregated data to evaluate program and candidate performance.

Accreditation Recommendation

Meets Standard with Notation—ARM 601 (1)(e) School Counseling and Instruction and Learning



**State On-site Accreditation Focus Review Exit Report
Professional Education Unit at Montana State University – Northern
February 6 - 7, 2013**

Narrative Summary Report

ARM 10.58.603 ASSESSMENT OF ADVANCED PROGRAMS

Area of Improvement: To meet the standard, programs must demonstrate their value through aggregations of program data demonstrating alignment with expected program student performance outcomes and changes in the programs based upon these aggregated data.

Sources of Evidence: Status Update: Graduate Programs, December 10, 2012; General Meeting Overview with Rosalyn Templeton, Christine Shearer-Creman, Darlene Setters, Curtis Smeby, and John Foley; Interviews with Debra Bradley, Enrolled Candidates and Graduates of School Counseling and Instruction and Learning Programs; Advisory Council; Site Supervisors; District Administrators

Summary of Findings: ARM 10.58.603 indicates that "... programs shall meet or exceed standards of performance equivalent to those established for national professional education accreditation for candidate competence and program quality." Because the newly defined assessment system will aggregate disaggregated individual student data to determine trends, themes and an overarching perspective of the program, meeting this expectation is now possible.

Accreditation Recommendation

Meets Standard with Notation—School Counseling and Instruction and Instruction and Learning

