

# 2010

## Teaching, Learning and Culture External Review February 28, 2010—March 3, 2010



### **Volume 3: Students, Outcomes, and Assessment**

Texas A&M University

College of Education & Human Development

Department of Teaching, Learning  
and Culture (TLAC)

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*Teaching, Learning and Culture  
External Review*



# Teaching, Learning & Culture

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## Section I: Students



### Student Enrollment

#### Student Enrollment in Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC)

<b>TLAC Enrollment</b>						
	<i>Undergraduate</i>		<i>Masters</i>		<i>PhD</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
<i>Enrollment Year</i>						
<i>Fall 2009</i>	1392	1392	202	202	213	1807
<i>Fall 2008</i>		1413		238	184	1835
<i>Fall 2007</i>		1492		221	183	1896
<i>Fall 2006</i>		1614		202	180	1996
<i>Fall 2005</i>		2075		189	165	2429
<i>Fall 2004</i>		2070		203	148	2421

### Student Enrollment by Major

#### Graduate Enrollment in Educational Curriculum and Instruction (EDCI)

<b>EDCI Enrollment</b>				
	<i>Masters</i>		<i>PhD</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
<i>Enrollment Year</i>				
<i>Fall 2009</i>	202	202	213	415
<i>Fall 2008</i>		238	184	422

<b>Fall 2007</b>	221	183	403
<b>Fall 2006</b>	202	180	382
<b>Fall 2005</b>	189	165	354
<b>Fall 2004</b>	203	148	351

**Undergraduate Enrollment in Educational Instructional Strategies (EDIS)  
{Freshmen and Sophomores in Phase 1 of the INST Degree}**

<b>EDIS Enrollment</b>	
<i>Undergraduate</i>	
<i>Enrollment Year</i>	
<b>Fall 2009</b>	674
<b>Fall 2008</b>	848
<b>Fall 2007</b>	836
<b>Fall 2006</b>	848
<b>Fall 2005</b>	903
<b>Fall 2004</b>	1049

**Undergraduate Enrollment in Interdisciplinary Studies (INST)  
{Juniors and Seniors in Phase 2}**

<b>INST Enrollment</b>	
<i>Undergraduate</i>	
<i>Enrollment Year</i>	
<b>Fall 2009</b>	693
<b>Fall 2008</b>	811
<b>Fall 2007</b>	895
<b>Fall 2006</b>	1021
<b>Fall 2005</b>	1145
<b>Fall 2004</b>	1000

## Enrollment by Major (TECR)

<b>TECR Enrollment</b>		
	<i>Undergraduate</i>	<i>Masters</i>
<i>Enrollment Year</i>		
<i>Fall 2009</i>	25	
<i>Fall 2008</i>	20	
<i>Fall 2007</i>	5	1
<i>Fall 2006</i>	29	
<i>Fall 2005</i>	27	
<i>Fall 2004</i>	21	

## Student Demographics

### Undergraduate students

TEXES Pass Rates for the College of Education and Human Development

<b>TLAC</b>	<b>TEXES Certification Examinations</b>			
	<b># Taking Test</b>	<b># Passing Test</b>	<b>Pass Rate</b>	<b>Average Scores</b>
<b>ELAR/Social Studies 4-8</b>				
2008	88	87	99%	262
2007	86	84	98%	263
2006	115	113	98%	264
2005	66	63	96%	264
2004	66	64	97%	263

**Generalist EC4**

2008	347	344	99%	271
2007	343	338	99%	270
2006	304	303	100%	272
2005	135	134	99%	272
2004	181	180	99%	271

**Middle Schools Maths/ Science 4-8**

2008	63	62	98%	262
2007	78	77	99%	263
2006	83	82	99%	264
2005	49	49	100%	266
2004	37	36	97%	268

**English as a Second Language Supplemental**

2008	294	283	96%	261
2007	255	247	97%	263
2006	183	168	92%	265
2005	52	48	92%	264
2004	3	3	100%	

**Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities 4-8**

2008	157	156	99%	271
2007	172	171	99%	273
2006	207	205	99%	273
2005	123	120	98%	275
2004	75	75	100%	275



## Graduate students

For more information on PhD GRE information, please see Appendix 8.

***PhD GRE Information used for US News and World Report***

Department	Verbal			N	Quantitative		
	Average	Low	High		Average	Low	High
EAHR	499	300	640	27	578	370	750
EPSY	454	280	680	26	565	410	750
HLKN	451	310	590	9	601	210	790
TLAC	456	280	710	31	657	350	800

	Percentile	TLAC
<b>Verbal Ranges</b>		
>580	80%-100%	3
460-579	50%-79%	14
400-459	30%-49%	6
<400	0-29%	8

	Percentile	TLAC
<b>Quantitative Ranges</b>		
> 740	80%-100%	14
600-739	50%-79%	7
520-599	30%-49%	2
<520	0-29%	8

## Section 2: Outcomes and Assessment



### Certification Exam Passage Rates

<b>TLAC</b>		TEXES Certification Examinations			
Year	# Taking Test	# Passing Test	Pass Rate	Average Scores	
<b>ELAR/Social Studies 4-8</b>					
2008	88	87	99%	262	
2007	86	84	98%	263	
2006	115	113	98%	264	
2005	66	63	96%	264	
2004	66	64	97%	263	
<b>Generalist EC4</b>					
2008	347	344	99%	271	
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<b>Middle Schools Maths/ Science 4-8</b>					
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<b>English as a Second Language Supplemental</b>					
2008	294	283	96%	261	
2007	255	247	97%	263	

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2005	52	48	92%	264
2004	3	3	100%	

#### Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities 4-8

2008	157	156	99%	271
2007	172	171	99%	273
2006	207	205	99%	273
2005	123	120	98%	275
2004	75	75	100%	275

#### Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-4

2008	328	326	99%	268
2007	327	325	99%	266
2006	323	323	100%	268
2005	146	144	99%	270
2004	172	169	98%	267



## Weave-Online

The Office of Institutional Assessment ([assessment.tamu.edu](http://assessment.tamu.edu)) is responsible for assuring that all courses taught at Texas A&M University meet certain requirements. One of those requirements is assuring that all courses are objective based and outcome oriented and that there is sufficient evidence to support assessment of the outcomes. The instrument which the university uses is Weave-Online. Each department provides documentation which is overseen by the Office of Institutional Assessment. Following are the TLAC weave on-line

reports for the undergraduate program and for the graduate program, which are continuing to be developed.

## ***Undergraduate Weave-Online Outcomes and Assessments***

### ***Assessment of Pre-Service Teachers***

In an effort to identify and define the actions that we expect our pre-service teachers to demonstrate in knowledge, skills, and attitudes upon the completion of our educational program, the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC) developed seven student learning outcomes. It was also necessary to identify how this knowledge would be assessed. In response to this charge TLAC identified multiple assessments we use to determine if students have met these expectations. These student learner outcomes (listed below) and specific assessments are available through Weave online.

#### **Program Mission/Purpose**

\* "To prepare EC - 6 educators and researchers to build inclusive democratic learning communities in elementary schools and society through critical and reflective research, teaching and service."

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Use the fields below to enter student learning outcomes. An outcome is a specific, measurable, and/or identifiable learning goal focusing on the end result of learning, rather than the process. A student learning outcome is an identified action that a student is expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes upon the completion of an educational program. Outcomes should be measurable or observable, manageable, and meaningful. They are more easily formed when filling in this blank: "The successful student will be able to \_\_\_\_\_ (define, apply, analyze, etc.)." To see examples, use this link: [http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt\\_help/writing\\_learning\\_outcomes.pdf](http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt_help/writing_learning_outcomes.pdf)

**Assessment Methods:** There are direct and indirect, quantitative and qualitative assessment methods. Direct methods require students to produce work so that reviewers can assess how well students meet expectations. Indirect methods provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. Indirect methods are often helpful in interpreting the findings of direct methods. Use the fields below to describe the assessment methods for each student learning outcome. To see examples, use this link: <http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt/methods.htm>

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#### **Student Learning Outcome #1:**

Demonstrates knowledge (conceptual, theoretical, and empirical) of content.

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #1:**

Content knowledge exams (RDNG 351, 361, 461, 467, 468; MASC 351, 450, 475; TEFB 412, 423;)  
Position paper (MASC 351, 450; TEFB 412)  
Presentation (MASC 351,450; TEFB 412; )  
Lesson plan development (MASC 351, 450, 475; TEFB 410, 412, 413)  
Design of an experiment (MASC 475, 351; TEFB 413)  
Evidence of lesson plans in students' electronic portfolios  
Certification Tests (TEXES)

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**Student Learning Outcome #2:**

Displays respect for others and creates a learner-centered environment; Aware of and provides for various background, skills, interests, and learning needs through use of appropriate strategies, activities, materials, tools and resources. Modifies and develops lessons to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, including English language learners.

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #2:**

Lesson plan modifications as evidenced in students' electronic portfolios.  
Observations in senior field placements as evidenced in walk-through data (TEFB 412, TEFB 413, TEFB 410, TEFB 273 )  
Student teaching (EDFB 497, MEFB 497)

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**Student Learning Outcome #3:**

Communicates effectively in written, oral and technological formats appropriate to content, learners, and environment

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #3:**

Classroom interactions as evidenced in walk-through data (MEFB 352, 450, RDNG 370, 390 )  
Writing samples as evidenced in writing intensive courses (RDNG 461, 371, 372, 472, TEFB 471 )  
Oral presentations as required in course work (RDNG 461 )  
Technology presentations as evidenced in course work (EDCI 365, MEFB 352, MEFB 450, )  
Students' electronic portfolios

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**Student Learning Outcome #4:**

Develops and implements appropriate assessment strategies aimed at higher order thinking skills; Involves students in inquiry activities

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #4:**

Lesson plans as evidenced in students' electronic portfolios. (INST 463)  
Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)  
Student teaching (EDFB 497, MEFB 497)

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**Student Learning Outcome #5:**

Models understanding of student learning and development through -content, -age, and level appropriate strategies, plans and activities; recognizes and addresses all learners; models/applies research based learning and learning practices

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #5:**

Lesson plans as evidenced in students' electronic portfolios (RDNG 470, MEFB 450)  
Demonstration of incorporating technology into teaching as evidenced in students' electronic portfolios (EDCI 365)  
Student teaching (ECFB 497, MEFB 497)  
Field placements as evidenced in walk-through data ( )  
Certification tests (ECFB 497, MEFB 497)

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**Student Learning Outcome #6:**

Displays the dispositions of a professional educator.

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #6:**

Field placements as evidenced in walk-through data (MEFB 352, MEFB 450, RDNG 370, 390; )  
 Mentor observations and evaluations ( MEFB 352, MEFB 450, RDNG 370, 390)

**Student Learning Outcome #7:**

Interacts with students, parents, and other educational personnel in an effective, professional manner  
 Encourages family and community involvement in the classroom/school

**Assessment Methods for Outcome #7:**

Student teaching (ECFB 497. MEFB 497)  
 Field-based experiences as evidenced in walk-through data ( MEFB 352, MEFB 450, RDNG 370, 390) )  
 Service project as evidenced in students' electronic portfolios

**Graduate Weave-Online Outcomes and Assessments****Detailed Assessment Report – Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction**

Mission: To prepare educators and researchers to build inclusive democratic learning communities in schools and society through critical and reflective research, teaching, service.

Area	Revised Outcomes/Objectives	Related Measure	Source of Evidence
Overall	1. Examine the impact of social, political, cultural, and economic issues that affect educational decisions.	Course content Class projects	Course evaluations Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Written and oral comprehensive exams Dissertation Conference presentations
Overall	2. Develop appropriate knowledge base content and research in respective discipline	Course content Class projects	Course evaluations Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Written and oral comprehensive exams Dissertation Conference presentations
Research	3. Develop an understanding of <b>appropriate research methodology (qualitative, quantitative or some combination).</b>	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Dissertations Journal articles Journal submissions
Research	4. Analyze research reports	Course content Research core	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Dissertations

			Journal articles Journal submission s
Research	5. Demonstrate research skills necessary to complete the dissertation (traditional or journal format)	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Dissertations Journal articles Journal submission s
Research	6. Analyze literature in their respective discipline.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Dissertations Journal articles Journal submission s
Teaching-Instruction	7. Examine the influence of social and cultural factors on the teaching and learning process.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios
Teaching-Instruction	8. Design instruction appropriate for understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Service	9. Encourage participation in their professional organizations.	Leadership in professional organizations	Leadership and Membership in organizations Passing state requirements (criminal check, drug test) Graduate Form
Service	10. Fulfill professional roles and responsibilities as well as adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	Course content	Passing state requirements (criminal check, drug test)

**Detailed Assessment Report – Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction**

Mission: To prepare educators and researchers to build inclusive democratic learning communities in schools and society through critical and reflective research, teaching, service.

Area	Revised Outcomes/Objectives	Related Measure	Source of Evidence
Overall	1. Examine the impact of social, political, cultural, and economic issues that affect educational decisions.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions
Overall	2. Develop an understanding of <b>appropriate instructional practices (i.e., classroom, workplace).</b>	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Overall	3. Analyze literature in their respective discipline.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions
Research	4. Demonstrate research skills necessary to complete the thesis (MS).	Course content Research Core Class projects	Thesis
Teaching-Instruction	5. Examine the influence of social and cultural factors on the teaching and learning process.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Teaching-Instruction	6. Design instruction appropriate for understanding of relevant content that is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Teaching-Instruction	7. Complete certification and licensure examinations (national or state) in respective fields (when appropriate).	Course content Class projects	Pass State Competency Exams Pass State Professional Exams



Service	8. Encourage participation in their professional and community organizations.	Course content Class projects	Professional Organization Leadership and Membership Community leadership and membership
Service	9. Fulfill professional roles and responsibilities as well as adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	Course content Class projects	Professional Organization Leadership and Membership Passing state requirements (criminal check, drug test)

### **Detailed Assessment Report – Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction**

Mission: To prepare educators and researchers to build inclusive democratic learning communities in schools and society through critical and reflective research, teaching, service.

Area	Revised Outcomes/Objectives	Related Measure	Source of Evidence
Overall	1. Examine the impact of social, political, cultural, and economic issues that affect educational decisions.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions
Overall	2. Develop an understanding of <b>appropriate instructional practices (i.e., classroom, workplace).</b>	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Overall	3. Analyze literature in their respective discipline.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions
Teaching-Instruction	4. Examine the influence of social and cultural factors on the teaching and learning process.	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral comprehensive exams
Teaching-Instruction	5. Design instruction appropriate for understanding of relevant content that is based on continuous and appropriate	Course content Class projects	Written & e-learning assignments , papers, projects, exhibitions Portfolios Written and oral

	assessment.		comprehensive exams
Teaching-Instruction	6. Complete certification and licensure examinations (national or state) in respective fields (when appropriate).	Course content Class projects	Pass State Competency Exams Pass State Professional Exams
Service	7. Encourage participation in their professional and community organizations.	Course content Class projects	Professional Organization Leadership and Membership Community leadership and membership
Service	8. Fulfill professional roles and responsibilities as well as adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	Course content Class projects	Professional Organization Leadership and Membership Passing state requirements (criminal check, drug test)

# Comparison of Weave-Online, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and Faculty Survey Outcomes

## Comparison of Assessments

The following document compares the weave assessment from Texas A&M's Office of Institutional Assessment with the results of the recent faculty survey, which is based on the framework of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student Outcomes (**See Faculty Survey, Volume 2**). This document compares the current state of TLAC's weave online assessment framework for graduate students with the faculty survey on student competencies, which was based on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century framework.

### COMPARISON OF THREE DOCUMENTS

21<sup>st</sup> Century Student Outcomes, Faculty Survey, And TLAC Graduate Weave Online Assessment Report

Carol Stuessy (11-16-09)

Original 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills Document <sup>1</sup>	All-Faculty Survey <sup>2</sup> (UG, Grad)	TLAC Assessment Report <sup>3</sup>		
		M.Ed. Degree	M.S. Degree	Ph.D.
<b>CORE SUBJECTS AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THEMES</b>				
Core subjects mastery: English, reading, LA; world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics [and create lessons for, as in PCK]	1,2,14	1,2,6	1	1,2
Interdisciplinary themes mastery: global awareness; financial, economic, business literacy; civic literacy; health literacy [and create lessons for]	3			
<b>LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS</b>				
Creativity and innovation: think creatively; work creatively with others; implement innovations	17			
Critical thinking and problem solving: reason effectively, use systems thinking; make judgments and decisions; solve problems [and do research in]	3,8,9,10,18		2,4	3,5
<b>COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION</b>				
Communicate clearly; collaborate with others	4,5,6			
<b>INFORMATION, MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS</b>				
Information literacy: Access and evaluate information; Use and manage information	13	4	3	4,6
Media literacy: Analyze media; create media products	17			
Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Literacy: Apply technology effectively	17			

LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS				
Flexibility and adaptability: Adapt to change, be flexible	12			
Initiative and self-direction: Manage goals and time, work independently, be self-directed learners	11			
Social and cross-cultural skills: interact effectively with others, work effectively in diverse teams	7,15	5	5	7
PRODUCTIVITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY				
Manage projects, produce results	11,14,17	3,6,7	6,7	8
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY				
Guide and lead others; be responsible to others	7,16	8,9	8,9	9,10

<sup>1</sup>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills document was developed by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills to "provide guidance to educators who are working to make sure the K-12 education system provides all students with rich core content and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills" (P21 document available on the web, 05/27/09)

<sup>2</sup>All-Faculty survey was developed by Stuessy, Burbaw, and Graham in summer 2009 in response to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills document, using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills framework to develop individual items for all faculty (undergraduate through Ph.D.).

<sup>3</sup>The TLAC Assessment Report was developed by Larke and Joshi in August 2009 to reflect lists of skills by graduate degree.

## Other Measures of Assessment and Outcomes

### *Internal Assessments to Assure Student Learning*

All students in senior methods are observed in their field placements 4 times each semester. All observations are recorded by the field supervisor on the electronic walkthrough form the information is submitted to a database and should concern arise the information could be accessed during the student teaching semester. This data has also been used to study the experiences are students are receiving in their field placements.

A Walkthrough form has been developed for evaluation of students in the classroom. This is used as a formative assessment to make observations of their skills and assist in identifying student strengths and weaknesses.

Students also receive feedback from the mentor teacher and these evaluations are submitted to the field supervisors at midterm and at the end of the semester.

All students is senior methods are required to create an e-Folio which is a web based collection of authentic learner-specific artifacts that demonstrate growth and the development of

skills toward becoming an effective teacher. Each item placed in the e-Folio is chosen based upon the demonstration of a competency that correlates with an Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standard.

Purposes of the e-Folio:

To provide evidence that pre-service teachers have met the competencies and requirements of the teacher education courses.

To inform prospective employers that pre-service teachers have met the competencies that are appropriate for beginning teachers

All students in enrolled in the junior II semester are given the trial version of the TexEt exam (Exam for Texas State Teacher Certification) at the beginning and the end of the semester these scores are analyzed for the areas of strength and weaknesses and this guides the curriculum of the senior methods courses.

### ***Achieve technology expertise***

It was determined that while our undergraduate students were able to manipulate many of the current technologies they lacked knowledge of how to effectively integrate these technologies into the classroom. To address the integration of technology in the classroom, the course "Using Technology in Elementary Classrooms" was developed and implemented in the fall of 2009.

To address technology in all areas the National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers are addressed in every course taught by the department beginning with the fall 2009 semester.

Our goal is to celebrate the outstanding teaching and learning by Aggie Teachers. Effective and creative educational practices of Aggie Teachers serve as authentic learning ideas that have an impact on students and the community. The overall program will advance the "best practices" for all teachers through providing awards, scholarships, and recognition. Aggie Teachers may

receive recognition for their excellence in teaching and learning through telling and sharing their most compelling stories. The tradition and spirit prevails through Aggies helping other Aggies.

Two of our students have received monetary awards for the integration of technology into the classroom. Both of these students learned about the use of technology (ipods/flip cameras) during their methods course work they integrated these technologies into the classroom during their student teaching semester.

A student journal entry:

“For my last formal observation from my supervisor, my cooperating teacher and I decided to have the students perform a reader's theatre. When I was thinking of how to make this observation my best one of the semester I remembered using Flip Cameras in my Methods reading class. I was in Methods during Fall 2008. During that semester we were able to get two flip cameras for the College of Education. I ran this idea of using the flip camera by my cooperating teacher and she had never heard of them. I showed her what it was online and she fell in love with it. She loved how you could video tape something and then automatically put it on the computer. Before my observation day, my teacher and I were able to buy a flip camera. We played around with it prior to the observation day. My teacher was hooked after getting to play with the camera. On my observation day we told the students that we were going to video tape them and then once they completed the assessment afterwards they would be able to watch their performance. My supervisor came to observe me and I video taped the students while they performed their reader's theatre. The students really enjoyed being videotaped and loved being able to see

themselves up on the screen. My cooperating teacher and I also emailed the video to some of the parents of the students that were in the performance.

During my final evaluation, my supervisor brought up the flip camera idea and asked where I got that idea from. I told her about how during Methods we were able to get two flip cameras for the College of Education and how we got to play around with them. Then when I was thinking of this lesson I wanted to bring in the flip camera to introduce them to the students. I also explained to my cooperating teacher how they are easy enough for the students to operate. Then we talked about how that would get our students ahead in the technology that is out there than any of the other 4th graders in Ennis. We have been throwing around ideas about how else we might use the flip camera in the classroom.

Without having experienced the flip camera in my Methods class, I would not have been able to bring in more technology into my ST classroom. I daily use technology with PowerPoints but the flip camera brings in a whole different perspective on technology and the students enjoy being able to video tape something and automatically watch them from the projector.”

Kelly Little

“I was a student in the spring semester in your methods reading class, and I am currently completing my student teaching at Frisco ISD. I just wanted to let you know that I used the podcast assignment I completed for your class as an assignment for my students and they loved it, as well as my mentor teacher and the whole 3rd grade team of teachers! We were doing a week-long reading unit on Strega Nona and I mentioned to my mentor teacher that I had made a podcast and coordinating worksheet for an assignment in one of my past education classes on Strega Nona, so

she made me email it to her. She looked it over and we ended up using it in our classroom. She also emailed it to the other 3rd grade teachers who said they thought it was really neat. The students also loved it because they loved hearing the story in my voice over the podcast.

I thought I would email you to tell you that assignment was a big success and the teachers thought the technology was really great. Thanks for a great assignment! I hope your fall semester is going well.”

Virginia Fellow

### **First Year retention rates**

#### **TLAC**

<b>First Year Retention Rates</b>	<b>Retention(%)</b>
Fall 2003-Fall 2004	76.8
Fall 2004-Fall 2005	79.1
Fall 2005-Fall 2006	67.8
Fall 2006-Fall 2007	74.7
Fall 2007-Fall 2008	79.7

#### **Major**

##### **INST**

Fall 2003-Fall 2004	76.8
Fall 2004-Fall 2005	79.1
Fall 2005-Fall 2006	75.7
Fall 2006-Fall 2007	76.1
Fall 2007-Fall 2008	81.3



## Graduation Rates

### TLAC

Cohort Year-Graduation Year	Cohort #	Graduation #	Graduation %
Fall 1998-Fall 2004	164	104	63.4
Fall 1999-Fall 2005	170	115	67.6
Fall 2000-Fall 2006	181	110	60.8
Fall 2001-Fall 2007	186	116	62.4
Fall 2002-Fall 2008	234	126	53.8

### Major

#### INST

Fall 1998-Fall 2004	164	104	63.4
Fall 1999-Fall 2005	117	115	67.6
Fall 2000-Fall 2006	181	119	65.7
Fall 2001-Fall 2007	186	126	67.7
Fall 2002-Fall 2008	234	151	64.5

## Texas A&M University DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

Science Education Faculty – (2004-2009)

Carol Stuessy

**Toni Ivey.** (December, 2009). *High School Science Teacher Induction in Texas: Implications for Policy*. Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Ivey is currently an assistant professor in science education at Oklahoma State University].

**Brooks, Lisa.** (May, 2009). *Learning and Transfer in a Complex Professional Development Setting: A Cross-Case Analysis of the Perceptions and Practices of Science Teachers*. Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Brooks is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Washington University in St. Louis].

**Gerren, Sally Sue.** (August, 2008). *A Case Study: The Relationship Between the Use of*

*Graphing Calculators and the Development of Classroom Norms in a College Algebra Course.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Gerren is currently a community college mathematics instructor; co-chaired with Dr. Gerald Kulm].

**Force, Crista.** (August, 2007). *Overcoming the Obstacles: Life Stories of Scientists With Learning Disabilities.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Force is currently an assistant professor in secondary science education at Baylor University, Waco, TX].

**Metty, Jane.** (June, 2006). *A Comparative Study of Authentic Student Research Versus Guided Inquiry in Affecting Middle School Students' Abilities to Know and Do Genetics.* **M. S. Thesis.** [Ms. Metty is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in science education at Texas A&M University, College Station].

**Jensen, Deborah.** (December, 2004). *Case Study of an Expert Mathematics Teacher's Decision-making Behaviors Correlated with Physiological Response Rates.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Jensen is currently Director of Programming and Implementation for the Southeast Regional T-STEM Center, Division of Community Outreach, at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston].

Cathleen Loving

**Anderson, Amy.** (May, 2009) *Exploration of the Impact of the Same Developmental Mentor Training Within the Infrastructure of Two Different School Districts.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Anderson continues in her leadership position in mentoring new teachers with the College Station I.S.D.].

**Seifert, Kathryn.** (August, 2008) *An Analysis of the Impact of a Reflection Component in a Problem-Based Learning Unit.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Seifert is currently working in a leadership position at the Brenham State School, Brenham, TX; co-chaired with Dr. Susan Pedersen, Dept. of Educational Psychology].

**Schroeder, Carolyn.** (May, 2006) *Expert-Novice Interaction in Problematizing a Complex Environmental Science Issue Using Web-based Information and Analysis Tools.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Schroeder is Program Coordinator, Aggie Teach Program in the Center for Mathematics and Science Education, College of Science, Texas A&M University].

**Ezrailson, Cathy Mariotti.** (December, 2004) *Explicit Modeling of Interactive-engagement Techniques for Physics Graduate Teaching Assistants and the Impact on Instruction and Student Performance in Calculus-based Physics.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Ezrailson is an assistant professor of science education at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, S.D.; co-chaired with Dr. Donald Allen, Dept. of Mathematics].

Scott Slough

**Gordon, Denise.** (December, 2009) *A Case Study of the Applied Learning Academy: Reconceptualized Quantum Design of Applied Learning.* Ph.D. Dissertation. [Dr. Gordon is

currently teaching science at the Applied Learning Academy in Ft. Worth ISD, Ft. Worth, TX.].

Bugra Yalvac (assistant professor)

**Richard, Shawn.** (December, 2009). Non-thesis M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction. [Shawn is applying for doctoral programs in various technology fields/computer science; co-chaired with Dr. Cathleen Loving, TLAC]

***Employment of Doctoral Graduates – Last Five Years (blanks simply are unknown)***

<b>Graduates of Doctoral Programs</b>		
<b>Student</b>	<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Employment</b>
<b>Hawkins, Torrance Norval</b>	Fall 2005	
<b>Reuthinger, Georgeanne</b>	Fall 2005	Director, Special Education- Laredo ISD
<b>Sarpy-Simpson, Claudine Latreece</b>	Fall 2005	
<b>Vasquez, Cherrye Shawn</b>	Fall 2005	
<b>Colvin, Alex Don</b>	Fall 2006	Academia
<b>Contreras, Diana Linn</b>	Spring 2006	Asst Prof - Texas A&M International, Laredo TX
<b>Charleston-Cormier, Phyllis Ann</b>	Summer 2006	Professional
<b>Charleston-Cormier, Phyllis Ann</b>	Summer 2006	Professional
<b>Ghong, Mary Njang</b>	Fall 2006	Professional
<b>Hollingshead, Barbara Sue</b>	Fall 2006	Professional
<b>Landeck, Edith S</b>	Fall 2006	Grants Administrator, Director- United ISD, Laredo TX
<b>Li, Xiaobao</b>	Fall 2006	Academia
<b>Livengood, Kimberly Kay</b>	Fall 2006	Academia

<b>Ruiz, Elsa Cantu</b>	Fall 2006	Academia
<b>Standish, Hilary Anne</b>	Fall 2006	
<b>Taylor, Judy</b>	Fall 2006	Academia
<b>White, Teresa Marie</b>	Fall 2006	Professional
<b>Ahn, Soo Jin</b>	Fall 2007	Academia
<b>Boone, Sonia Kay</b>	Fall 2007	
<b>Ibrahim, Eronif</b>	Fall 2007	Professional
<b>Liu, Chia-Ning</b>	Fall 2007	Professional
<b>Sahin, Alpaslan</b>	Fall 2007	Academia
<b>Wickens, Corrine Marie</b>	Fall 2007	
<b>Dean, Emily Ocker</b>	Spring 2007	Asst Prof., McMurray University, Abilene TX
<b>Ding, Meixia</b>	Summer 2007	Academia
<b>Force, Crista Marie</b>	Summer 2007	Baylor University
<b>Garcia, Norma Garza</b>	Summer 2007	Professional
<b>Graham, Lori Lynn</b>	Summer 2007	TAMU-TLAC, Clinical Asst Prof.
<b>Kang, Rui</b>	Summer 2007	Academia - Georgia College
<b>Matteson, Shirley Marie</b>	Summer 2007	Professional
<b>Natesan, Prathiba</b>	Summer 2007	Academia
<b>Pittman, Ramona Trinette</b>	Summer 2007	Florida State Univ – Asst Prof
<b>Sullivan, Earnestyne Lashonne</b>	Summer 2007	Asst Prof – Prairie View A&M
<b>Hayley Kazen</b>	Spring 2008	TAMU International
<b>Ates, Burcu</b>	Summer 2008	Academia
<b>Cavenall, Pamela Elaine Rogers</b>	Summer 2008	

<b>Chen, Wen-Chun</b>	Summer 2008	
<b>Gerren, Sally Sue</b>	Summer 2008	Academia-Community College
<b>Hairrell, Angela Renee Sebesta</b>	Summer 2008	Academia
<b>Henry, Patricia May</b>	Summer 2008	
<b>Muzheve, Michael Tapfuma</b>	Summer 2008	Academia
<b>Plett, Bethany Joy</b>	Summer 2008	Professional
<b>Seifert, Kathryn Ann Hawkins</b>	Summer 2008	Professional – The Brenham School
<b>Tzou, Yeh-Zu</b>	Summer 2008	
<b>West, Courtney Ann</b>	Summer 2008	Academia
<b>Binks, Emilly</b>	Spring 2008	University of Hull, UK, Lecturer and Research Director
<b>James, Marlon</b>	Fall 2008	University of Connecticut
<b>Hoyt, Mei Wu</b>	Fall 2008	TLAC, adjunct

## Section 3: Stakeholders



## **Stake Holders**

### ***Texas Education Agency (TEA)***

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) periodically reviews each program in the state which prepares students for teacher certification. The latest TEA review occurred in January 2008 and focused only on the undergraduate program.

### ***Brazos Valley Cooperative Teacher Education Center (BVCTEC)***

The Brazos Valley Cooperative Teacher Education Center (BVCTEC) is a long-standing advisory committee which helps shape the current status of teacher education at Texas A&M University. The BVCTEC is composed of TAMU faculty and staff, representatives from the Regional Education Services Centers, and faculty and administrators from many independent school districts from many areas of Texas. The collaborative committee meets each September, February, and June to develop and assess preservice candidate preparation.

### ***Council on Teacher Education (CTE)***

The Council on Teacher Education serves as an advisory body regarding all matters relating to teacher education. The CTE consists of twelve members of the general faculty, three students, and members from local school districts who are appointed by the president of the university. Members of the council meet monthly, with additional meeting scheduled when deemed necessary to discharge the business of the council. Members of the CTE board also attend relevant and appropriate teacher education meetings called by the Texas Education Agency and other regional and national accrediting bodies involved in the preparation of teachers. All correspondence from the Texas Education Agency concerning certification requirements and changes in the standards of teacher education programs is processed through the CTE. The Council on Teacher Education board is also responsible for keeping all essential records related to the approval status of the

various teacher education programs and serves as an appeals board to hear petitions from students who have been denied admission to teacher education programs.

### ***Bryan and College Station School Districts***

Bryan and College Station School Districts are major share holders as they place many of the students teachers. In addition, many of TLAC student teachers are hired into these school districts and in school districts around the surrounding areas.

## Section 4: Student Survey

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Program Review Survey – Summary  
Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture  
College of Education and Human Development  
Texas A&M University



## Program Review Survey – Summary

As part of a program review, the Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture (TLAC) in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University (TAMU) invited current students and former students who graduated in the past five years to participate in an online survey. Students from all programs—Undergraduate, Secondary Graduate Certification, Master’s, and Doctoral—were sent emails that asked them to complete the online surveys. Response rates for the surveys were as follows: current undergraduate students = 34%; former undergraduate students = 15%; current Secondary Graduate Certification students = 52%; former Secondary Graduate Certification students = 21%; current Master’s students = 31%; former Master’s students = 26%; current doctoral students = 46%; and former doctoral students = 34%.

Items for the surveys were adapted from other similar surveys, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and widely-accepted “best practices” within the various concentration areas (Boyd, et al. 2008; Dean & Lauer, 2003; Dean, Lauer, & Urquhart, 2005; US Department of Ed., 1999). Prior to inviting participants to respond, doctoral students and faculty reviewed the surveys and provide feedback. Using a four-point Likert-type scale, participants indicated their levels of agreement with items related to program aspects (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree), as well as their confidence in various items related to *professionalism* and *curriculum and instruction* (1 = not at all confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = confident, 4 = extremely confident). Furthermore, both current and former students were asked to provide open-ended responses concerning program strengths, challenges, and suggestions.

Separate analyses were conducted on survey data collected from current and former students in each program. The following is a brief summary of results. The complete report is available on the TLAC Program Review web site. Additionally, the descriptive survey results are provided in Tables 1-1 thru 8-2 (scale questions) and in Appendices A-1 thru H-3 (open-ended responses) within the comprehensive report. For purposes of confidentiality, faculty names and other identifying information were deleted from the open-ended responses.

*Summary of Undergraduate Program – current students*

Of the 464 participants who responded to the online survey of current undergraduate students, 96% were female and nearly 90% were white. Thirty-four percent of the respondents classified themselves as seniors, 28% juniors, 12% sophomores, 16% freshmen, and 10% fifth-year seniors. In terms of certification, 43% are 4 – 8; 38% are EC – 6; and 20% are EC – 4. Of the students who are pursuing 4 – 8 teacher certification, 55% have a math/science emphasis, and 45% are reading/language arts/social studies-focused.

On the whole, more students felt more confident teaching Reading/Language Arts and Early Childhood Education than Mathematics and Science. In both Mathematics and Science, mean scores for all indicators were less than 3.00 (on a four-point Likert-type scale). Students' feelings about teaching Social Studies also indicated less confidence; although mean scores did indicate confidence with two indicators, *assessing prior knowledge* and *making connections to events in students' lives, current events, and other content areas*. Conversely, mean scores for all Reading/Language Arts and Early Childhood Education indicators were higher than 3.00, providing evidence for students' confidence in teaching these areas. Mean scores for ESL instruction split almost evenly, with about half of the students reflecting confidence teaching English language learners and half not feeling

confident. The findings pertaining to General Instruction revealed three issues where students felt less confident: *teaching students with special needs*, *differentiating instruction*, and *conducting parent/teacher conferences*.

While the majority of responses reflected positively on Texas A&M's instructors in terms of knowledge, accessibility, and caring for students as individuals, an obvious area of weakness, as identified by the students, is the area of *Professionalism*. All indicators showed a mean score that fell below the *confident* level (Means < than 3.00). The concerns that students identified were: *initiate a job search*; *conduct myself in an interview*; *identify and join professional organizations pertinent to my field*; and *read research-based articles related to my field*.

Students were asked to reflect on the past as well as their future career aspirations. When asked whether or not they would once again choose Texas A&M University and the field of education should they have the opportunity to "start over," most students generally responded that they would. The majority of students (90%) indicated that they planned to obtain a full-time teaching job immediately following graduation. Additionally, for the most part, students plan to still be teaching in the classroom three, five, and ten years following graduation. Finally, most students agreed or strongly agreed that they intend to pursue a graduate degree in education at some point in the future.

The open-ended responses reflected trends that were similar to the Likert-type scale indicators. By and large, five widespread themes emerged: (a) Advising, (b) Courses and Curriculum, (c) Instructors, (d) Field Experience, and (e) Professionalism/Job Preparation. Students are pleased with their advisors; however, they find registering for the classes they need, when they need them, to be challenging. Overall, they find their instructors to be

knowledgeable; but students report that taking courses from instructors who do not speak English as their native language can be difficult. Also, students enjoy the interdisciplinary nature of their coursework; however, on the whole, they believe far too much emphasis is placed on multicultural education, as opposed to classroom management—a topic of which many respondents suggested the department offer much more (but not online). In addition, practical field experiences emerged as a strength of the program; but students indicated that more effort should be made to meet their needs with regard to school/site placements. Lastly, across the board, the respondents want more instruction and guidance on the job-hunting process. Specifically, they want to learn how to identify good jobs, complete applications effectively, and make a good impression during interviews.

*Summary of Undergraduate Program – former students*

A total of 341 former undergraduate students completed the online survey. The response rate for this survey was particularly low (15%) due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate email addresses for these students. Of the respondents, 95% were female and nearly 91% were white. Seventy-three percent of the respondents are currently employed as teachers. In terms of certification, 37% are 4 – 8, and 63% are EC – 4. Of the former students who are 4 – 8 teacher certified, 42% have a math/science emphasis, and 58% are reading/language arts/social studies-focused. The distribution of grade-levels currently taught by the respondents was fairly even, ranging from 12 - 18% for kindergarten to eighth grade (8% teach Pre-K; 5% teach others). Thirty-eight percent of the former students reported that they currently serve as Team Leader, and 45% reported holding the role of student organization sponsor. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 9% reported working in an inner city environment, 16% in an urban

school, 53% in a suburban setting, 13% in a small town, 7% in a rural environment, and 2% were “not sure” of their school’s location.

On the whole, more students felt more confident teaching Reading/Language Arts, Early Childhood Education, and Mathematics than Science and Social Studies. In both Science and Social Studies, three mean scores out of seven were less than 3.00 (on a four-point Likert-type scale). Of all areas of teaching, former students clearly felt less confident teaching ESL, as evidenced by all indicators having mean values below the confidence level of 3.00. On the other hand, mean scores for Reading/Language Arts, Early Childhood Education, and Mathematics provided evidence for former students’ confidence in teaching these areas.

Responses reflected positively on Texas A&M’s instructors in terms of knowledge, accessibility, and caring for students as individuals. Former students indicated that, 10 years from now, they were not confident that they would still be in the classroom. When asked, should they have the ability to “start over,” whether or not they would once again choose Texas A&M University for a degree in education, most students (92%) responded that they would.

The open-ended responses reflected trends that were similar to the Likert-type scale indicators. Overall, the former students felt well-prepared to enter their own classrooms and become effective teachers. As was the case with the current students, confidence in teaching mathematics and science, as well as ESL, were areas of weakness as compared to other content areas.

*Summary of Secondary Graduate Certification Program – current students*

Thirty-seven students responded to the online survey of current Secondary Graduate Certification students. Of the respondents, 81% were female and 81% were white. Seventy-eight percent of the students are currently employed as a teacher during the 2009-2010 school year. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 50% reported working in a suburban school, 19% small town, 17% urban, 11% rural and 3% inner city. In terms of certification, 43% were Language Arts/Reading certified, 16% History, 16% Social Studies Composite, 11% Math, 8% Communication, 5% Life Sciences, 5% Science Composite, 2% Spanish, and 2% Theatre Arts. The majority of students in the program currently hold a leadership role in their school; 64% sponsor of a student organization, 27% other, 14% are coaches, and 9% are Team Leaders.

On the whole, students expressed confidence in their abilities to teach their chosen concentration areas. Mean scores for Mathematics and Social Studies were all higher than 3.00, providing evidence for students' confidence in teaching these areas. Concerning Science, all mean scores were above 3.00 with the exception of *designing and implementing student-led, inquiry activities*. All but two mean scores for ESL (*teach students to recognize and apply various strategies to interpret a writer's purpose and provide opportunities for English Language Learners to listen, speak, read, and write at their current levels of English development, while gradually increasing the linguistic complexity of the English*) were also above 3.0. Pertaining to General Instruction, three issues emerged with which students felt less confident: *developing strategies for working with parents and families; conducting parent/teacher conferences; and employing effective instructional strategies for students with special needs*.

The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses/Field Experience, Application Process and Advising, Mentor Teacher/University Supervisor, Instructors, Job Search, and Current School Environment*. All indicators showed a mean score either above or marginally below the *confident* level ( $M = 3.0$ ). *Professionalism* was an area identified on which the program could improve. The issues identified as weaknesses were: *writing academic papers and articles; identifying and joining professional organizations pertinent to my field; and presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

When students were given the opportunity to reflect on their decision to choose teaching as a profession, overwhelmingly (94%), students agreed that they would do so again. In addition, almost all students agreed that Texas A&M would be their choice for obtaining their teacher certification. Also, the surveys revealed that 90% of students plan to continue teaching at their current school. Finally, most of the students indicated that they would remain teaching in the classroom three, five, and ten years from now.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Secondary Graduate Certification program. An identified strength was the quality of the instructors. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be knowledgeable, available, and caring with regard to students. Another strength to which the students referred was the cohort-nature of the program. Students reported that such a structure allows them to interact with others that are having similar experiences in their first year of teaching. A majority of students commented that the field experience component of the program is lacking. Students recognize the value of field experiences, and they believe that more opportunities for practical classroom experience should be included within the program. Lastly, some

respondents reported an ever-present feeling of favoritism within the program towards some content areas as opposed to others.

*Summary of Secondary Graduate Certification Program – former students*

Of the 53 participants who responded to the online survey of former Secondary Graduate Certification students, 83% were female and 87% were white. Seventy-eight percent are currently employed as teachers during the 2009-2010 school year. For those respondents who indicated they were not currently teaching, the primary explanation was *the inability to find a job*. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 50% reported working in a suburban setting, 19% in a small town, 17% in an urban setting, 11% in a rural setting, and 3% in an inner city. In terms of certification, 40% are certified Language Arts/Reading, 26% Social Studies Composite, 22% History, 14% Life Sciences, 10% Spanish, 8% Physical Sciences, 8% Science Composite, 6% Chemistry, 4% Math, 4% Communication, and 2% Latin. The majority of respondents currently hold a leadership role in their school; 72% sponsor of a student organization, 23% are coaches, 21% are Team Leaders, 17% other, and 14% are Department Heads.

On the whole, former students expressed confidence in their abilities to teach their chosen content areas. Mean scores for Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, and Social Studies were all higher than 3.00, providing evidence for former students' confidence in teaching these areas. Concerning Science, all mean scores were above 3.00, with the exception of *designing and implementing student-led, inquiry activities*. Pertaining to General Instruction, three issues emerged with which former students felt less confident: *differentiate instruction for all students; employing effective instructional strategies for students with special needs; and support older readers who are learning to read*.



The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses/Field Experience, Mentor Teacher/University Supervisor, Current School Environment, Instructors, TLAC Core Courses, and Job Search*. All indicators showed a mean score above or the *confident* level. In the *Action Research Project* portion of the survey, a weakness that was identified was: *The action research project changed my classroom teaching practices*. *Professionalism* was another area identified that the program could improve upon. Other issues identified as weaknesses were: *writing academic papers and articles and presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

When former students were given the opportunity to reflect on their decision to attend Texas A&M University to obtain their teaching certification, overwhelmingly, former students (100%) agreed. In addition, almost all former students (87%) agreed that they would again choose teaching as their profession. In addition, the surveys revealed that only 67% of former students plan to continue teaching at their current school. Finally, most of the former students indicated that they would remain teaching in the classroom three, and five years from now; but they were less confident regarding whether they would still be in the classroom ten years from now.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Secondary Graduate Certification program. An identified strength was the quality of the instructors. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be caring with regard to former students and knowledgeable about the realities of the classroom. Another strength the former students referred to was the ability to complete a Master's degree in Education upon completion of the program. Finally, former students commented on the cohort-nature of the program. The structure of the program allows former students to interact with others that are

having similar experiences in their first year of teaching. A majority of former students commented that the field experience component of the program is lacking. Former students feel as though the amount of field experience needs to be increased to better prepare future students in the program for the classroom. Another suggestion from former students was to increase the difficulty and rigor of the program. Lastly, some respondents suggested more marketing of the program to increase the number of people who are aware of its presence on campus.

#### *Summary of Masters Program – current students*

Thirty-two participants responded to the online survey of current Master's students. Of the respondents, 81% were female and 26% were male. Seventy-five percent of the respondents classified themselves as White, 13% as Other, 6% as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 6% Latino(a). The respondents were asked to describe their current employment status and student status. Sixty-three percent of the students are employed full-time; 25% are not employed; and 12% are part-time employed. Of the current Master's students, 56% are classified as part-time students and 44% are classified as full-time. The students' proximity to Texas A&M University broke-down fairly evenly, with 55% living more than 50 miles from TAMU and 45% living within 50 miles of the university. In regard to previous work experience, 78% had previous experience in the field of education, 16% in another field of employment, and 6% have never been employed.

On the whole, students agreed that the TLAC core courses, concentration area courses, and online or hybrid courses were challenging and not repetitive. However, students disagreed that TLAC core courses and concentration area courses were offered during the semester(s) in which they needed them or whether or not seats were available in these

courses during registration. With regard to online or hybrid courses, students did not agree that instructors provided prompt feedback or were able to assist with technology issues when they arose.

The majority of responses reflected positively on *Advising and Instructors*. All indicators showed a mean score above the *agree* level. *Professionalism* was an area identified that the program could improve upon. The only indicators that demonstrated student confidence ( $M > 2.99$ ) were *Initiating a job search* and *Reading research-based articles related to my field*. Three clear weaknesses (mean values  $< 3.00$ ) were: *writing academic papers and articles*, *professional activities (i.e. editing/reviewing for a journal)* and *presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

Students were asked to reflect on their future career aspirations and overall experience with the program. Concerning future career aspirations, 93% agreed that after completing their degree they would seek a job in education and that their degree would lead to a professional career opportunity. When reflecting on the overall experience in the program, 93% agreed that the information they learned in graduate courses would be beneficial in their chosen career. Finally, most agreed that the graduate experience helped prepare them for a future job and provided networking opportunities.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Masters' program. All students identified the quality of instructors and the flexibility of the program as strengths. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be caring with regard to students and knowledgeable current trends of the field. In addition, the program structure allows current students the flexibility to complete a Master's degree at their own pace. In fact, many students commented that the flexibility allowed them to pursue a graduate degree

that they might not have been able to pursue otherwise. The responses pertaining to challenges and suggestions were clearly divided by those participating in the Online Master's program and those who did not. Online Master's students signified their biggest challenge as the number of online courses and the availability of classes that are online. These respondents suggested allowing students at a distance first choice at online classes before allowing other students to register for them. Other Master's students' challenges were more closely related to their own experiences in the program. Examples of these challenges include: not being able to find a job, not enough funding while in the program, and too much emphasis on pre-service educators as opposed to experienced educators.

*Summary of Master's Program – former students*

Of the 49 participants who responded to the online survey of former Master's students, 90% were female. Seventy-six percent of the respondents classified themselves as White, 4% as other, 4% African-American, 4% Latino(a), and 3% Asian or Pacific Islander. In regards to work experience since receiving their Master's degree, 90% have worked in the field of education, 8% in another field of employment, and 2% have not been employed. If respondents indicated employment in the field of education, they were also asked to indicate the area of experience. Sixty-eight percent indicated experience as a classroom teacher, 23% other, and 9% administration.

General academic demographics were also collected on the survey. The percentages of former students identifying themselves in the various TLAC concentration areas broke-down as follows: 33% Culture and Curriculum; 21% Science Education; 15% Reading and Language Arts Education; 13% English as a Second Language (ESL); 6% Urban Education;

and 2% Early Childhood Education. Finally, of the former masters students, 27% are currently pursuing an additional degree.

On the whole, students agreed that the TLAC core courses, concentration area courses, and online or hybrid courses were challenging, not repetitive, were offered during the semester they needed them, and seats were available in these courses during registration. With regard to online or hybrid courses, students indicated they agreed that instructors provided prompt feedback or were able to assist with technology issues when they arose.

The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Advising and Instructors*. All indicators showed a mean score above or the *agree* level ( $M = 3.00$ ), except items that pertained to keeping in contact with professors or advisors once they finished their degree. *Professionalism* was an area identified that the program could improve upon. Three clear weaknesses (those with a mean value  $< 3.00$ ) illustrated from responses were: *writing academic papers and articles*; *professional activities (i.e. editing/reviewing for a journal)*; and *presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

Former students were asked to reflect on their future career aspirations and overall experience with the program. In regards to future career aspirations, 66% agreed that after completing their degree they did seek a job in education (54% in a public school district) and 70% indicated that their degree led to a professional career opportunity. In addition, only 40% have continued with graduate school after completing their Masters' degree. When reflecting on the overall experience in the program, 91% agreed that the information they learned in graduate courses would be beneficial in their chosen career. Overwhelmingly, former students also agreed that the overall graduate experience helped prepare them for their

current job or a job in the future. Finally, most agreed that the graduate experience provided networking opportunities.

The former Master's students identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the program in the open-ended responses. All students identified the quality of instructors and course content of the program as strengths. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be knowledgeable, and students appreciated their guidance throughout the program. In addition, the course content of the program provided foundational knowledge and allowed students to be confident discussing current educational issues. Former Master's students' challenges were more closely related to their own experiences in the program. Examples of these challenges included: finding time to coordinate a full time job with obtaining a graduate degree, commuting for classes, and not receiving feedback in online classes from professors.

#### *Summary of Doctoral Program – current students*

One-hundred current doctoral students responded to the survey. Of the respondents, 73% were female and 27% were male. Fifty-four percent of the respondents classified themselves as White, 19% as African-American, 14% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% as Latino(a), and 5% as other. Thirty-one percent of the current doctoral students reported that English is not their first language.

The percentages of students identifying themselves in the various TLAC concentration areas are categorized as follows: 22% Culture and Curriculum; 17% Reading and Language Arts; 16% Science Education; 13% Urban Education; 12% English as a Second Language (ESL); 12% Mathematics Education; and 6% Early Childhood Education. The current students are in various stages within the program: 25% have completed 0 - 1 year; 19% 1 - 2 years; 22% 2 - 3 years; 18% 3 - 4 years; 7% 4 - 5 years; and 8% 5+ years.

Current TLAC doctoral students represent a range of backgrounds and concentration areas. They hold various jobs, speak an assortment of languages, and come from (and currently live in) a mixture of communities. Their academic experiences and coursework have been both similar and different, and they are at varying stages in their doctoral studies.

As related to coursework, mean scores for two indicators (*overall, the core courses were challenging, and the core courses were not repetitive of other doctoral courses I had already taken*) were less than 3.00. The open-ended comments supported these lower scores, indicating that doctoral students desire increased academic rigor and less repetition in their core courses. They did, however, respond with higher levels of agreement to those items related to courses within their own concentration areas. Unlike the core courses, students do not find their concentration area courses to be “too easy,” nor do they consider them to be repetitive. Moreover, respondents indicated that their concentration area courses are taught by well-informed professors who are knowledgeable with regard to current issues in their areas of emphasis.

Doctoral students, in cooperation with their committee chair(s), select both a sequence of research coursework and additional advanced research courses. Almost one-third of the respondents have taken or plan to enroll in the TLAC research sequence (Sequence C); otherwise, students are distributed fairly evenly in their enrollment in the other research sequence options. The lowest area of agreement was *there were open seats in the research courses when I needed to register for them*. When combined with the open-ended comments on coursework, the overall sentiment appears to be that students appreciate the knowledge and competency levels of their professors; however, there exists concern that some professors are too narrow with their approaches to specific topics.

On the whole, respondents view both the TLAC Graduate Advising Office and their Dissertation Committee Chair in a positive light, reporting that both are helpful and treat them with respect; however, several students described problems related to communication with their chair. Some stated that their chair fails to respond in a timely manner and that logistical issues (often related to communication) have served as impediments to completing the doctoral program at an acceptable rate.

As evidenced by the open-ended comments, the areas of *publications, presentations, and funding* all tended to interconnect. Students indicated that they intend to publish papers and present at conferences during their academic program at TAMU; however, a multitude of respondents described funding options as a legitimate obstacle in accomplishing this and many of their goals. On the whole, students face challenges in meeting their day-to-day responsibilities while trying to finance their doctoral pursuits.

Finally, current doctoral students reported that they feel prepared and intend to secure a position in higher education and/or leadership. If they could start over, most (85%) agreed they would once again choose to attend Texas A&M University for a doctoral degree in education.

#### *Summary of Doctoral Program – former students*

Thirty former doctoral students responded to the online survey. Of the respondents, 90% were female and 59% white, 10% Asian or Pacific Islander, 10% Latino(a), 10% African American, and 10% responded as other. Of the former student respondents, 14% spoke a first language other than English. In terms of TLAC concentration area, 23% were Culture and Curriculum; 17% were Mathematics Education; 17% were Reading and Language Arts Education; 17% were Science Education; 13% were English as a Second



Language (ESL); and 13% were Urban Education. Currently, 70% of the former doctoral students are employed at a university, 27% are employed with a school district, and 3% are employed at a community college.

Former TLAC doctoral students represent a range of backgrounds and concentration areas, and the majority of them are currently employed at a university. During their time as TAMU students, the majority lived more than 50 miles from the campus, with less than 40% residing locally. They responded to a variety of questions on coursework and general experiences they had while attending Texas A&M for their Ph.D.

As related to the TLAC core and concentration area courses, mean scores for all items were above 3.20. The open-ended comments made by former doctoral students indicated that former doctoral students appreciated the high standards and rigor of their courses; however, it was noted that former doctoral students would like more available options for their elective courses. The survey items associated with Research Courses revealed two items where the mean scores fell below 3.00: *I feel like my advanced research courses further prepared me to complete my dissertation research* and *I feel like the research courses sufficiently prepared me to complete my dissertation research*. The lower scores were supported by the open-ended comments, where former doctoral students indicated that not enough advanced research courses were provided in certain areas of research.

Former students reflected favorably on both the TLAC Graduate Advising Office and their Dissertation Committee Chair. They indicated the Advising Office answered their questions and were accessible. The same sentiment was reflected in comments about Committee Chairs; however, respondents' attitudes fell below the *agreement* level when asked about receiving specific instruction and guidance on writing their dissertations. Also,

some regretted that their Chair was seldom on campus or had too many doctoral students. Though not specific to Committee Chairs, former students had generally positive comments concerning their professors' knowledge levels and demeanors; but some did comment on negative experiences relating to attitude and availability.

The Publications and Presentations segment of the survey showed a wide range of sentiment, based on the indicator. Former students demonstrated high levels of agreement with regard to attended conferences and submitted proposals for presentation. Conversely, a lower percentage said that they served as journal reviewers or that they knew how to apply for graduate student conference funding.

Lastly, former doctoral students reported that if they could start over, they would once again pursue a doctoral degree in education; and though slightly lower, mean values indicated that most would again attend Texas A&M University to do so. They appreciated the collegiality that emerged among their peers and believed the opportunities to interact were plentiful.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, current and former students from all TLAC programs at Texas A&M University—Undergraduate, Secondary Graduate Certification, Master's, and Doctoral—completed online surveys. For all program areas, respondents identified their instructors as a program strength, specifically citing their knowledge levels and caring demeanors.

Additionally, program-specific trends emerged.

Specific to undergraduates, both current and former students' responses overwhelmingly indicated that the *field experiences* component of the program is a strength; however, both undergraduate groups, as well as the Secondary Graduate Certification

program students, said that issues related to *professionalism* and *job preparation* were program challenges. In particular, students do not feel confident writing a résumé, interviewing, and the overall job-search process. Master’s students identified *course availability* as a challenge. Finally, doctoral students described *collegiality* among their peers as a strength. Also, most found their committee chair to be both motivational and supportive. Specific areas for improvement, as suggested by both current and former doctoral students, were: more TLAC departmental options for advanced research coursework, additional opportunities for funding, and fewer courses where professors offer a constricted viewpoint, based on their personal philosophies and research interests. This report represents a summary of the overall findings. A comprehensive description and analysis is available.

## Section IV: Student Survey

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Program Review Survey – Summary

Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture

College of Education and Human Development

Texas A&M University

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Program Review Survey – Summary

As part of a program review, the Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture (TLAC) in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University (TAMU) invited current students and former students who graduated in the past five years to participate in an online survey. Students from all programs—Undergraduate, Secondary Graduate Certification, Master’s, and Doctoral—were sent emails that asked them to complete the online surveys. Response rates for the surveys were as follows: current undergraduate students = 34%; former undergraduate students = 15%; current Secondary

Graduate Certification students = 52%; former Secondary Graduate Certification students = 21%; current Master's students = 31%; former Master's students = 26%; current doctoral students = 46%; and former doctoral students = 34%.

Items for the surveys were adapted from other similar surveys, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and widely-accepted “best practices” within the various concentration areas (Boyd, et al. 2008; Dean & Lauer, 2003; Dean, Lauer, & Urquhart, 2005; US Department of Ed., 1999). Prior to inviting participants to respond, doctoral students and faculty reviewed the surveys and provide feedback. Using a four-point Likert-type scale, participants indicated their levels of agreement with items related to program aspects (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree), as well as their confidence in various items related to *professionalism* and *curriculum and instruction* (1 = not at all confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = confident, 4 = extremely confident). Furthermore, both current and former students were asked to provide open-ended responses concerning program strengths, challenges, and suggestions.

Separate analyses were conducted on survey data collected from current and former students in each program. The following is a brief summary of results. The complete report is available on the TLAC Program Review web site. Additionally, the descriptive survey results are provided in Tables 1-1 thru 8-2 (scale questions) and in Appendices A-1 thru H-3 (open-ended responses) within the comprehensive report. For purposes of confidentiality, faculty names and other identifying information were deleted from the open-ended responses.

#### *Summary of Undergraduate Program – current students*

Of the 464 participants who responded to the online survey of current undergraduate students, 96% were female and nearly 90% were white. Thirty-four percent of the

respondents classified themselves as seniors, 28% juniors, 12% sophomores, 16% freshmen, and 10% fifth-year seniors. In terms of certification, 43% are 4 – 8; 38% are EC – 6; and 20% are EC – 4. Of the students who are pursuing 4 – 8 teacher certification, 55% have a math/science emphasis, and 45% are reading/language arts/social studies-focused.

On the whole, more students felt more confident teaching Reading/Language Arts and Early Childhood Education than Mathematics and Science. In both Mathematics and Science, mean scores for all indicators were less than 3.00 (on a four-point Likert-type scale).

Students' feelings about teaching Social Studies also indicated less confidence; although mean scores did indicate confidence with two indicators, *assessing prior knowledge* and *making connections to events in students' lives, current events, and other content areas*.

Conversely, mean scores for all Reading/Language Arts and Early Childhood Education indicators were higher than 3.00, providing evidence for students' confidence in teaching these areas. Mean scores for ESL instruction split almost evenly, with about half of the students reflecting confidence teaching English language learners and half not feeling confident. The findings pertaining to General Instruction revealed three issues where students felt less confident: *teaching students with special needs, differentiating instruction, and conducting parent/teacher conferences*.

While the majority of responses reflected positively on Texas A&M's instructors in terms of knowledge, accessibility, and caring for students as individuals, an obvious area of weakness, as identified by the students, is the area of *Professionalism*. All indicators showed a mean score that fell below the *confident* level (Means < than 3.00). The concerns that students identified were: *initiate a job search; conduct myself in an interview; identify and*

*join professional organizations pertinent to my field; and read research-based articles related to my field.*

Students were asked to reflect on the past as well as their future career aspirations. When asked whether or not they would once again choose Texas A&M University and the field of education should they have the opportunity to “start over,” most students generally responded that they would. The majority of students (90%) indicated that they planned to obtain a full-time teaching job immediately following graduation. Additionally, for the most part, students plan to still be teaching in the classroom three, five, and ten years following graduation. Finally, most students agreed or strongly agreed that they intend to pursue a graduate degree in education at some point in the future.

The open-ended responses reflected trends that were similar to the Likert-type scale indicators. By and large, five widespread themes emerged: (a) Advising, (b) Courses and Curriculum, (c) Instructors, (d) Field Experience, and (e) Professionalism/Job Preparation. Students are pleased with their advisors; however, they find registering for the classes they need, when they need them, to be challenging. Overall, they find their instructors to be knowledgeable; but students report that taking courses from instructors who do not speak English as their native language can be difficult. Also, students enjoy the interdisciplinary nature of their coursework; however, on the whole, they believe far too much emphasis is placed on multicultural education, as opposed to classroom management—a topic of which many respondents suggested the department offer much more (but not online). In addition, practical field experiences emerged as a strength of the program; but students indicated that more effort should be made to meet their needs with regard to school/site placements. Lastly, across the board, the respondents want more instruction and guidance on the job-hunting

process. Specifically, they want to learn how to identify good jobs, complete applications effectively, and make a good impression during interviews.

*Summary of Undergraduate Program – former students*

A total of 341 former undergraduate students completed the online survey. The response rate for this survey was particularly low (15%) due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate email addresses for these students. Of the respondents, 95% were female and nearly 91% were white. Seventy-three percent of the respondents are currently employed as teachers. In terms of certification, 37% are 4 – 8, and 63% are EC – 4. Of the former students who are 4 – 8 teacher certified, 42% have a math/science emphasis, and 58% are reading/language arts/social studies-focused. The distribution of grade-levels currently taught by the respondents was fairly even, ranging from 12 - 18% for kindergarten to eighth grade (8% teach Pre-K; 5% teach others). Thirty-eight percent of the former students reported that they currently serve as Team Leader, and 45% reported holding the role of student organization sponsor. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 9% reported working in an inner city environment, 16% in an urban school, 53% in a suburban setting, 13% in a small town, 7% in a rural environment, and 2% were “not sure” of their school’s location.

On the whole, more students felt more confident teaching Reading/Language Arts, Early Childhood Education, and Mathematics than Science and Social Studies. In both Science and Social Studies, three mean scores out of seven were less than 3.00 (on a four-point Likert-type scale). Of all areas of teaching, former students clearly felt less confident teaching ESL, as evidenced by all indicators having mean values below the confidence level of 3.00. On the other hand, mean scores for Reading/Language Arts, Early Childhood

Education, and Mathematics provided evidence for former students' confidence in teaching these areas.

Responses reflected positively on Texas A&M's instructors in terms of knowledge, accessibility, and caring for students as individuals. Former students indicated that, 10 years from now, they were not confident that they would still be in the classroom. When asked, should they have the ability to "start over," whether or not they would once again choose Texas A&M University for a degree in education, most students (92%) responded that they would.

The open-ended responses reflected trends that were similar to the Likert-type scale indicators. Overall, the former students felt well-prepared to enter their own classrooms and become effective teachers. As was the case with the current students, confidence in teaching mathematics and science, as well as ESL, were areas of weakness as compared to other content areas.

#### *Summary of Secondary Graduate Certification Program – current students*

Thirty-seven students responded to the online survey of current Secondary Graduate Certification students. Of the respondents, 81% were female and 81% were white. Seventy-eight percent of the students are currently employed as a teacher during the 2009-2010 school year. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 50% reported working in a suburban school, 19% small town, 17% urban, 11% rural and 3% inner city. In terms of certification, 43% were Language Arts/Reading certified, 16% History, 16% Social Studies Composite, 11% Math, 8% Communication, 5% Life Sciences, 5% Science Composite, 2% Spanish, and 2% Theatre Arts. The majority of students in the



program currently hold a leadership role in their school; 64% sponsor of a student organization, 27% other, 14% are coaches, and 9% are Team Leaders.

On the whole, students expressed confidence in their abilities to teach their chosen concentration areas. Mean scores for Mathematics and Social Studies were all higher than 3.00, providing evidence for students' confidence in teaching these areas. Concerning Science, all mean scores were above 3.00 with the exception of *designing and implementing student-led, inquiry activities*. All but two mean scores for ESL (*teach students to recognize and apply various strategies to interpret a writer's purpose and provide opportunities for English Language Learners to listen, speak, read, and write at their current levels of English development, while gradually increasing the linguistic complexity of the English*) were also above 3.0. Pertaining to General Instruction, three issues emerged with which students felt less confident: *developing strategies for working with parents and families; conducting parent/teacher conferences; and employing effective instructional strategies for students with special needs*.

The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses/Field Experience, Application Process and Advising, Mentor Teacher/University Supervisor, Instructors, Job Search, and Current School Environment*. All indicators showed a mean score either above or marginally below the *confident* level ( $M = 3.0$ ). *Professionalism* was an area identified on which the program could improve. The issues identified as weaknesses were: *writing academic papers and articles; identifying and joining professional organizations pertinent to my field; and presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

When students were given the opportunity to reflect on their decision to choose teaching as a profession, overwhelmingly (94%), students agreed that they would do so

again. In addition, almost all students agreed that Texas A&M would be their choice for obtaining their teacher certification. Also, the surveys revealed that 90% of students plan to continue teaching at their current school. Finally, most of the students indicated that they would remain teaching in the classroom three, five, and ten years from now.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Secondary Graduate Certification program. An identified strength was the quality of the instructors. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be knowledgeable, available, and caring with regard to students. Another strength to which the students referred was the cohort-nature of the program. Students reported that such a structure allows them to interact with others that are having similar experiences in their first year of teaching. A majority of students commented that the field experience component of the program is lacking. Students recognize the value of field experiences, and they believe that more opportunities for practical classroom experience should be included within the program. Lastly, some respondents reported an ever-present feeling of favoritism within the program towards some content areas as opposed to others.

#### *Summary of Secondary Graduate Certification Program – former students*

Of the 53 participants who responded to the online survey of former Secondary Graduate Certification students, 83% were female and 87% were white. Seventy-eight percent are currently employed as teachers during the 2009-2010 school year. For those respondents who indicated they were not currently teaching, the primary explanation was *the inability to find a job*. With regard to the location of the schools where respondents are currently employed, 50% reported working in a suburban setting, 19% in a small town, 17% in an urban setting, 11% in a rural setting, and 3% in an inner city. In terms of certification,

40% are certified Language Arts/Reading, 26% Social Studies Composite, 22% History, 14% Life Sciences, 10% Spanish, 8% Physical Sciences, 8% Science Composite, 6% Chemistry, 4% Math, 4% Communication, and 2% Latin. The majority of respondents currently hold a leadership role in their school; 72% sponsor of a student organization, 23% are coaches, 21% are Team Leaders, 17% other, and 14% are Department Heads.

On the whole, former students expressed confidence in their abilities to teach their chosen content areas. Mean scores for Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, and Social Studies were all higher than 3.00, providing evidence for former students' confidence in teaching these areas. Concerning Science, all mean scores were above 3.00, with the exception of *designing and implementing student-led, inquiry activities*. Pertaining to General Instruction, three issues emerged with which former students felt less confident: *differentiate instruction for all students; employing effective instructional strategies for students with special needs; and support older readers who are learning to read*.

The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses/Field Experience, Mentor Teacher/University Supervisor, Current School Environment, Instructors, TLAC Core Courses, and Job Search*. All indicators showed a mean score above or the *confident* level. In the *Action Research Project* portion of the survey, a weakness that was identified was: *The action research project changed my classroom teaching practices*. *Professionalism* was another area identified that the program could improve upon. Other issues identified as weaknesses were: *writing academic papers and articles and presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

When former students were given the opportunity to reflect on their decision to attend Texas A&M University to obtain their teaching certification, overwhelmingly, former

students (100%) agreed. In addition, almost all former students (87%) agreed that they would again choose teaching as their profession. In addition, the surveys revealed that only 67% of former students plan to continue teaching at their current school. Finally, most of the former students indicated that they would remain teaching in the classroom three, and five years from now; but they were less confident regarding whether they would still be in the classroom ten years from now.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Secondary Graduate Certification program. An identified strength was the quality of the instructors. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be caring with regard to former students and knowledgeable about the realities of the classroom. Another strength the former students referred to was the ability to complete a Master's degree in Education upon completion of the program. Finally, former students commented on the cohort-nature of the program. The structure of the program allows former students to interact with others that are having similar experiences in their first year of teaching. A majority of former students commented that the field experience component of the program is lacking. Former students feel as though the amount of field experience needs to be increased to better prepare future students in the program for the classroom. Another suggestion from former students was to increase the difficulty and rigor of the program. Lastly, some respondents suggested more marketing of the program to increase the number of people who are aware of its presence on campus.

#### *Summary of Masters Program – current students*

Thirty-two participants responded to the online survey of current Master's students. Of the respondents, 81% were female and 26% were male. Seventy-five percent of the

respondents classified themselves as White, 13% as Other, 6% as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 6% Latino(a). The respondents were asked to describe their current employment status and student status. Sixty-three percent of the students are employed full-time; 25% are not employed; and 12% are part-time employed. Of the current Master's students, 56% are classified as part-time students and 44% are classified as full-time. The students' proximity to Texas A&M University broke-down fairly evenly, with 55% living more than 50 miles from TAMU and 45% living within 50 miles of the university. In regard to previous work experience, 78% had previous experience in the field of education, 16% in another field of employment, and 6% have never been employed.

On the whole, students agreed that the TLAC core courses, concentration area courses, and online or hybrid courses were challenging and not repetitive. However, students disagreed that TLAC core courses and concentration area courses were offered during the semester(s) in which they needed them or whether or not seats were available in these courses during registration. With regard to online or hybrid courses, students did not agree that instructors provided prompt feedback or were able to assist with technology issues when they arose.

The majority of responses reflected positively on *Advising and Instructors*. All indicators showed a mean score above the *agree* level. *Professionalism* was an area identified that the program could improve upon. The only indicators that demonstrated student confidence ( $M > 2.99$ ) were *Initiating a job search* and *Reading research-based articles related to my field*. Three clear weaknesses (mean values  $< 3.00$ ) were: *writing academic papers and articles*, *professional activities (i.e. editing/reviewing for a journal)* and *presenting at professional conferences in my field*.

Students were asked to reflect on their future career aspirations and overall experience with the program. Concerning future career aspirations, 93% agreed that after completing their degree they would seek a job in education and that their degree would lead to a professional career opportunity. When reflecting on the overall experience in the program, 93% agreed that the information they learned in graduate courses would be beneficial in their chosen career. Finally, most agreed that the graduate experience helped prepare them for a future job and provided networking opportunities.

The open-ended responses identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the Masters' program. All students identified the quality of instructors and the flexibility of the program as strengths. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be caring with regard to students and knowledgeable current trends of the field. In addition, the program structure allows current students the flexibility to complete a Master's degree at their own pace. In fact, many students commented that the flexibility allowed them to pursue a graduate degree that they might not have been able to pursue otherwise. The responses pertaining to challenges and suggestions were clearly divided by those participating in the Online Master's program and those who did not. Online Master's students signified their biggest challenge as the number of online courses and the availability of classes that are online. These respondents suggested allowing students at a distance first choice at online classes before allowing other students to register for them. Other Master's students' challenges were more closely related to their own experiences in the program. Examples of these challenges include: not being able to find a job, not enough funding while in the program, and too much emphasis on pre-service educators as opposed to experienced educators.

*Summary of Master's Program – former students*

Of the 49 participants who responded to the online survey of former Master's students, 90% were female. Seventy-six percent of the respondents classified themselves as White, 4% as other, 4% African-American, 4% Latino(a), and 3% Asian or Pacific Islander. In regards to work experience since receiving their Master's degree, 90% have worked in the field of education, 8% in another field of employment, and 2% have not been employed. If respondents indicated employment in the field of education, they were also asked to indicate the area of experience. Sixty-eight percent indicated experience as a classroom teacher, 23% other, and 9% administration.

General academic demographics were also collected on the survey. The percentages of former students identifying themselves in the various TLAC concentration areas broke-down as follows: 33% Culture and Curriculum; 21% Science Education; 15% Reading and Language Arts Education; 13% English as a Second Language (ESL); 6% Urban Education; and 2% Early Childhood Education. Finally, of the former masters students, 27% are currently pursuing an additional degree.

On the whole, students agreed that the TLAC core courses, concentration area courses, and online or hybrid courses were challenging, not repetitive, were offered during the semester they needed them, and seats were available in these courses during registration. With regard to online or hybrid courses, students indicated they agreed that instructors provided prompt feedback or were able to assist with technology issues when they arose.

The majority of responses reflected positively on the *Advising and Instructors*. All indicators showed a mean score above or the *agree* level ( $M = 3.00$ ), except items that pertained to keeping in contact with professors or advisors once they finished their degree. *Professionalism* was an area identified that the program could improve upon. Three clear

weaknesses (those with a mean value < 3.00) illustrated from responses were: *writing academic papers and articles; professional activities (i.e. editing/reviewing for a journal); and presenting at professional conferences in my field.*

Former students were asked to reflect on their future career aspirations and overall experience with the program. In regards to future career aspirations, 66% agreed that after completing their degree they did seek a job in education (54% in a public school district) and 70% indicated that their degree led to a professional career opportunity. In addition, only 40% have continued with graduate school after completing their Masters' degree. When reflecting on the overall experience in the program, 91% agreed that the information they learned in graduate courses would be beneficial in their chosen career. Overwhelmingly, former students also agreed that the overall graduate experience helped prepare them for their current job or a job in the future. Finally, most agreed that the graduate experience provided networking opportunities.

The former Master's students identified clear strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the program in the open-ended responses. All students identified the quality of instructors and course content of the program as strengths. Overall, respondents find their instructors to be knowledgeable, and students appreciated their guidance throughout the program. In addition, the course content of the program provided foundational knowledge and allowed students to be confident discussing current educational issues. Former Master's students' challenges were more closely related to their own experiences in the program. Examples of these challenges included: finding time to coordinate a full time job with obtaining a graduate degree, commuting for classes, and not receiving feedback in online classes from professors.

*Summary of Doctoral Program – current students*



One-hundred current doctoral students responded to the survey. Of the respondents, 73% were female and 27% were male. Fifty-four percent of the respondents classified themselves as White, 19% as African-American, 14% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% as Latino(a), and 5% as other. Thirty-one percent of the current doctoral students reported that English is not their first language.

The percentages of students identifying themselves in the various TLAC concentration areas are categorized as follows: 22% Culture and Curriculum; 17% Reading and Language Arts; 16% Science Education; 13% Urban Education; 12% English as a Second Language (ESL); 12% Mathematics Education; and 6% Early Childhood Education. The current students are in various stages within the program: 25% have completed 0 - 1 year; 19% 1 - 2 years; 22% 2 - 3 years; 18% 3 - 4 years; 7% 4 - 5 years; and 8% 5+ years.

Current TLAC doctoral students represent a range of backgrounds and concentration areas. They hold various jobs, speak an assortment of languages, and come from (and currently live in) a mixture of communities. Their academic experiences and coursework have been both similar and different, and they are at varying stages in their doctoral studies.

As related to coursework, mean scores for two indicators (*overall, the core courses were challenging, and the core courses were not repetitive of other doctoral courses I had already taken*) were less than 3.00. The open-ended comments supported these lower scores, indicating that doctoral students desire increased academic rigor and less repetition in their core courses. They did, however, respond with higher levels of agreement to those items related to courses within their own concentration areas. Unlike the core courses, students do not find their concentration area courses to be “too easy,” nor do they consider them to be repetitive. Moreover, respondents indicated that their concentration area courses are taught

by well-informed professors who are knowledgeable with regard to current issues in their areas of emphasis.

Doctoral students, in cooperation with their committee chair(s), select both a sequence of research coursework and additional advanced research courses. Almost one-third of the respondents have taken or plan to enroll in the TLAC research sequence (Sequence C); otherwise, students are distributed fairly evenly in their enrollment in the other research sequence options. The lowest area of agreement was *there were open seats in the research courses when I needed to register for them*. When combined with the open-ended comments on coursework, the overall sentiment appears to be that students appreciate the knowledge and competency levels of their professors; however, there exists concern that some professors are too narrow with their approaches to specific topics.

On the whole, respondents view both the TLAC Graduate Advising Office and their Dissertation Committee Chair in a positive light, reporting that both are helpful and treat them with respect; however, several students described problems related to communication with their chair. Some stated that their chair fails to respond in a timely manner and that logistical issues (often related to communication) have served as impediments to completing the doctoral program at an acceptable rate.

As evidenced by the open-ended comments, the areas of *publications, presentations, and funding* all tended to interconnect. Students indicated that they intend to publish papers and present at conferences during their academic program at TAMU; however, a multitude of respondents described funding options as a legitimate obstacle in accomplishing this and many of their goals. On the whole, students face challenges in meeting their day-to-day responsibilities while trying to finance their doctoral pursuits.

Finally, current doctoral students reported that they feel prepared and intend to secure a position in higher education and/or leadership. If they could start over, most (85%) agreed they would once again choose to attend Texas A&M University for a doctoral degree in education.

#### *Summary of Doctoral Program – former students*

Thirty former doctoral students responded to the online survey. Of the respondents, 90% were female and 59% white, 10% Asian or Pacific Islander, 10% Latino(a), 10% African American, and 10% responded as other. Of the former student respondents, 14% spoke a first language other than English. In terms of TLAC concentration area, 23% were Culture and Curriculum; 17% were Mathematics Education; 17% were Reading and Language Arts Education; 17% were Science Education; 13% were English as a Second Language (ESL); and 13% were Urban Education. Currently, 70% of the former doctoral students are employed at a university, 27% are employed with a school district, and 3% are employed at a community college.

Former TLAC doctoral students represent a range of backgrounds and concentration areas, and the majority of them are currently employed at a university. During their time as TAMU students, the majority lived more than 50 miles from the campus, with less than 40% residing locally. They responded to a variety of questions on coursework and general experiences they had while attending Texas A&M for their Ph.D.

As related to the TLAC core and concentration area courses, mean scores for all items were above 3.20. The open-ended comments made by former doctoral students indicated that former doctoral students appreciated the high standards and rigor of their courses; however, it was noted that former doctoral students would like more available options for their elective

courses. The survey items associated with Research Courses revealed two items where the mean scores fell below 3.00: *I feel like my advanced research courses further prepared me to complete my dissertation research* and *I feel like the research courses sufficiently prepared me to complete my dissertation research*. The lower scores were supported by the open-ended comments, where former doctoral students indicated that not enough advanced research courses were provided in certain areas of research.

Former students reflected favorably on both the TLAC Graduate Advising Office and their Dissertation Committee Chair. They indicated the Advising Office answered their questions and were accessible. The same sentiment was reflected in comments about Committee Chairs; however, respondents' attitudes fell below the *agreement* level when asked about receiving specific instruction and guidance on writing their dissertations. Also, some regretted that their Chair was seldom on campus or had too many doctoral students. Though not specific to Committee Chairs, former students had generally positive comments concerning their professors' knowledge levels and demeanors; but some did comment on negative experiences relating to attitude and availability.

The Publications and Presentations segment of the survey showed a wide range of sentiment, based on the indicator. Former students demonstrated high levels of agreement with regard to attended conferences and submitted proposals for presentation. Conversely, a lower percentage said that they served as journal reviewers or that they knew how to apply for graduate student conference funding.

Lastly, former doctoral students reported that if they could start over, they would once again pursue a doctoral degree in education; and though slightly lower, mean values indicated that most would again attend Texas A&M University to do so. They appreciated

the collegiality that emerged among their peers and believed the opportunities to interact were plentiful.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, current and former students from all TLAC programs at Texas A&M University—Undergraduate, Secondary Graduate Certification, Master’s, and Doctoral—completed online surveys. For all program areas, respondents identified their instructors as a program strength, specifically citing their knowledge levels and caring demeanors. Additionally, program-specific trends emerged.

Specific to undergraduates, both current and former students’ responses overwhelmingly indicated that the *field experiences* component of the program is a strength; however, both undergraduate groups, as well as the Secondary Graduate Certification program students, said that issues related to *professionalism* and *job preparation* were program challenges. In particular, students do not feel confident writing a résumé, interviewing, and the overall job-search process. Master’s students identified *course availability* as a challenge. Finally, doctoral students described *collegiality* among their peers as a strength. Also, most found their committee chair to be both motivational and supportive. Specific areas for improvement, as suggested by both current and former doctoral students, were: more TLAC departmental options for advanced research coursework, additional opportunities for funding, and fewer courses where professors offer a constricted viewpoint, based on their personal philosophies and research interests. This report represents a summary of the overall findings. A comprehensive description and analysis is available.

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