

CPR Report Submitted!

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- 5 **Institution:** Columbus State University
- 6 **Review Status:** Non-triggered Review
- 7 **Degree level:** Masters
- 8 **Degree acronym:** MED
- 9 **Degree/Major:** MEd in Secondary Education - Science
- 10 **CIP Code:** 13131601
- 11 **College,
School/Division:** College of Education
- 12 **Department:** Teacher Education
- 13 **CPR Plan
followed:** Yes
- 14 **Future institutional
plans for program:** Maintain at present level
- 15 **Supplemental file:** MEd Sec Ed Sci Exec-Sum.doc
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Executive Summary for the M.Ed. Secondary Science

Major Findings of the Program's Quality and Productivity

Program Quality: Very Strong

In February 2005, a continuing approval review of the College of Education was conducted by a Board of Examiners (BOE) consisting of representatives from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The 2000 NCATE Standards and the Georgia 2000 Standards were used to assess the unit and its programs. The BOE judged all standards to be met for the unit and for all initial and advanced programs.

Overall, the M.Ed. Secondary Science program is strong and prepares highly qualified science teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn.

Program Productivity: Satisfactory

Enrollment in the M.Ed. Secondary Science program has remained fairly stable since 2002 and ranks fifth in average enrollment among the ten M.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education. The average enrollment for the four-year period from 2001-2005 was 18. Because the program is small, courses are usually offered on a one- or two-year cycle, which helps with enrollment numbers. This contributes to the cost-effectiveness of the department. The program has a diverse group of majors (on average 69% female and 29% minority) from a wide range of age groups. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

The number of M.Ed. Secondary Science degrees conferred by CSU is small (on average 5.25 per year) but has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90-mile radius of Columbus that offers a master's degree in secondary science, CSU provides science teachers in its service region an opportunity that they might not have otherwise, to gain expertise in science education.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality

Though the program quality is very strong, we continue to look for ways to make improvements. Current initiatives include:

- aligning coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Science in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards,
- connecting content in graduate science courses to the secondary curriculum so that teachers see the relevance of the science they are learning.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

The Science Program Advisory Committee (PAC) will oversee the following efforts to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers.

- Align coursework with the new Georgia Performance Standards for Science (2005-2006).

- Connect the content of the graduate science courses to the secondary curriculum. By making the coursework more relevant to teachers, we hope to attract more teachers into the M.Ed. program.
- Recruit more students into the undergraduate science or science education programs.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The M.Ed. Secondary Science program at CSU is a viable one. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/PSC Board of Examiners in February 2005, the quality of the program is very strong. All NCATE/PSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs. In addition, program quality is enhanced by special opportunities available at CSU. Science education majors have access to resources and professional development opportunities offered through the Centers of Excellence, such as Oxbow Meadows and the Coca Cola Space Science Center.

The viability of the program is also ensured by the collaborative relationship that exists between the College of Education and the Science Department. Representatives from each of these groups work together to make improvements to the science education programs at CSU and to impact science education in our region. The M.Ed. program in secondary science is a valuable resource for teachers in our region who want to grow professionally and gain expertise in the field of science education.

Graduates of the M.Ed. Secondary Science program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate program in secondary science. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs in secondary science have helped to create a cadre of leaders within our Partner School Network. Graduates often serve CSU as pre-student teaching cooperating teachers and cooperating teachers for student teaching. They are an invaluable asset in assisting with the development of our undergraduates.

Though small, the number of M.Ed. Secondary Science degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. As the only USG institution within a 90 mile radius of Columbus that offers a master's degree in secondary science, CSU provides science teachers in its service region an opportunity to gain expertise in science education. This is an opportunity that they might not have if CSU did not offer this degree program. With the critical shortage of highly-qualified science teachers, we need to provide every possible opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching science.

Program Improvement Plan

In response to the findings of the Comprehensive Program Review, the faculty members and administrators of the M.Ed. in Secondary Science Education propose the strategies outlined below to improve the quality, productivity and viability of the program. These strategies will be facilitated by the Secondary Science Program Advisory Committee (PAC).

<i>Departmental Plans and Priorities</i>	<i>CPR Indicator</i>	<i>Projected Timeline</i>
1. Refine the College of Education Recruitment Plan to focus on specific methods for recruiting Secondary Science graduate students from diverse backgrounds	Productivity Viability	2006-2007
2. Explore various funding sources to provide scholarships for students seeking advanced degrees in Secondary Science	Productivity Viability	2006-Ongoing
3. Align appropriate graduate courses with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to make the individual courses as well as the program highly attractive to prospective graduate students who will be implementing the GPS.	Quality Productivity Viability	2006-2007
4. Continue to connect the content of the graduate science courses to the Secondary Science curriculum	Quality Productivity Viability	2006-Ongoing

The Interim Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs have reviewed the plan and will commit financial and personnel resources to accomplish priorities 1, 3, and 4 for program improvement. Resources from external funding will be necessary to support priority 2. The Program Coordinator will communicate additional resource requests as needed to the appropriate administrator within the College of Education at Columbus State University.

Summary Recommendation and Supporting Rationale

Recommendation: *Maintain the Program at the Current Level*

The program quality is very strong, but the number of degrees conferred each year is small. Until we are able to recruit more students into undergraduate programs in science or science education, opportunities for expansion of the M.Ed. program in secondary science will be limited. There are also factors beyond our control that have an impact on the M.Ed. program. Since teachers can get a master's degree in any field and receive an increase in pay, some of the science teachers in our service region have chosen to pursue a master's degree in an area other than secondary science.

As previously mentioned, CSU will continue to work to improve the current M.Ed. program in secondary science by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Georgia Performance Standards), improving the curriculum, providing better support and resources for students, and intensifying recruitment efforts. By enhancing the quality of the program, we hope to attract more potential students.