

# CPR Report Submitted!

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- 6    **Review Status:** Triggered Review
- 7    **Degree level:** Bachelors
- 8    **Degree acronym:** BSED
- 9    **Degree/Major:** BSEd in Special Education - General Curriculum/Mental Retardation
- 10                  **CIP Code:** 13100601
- 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:** BSEd Spec Ed-MR Exec-Sum.doc
- 16                  **File Type:** MS Word
- 17                  **CPR Web site:** aa.colstate.edu/assess/cprtbl.htm

## **Executive Summary for the BSEd General Curriculum/Mental Retardation Program**

### **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 B.S.Ed. Mental Retardation program is strong and prepares highly qualified special education teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn. The post-baccalaureate program leading to initial teacher certification in Mental Retardation has been an extremely strong part of the B.S.Ed. program but is not reflected in the numbers as the students in the post-baccalaureate program do not receive a bachelors degree. The post-baccalaureate program has been helpful in increasing and maintaining enrollment in the Mental Retardation program. This may change with the new requirements that all students graduating from the program be "highly qualified" under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This has resulted in a change in required coursework so that students will graduate highly qualified in Reading Education. We are monitoring this situation to see how it will impact admission and enrollment in the B.S.Ed. program.

#### **Program Productivity: Satisfactory**

Enrollment in the B.S.Ed. Mental Retardation program increased from 40 students in Fall 2001 to 54 students in Fall 2004 and ranks last in average enrollment among the B.S.Ed. programs housed in the Department of Teacher Education. Courses are offered on a one-year cycle, and enrollment in required courses is good. The offering and providing of several sections of SPED 2256, which is a state required course for all teacher education students, helps to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. The program has a diverse group of majors (on average 84% female and 30% minority) from a wide range of age groups. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

The average number of B.S.Ed. Mental Retardation degrees conferred from 2001-2002 to 2004-2005 was 6.5. The program ranks second in average number of degrees conferred by the four B.S.Ed. programs in the Department of Teacher Education. It is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. The statistics from other USG programs show that very few institutions offered a degree in Mental Retardation during the past four years.

#### **List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality**

The B.S.Ed. program in Special Education: Mental Retardation has been revised to enable it to be in compliance with the State of Georgia Professional Standards

Commission (PSC) mandate to be non-categorical. This means that all future graduates from the program will be licensed in Special Education – General Curriculum, rather than the current categorical certification of mental retardation. The program for students seeking initial certification in Special Education – General Curriculum has been revised so that all graduates will be considered to be “highly qualified” with a concentration in reading education.

### **List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity**

The special education program has recently been redesigned to train teachers in a content area thus making them “highly qualified” under the NCLB legislation. The Program Advisory Committee will continue to monitor enrollment patterns as the program changes are implemented to determine the impact on enrollment and retention in the special education program.

The program revisions may initially lead to a decrease in program admissions and decreased graduation rates as program requirements may lead students to question the value of pursuing a degree in special education, when they will be required to obtain an additional 15 semester hours of coursework in a teaching content area. Graduation rates may also be impacted as students may be required to delay their graduation until they have completed the additional coursework. However, after an initial drop-off in enrollment and graduation, enrollments should return to their current levels and subsequently so should graduation rates.

Beginning in the Fall 2006 semester, the State of Georgia will no longer require students to pass the Praxis II test for teacher licensure. In place of the Praxis series, the State of Georgia Assessment for Certification (GACE) which will reflect the required changes to special education teacher preparation curricula, will be required. All students graduating with a B.S.Ed. degree in Special Education: General Curriculum will be prepared for the new certification test through their course work and field-based practicum placements. The special education curriculum will be aligned with the content covered on the GACE.

### **Conclusion about the Program’s Viability at CSU**

The B.S.Ed. Mental Retardation program at CSU is an extremely 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.

The viability of the program is also ensured by the collaborative relationship that exists between the College of Education and P-12 teachers. Representatives from these groups work together to make improvements to the special education programs at CSU and to impact special education in our region.

Graduates of the B.S.Ed. program in Special Education: Mental Retardation are also a valuable resource for our special education programs. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our undergraduate programs in special education 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.

The number of B.S.Ed. degrees conferred by CSU in Special Education: Mental Retardation has been increasing fairly consistently over the past four years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities. With the critical shortage of highly-qualified special education teachers, we need to provide every possible opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching student with exceptional learning needs.

**Program Improvement Plan**

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

<i>Departmental Plans and Priorities</i>	<i>CPR Indicator</i>	<i>Projected Timeline</i>
1. Connect the content of the Special Education courses to the P-12 curriculum	Quality	2006-Ongoing
2. Continue to develop the adaptive and assistive technology classroom that will be used to model innovative teaching and materials	Quality	2005-Ongoing
3. Monitor program enrollment trends to enable appropriate planning for all aspects of the program including recruitment, scheduling of courses and securing faculty positions	Productivity Viability	2006-Ongoing

The resources needed to accomplish these priorities should be minimal. Departmental resources will be allocated as necessary to accomplish these plans. The Special Education Program Coordinator will be provided one course release time each academic year to provide leadership to these activities. The Department will contribute to the development of the model classroom by providing funds for supplies and materials. 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. There are factors beyond our control that have an impact on the B.S.Ed. program. Since teachers need to be “highly qualified” in a content area subject beginning with the Fall 2006 semester, many are starting to reconsider the need for a degree in special education when they can get a degree in any content field and be considered highly qualified. Some of the special education teachers in our service region are considering the pursuit of an undergraduate degree in an area other than special education, but are returning for the M.Ed. in Special Education at a later date.

As previously mentioned, CSU will continue to work to improve the current B.S.Ed. Program in special education by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Georgia Performance Standards, No Child Left Behind Act), 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.