

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE ED.S. MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION**

### **Major Findings of the Program's Quality and Productivity**

#### **Program Quality: Very Strong**

In February 2013, a continuing approval review of the Educator Preparation Unit at CSU 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 2008 NCATE Standards and the Georgia 2008 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. There were no areas for improvement cited, and the team noted multiple areas of strength.

Overall, the Ed.S. Middle Grades program is very strong and prepares highly qualified teachers (i.e., grades 4-8) who demonstrate expertise in their content knowledge and teaching skills, and share their knowledge and skills with other professionals. This is demonstrated by consistent ratings of meets or exceeds expectations on performance evaluations, overall GPAs of 3.0 or better and satisfactory completion of a culminating research project.

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

The total number of students enrolled in the specialist degree program increased from 13 in 2007-2008 to 21 in 2011-12 (an increase of 61%). Enrollment in the Ed.S. Middle Grades Education program has remained relatively stable with an average enrollment of 17.8 per year over the last five years.

The number of Ed.S. degrees conferred each year in Middle Grades Education is small but has increased since 2007-2008, with a five year average of seven degrees conferred per year.

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

Program Advisory Council (PAC) oversees the Ed.S. program in Middle Grades and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers. Though the program quality is very strong, we continue to look for ways to make improvements. Current initiatives include:

- aligning the curriculum with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards,
- implementing and refining a new portfolio option and new course-embedded key assessments,
- working with appropriate departments to explore the possibility of offering more graduate level content courses to broaden and deepen candidates' knowledge in their content area.

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

Recommendations to improve program productivity are as follows.

- Align coursework with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for mathematics and English and the Next Generation Science Standards. By responding to

current initiatives and mandates to make our programs more relevant for classroom teachers, we hope to recruit more teachers into the Ed.S. program.

- Work with the COEHP Recruitment Committee and Director of Graduate Studies to enhance recruitment efforts.

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

The Ed.S. Middle Grades program at CSU is viable. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/PSC Board of Examiners in February 2013, the quality of the program is very strong. All NCATE/PSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs. There were no areas for improvement and multiple strengths were cited. In addition, program quality is enhanced by special opportunities available at CSU through the Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC), Oxbow Meadows, Coca Cola Space Science Center, and the Cultural Approach to History Project.

The viability of the program is also ensured by the sharing of resources among all education programs at CSU. Faculty from the College of Education and Health Professions and the College of Letters and Sciences work with representatives from P-12 partner schools in the design and implementation of middle grades education programs at all levels (B.A, M.A.T., M.Ed., and Ed.S.). These stakeholders work together to make improvements to the middle grades education programs at CSU and to impact education in our region. The Ed.S. program in middle grades education is a valuable resource for teachers in our region who want to grow professionally and gain further expertise in their field while developing their leadership abilities. Candidates in the middle grades program take what they learn and apply it in their own classrooms to help their students learn, and share what they learn with other professionals.

Graduates of the Ed.S. Middle Grades Education program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate programs in middle grades education. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs 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 a valuable asset in assisting with the development of our undergraduates.

The number of Ed.S. Middle Grades Education degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past five years. CSU provides Middle Grades teachers in its service region an opportunity to develop further expertise in their content fields, improve their teaching skills, and share their knowledge and skills with other professionals. This is an opportunity that they might not have if CSU did not offer this degree program.

### **Program Improvement Plan**

In response to the findings of the Comprehensive Program Review, program faculty propose the strategies outlined below to improve the quality, productivity and viability of the program. These strategies will be facilitated by Program Advisory Councils (PAC).

Goals	Projected Timeline
Align the curriculum with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and Next Generation Science Standards.	2013-2014
Implement and refine new portfolio option and new course-embedded key assessments.	2013-2014
Work with appropriate departments in the College of Letters and Sciences to explore possibility of offering more graduate level content courses to broaden and deepen candidates' knowledge in their content area.	2013-2014
Work with COEHP Recruitment Committee and Director of Graduate Studies to enhance recruitment efforts.	Ongoing

### Summary Recommendation and Supporting Rationale

**Recommendation:** *Continue to Maintain and Enhance the Program*

The program quality is very strong, and the number of degrees conferred each year is small but relatively stable. CSU provides middle grades teachers in its service region an opportunity for professional development that they might not otherwise have if CSU did not offer this degree program. The Ed.S. program may also provide a pool of candidates for the Ed.D. program in Curriculum and Leadership

CSU will continue to work to improve the program by responding to new initiatives such as improving the curriculum, aligning the curriculum with the new Common Core Standards, providing better support and resources for students, preparing P-12 teachers to teach online, developing a retention and graduation plan to improve program viability, and intensifying recruitment efforts.

By enhancing the quality of the program, we hope to attract more potential students.