

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE M.A.T./M.ED. 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 M.A.T. and M.Ed. Middle Grades Education programs are very strong and prepare highly qualified middle grades teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn. This is demonstrated by GACE pass rates of 90% or above, 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 master's degree programs in middle grades has varied slightly; 42 in 2007, 48 in 2008, 44 in 2009, 47 in 2010, and 42 in 2011. The average number of M.A.T./M.Ed. Middle Grades degrees conferred by CSU since 2007-2008 is seventeen per year. The five year average is higher than the average in any of the secondary education programs. Among the ten USG state universities that offer master's degrees in middle grades education, CSU ranks fourth in average number of degrees conferred. CSU provides middle grades teachers in its service region an opportunity to gain expertise in middle grades 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 the curriculum with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for math and English and the Next Generation Science Standards in an effort to help prepare teachers to teach with the new standards.
  
- implementation of LiveText to store student work and evaluations.

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

The Middle Grades Program Advisory Council (PAC) oversees the Middle Grades programs and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers. Recommendations to improve program productivity are as follows.

Greater emphasis on student engagement; focus on student learning

- Emphasis on practicing differentiating lesson delivery.
- Smart board usage, utilizing IPADs and smartphones in class presentations and responses. Also, use of school's Twitter and Facebook postings for parents and students
- Through advising, ensure that students are taking required courses in the semesters in which they are offered so they can complete their program in a timely manner.

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

The Middle Grades Education program at CSU is viable. As indicated by the evaluation of the NCATE/PSC Board of Examiners in February 2013, the quality of the programs is very strong. All NCATE/PSC standards were judged to be met for all initial and advanced programs with no areas for improvement and multiple areas of strength cited. In addition, program quality is enhanced by special opportunities available at CSU. The viability of the program is also ensured by the sharing of resources among all education programs at CSU.

A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. 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 degrees conferred by CSU has been fairly consistent over the past five years and is comparable to the number of degrees conferred by other USG state universities.

### **Program Improvement Plan**

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

| <b>Goals</b>  | <b>Projected Timeline</b> |
|---|---------------------------|
| Align the curriculum with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for Math and English and the Next Generation Science Standards.                           | 2013-2014                 |
| Implementation of LiveText to store student work and evaluations.   | 2013-2014                 |
| Greater emphasis on student engagement; focus on student learning   | 2013-2014                 |
| Emphasis on practicing differentiating lesson delivery.   | 2013-2014                 |
| Smart board usage, utilizing IPADs and smartphones in class presentations and responses. Also, use of school's Twitter and Facebook postings for parents and students | 2013-2014                 |
| Through advising, ensure that students are taking required courses in the semesters in which they are offered so they can complete their program in a timely manner.  | 2013-2014                 |

## **Summary Recommendation and Supporting Rationale**

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

The program quality is strong, but the number of degrees conferred each year is not as high as would be preferred. CSU will continue to work to improve the current M.A.T./M.Ed. Middle Grades programs by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Common Core Georgia Performance Standards), improving the curriculum, aligning the curriculum with the edTPA model of teacher assessment model, 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.