

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE MAT/MEd Secondary Social Studies 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. Secondary Social Studies Education programs are very strong and prepare highly qualified history 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*

Enrollment in the M.A.T. and M.Ed. Secondary History Education remained constant from 2007-2012. Courses are offered on a one- or two-year cycle, and enrollment in required courses is good. This helps to contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the department. The program has a diverse group of majors a wide range of age groups. Graduates of the program are in high demand.

The number of M.Ed. Secondary History degrees conferred by CSU is small (an average of 3 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 social studies, CSU provides history teachers in its service region an opportunity that they might not have otherwise, to gain expertise in history education.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality

Closer relationships between the clinical supervisors and the academic program faculty is indicated. In the same light, selection and training of cooperating teachers is a crucial piece to maintain a quality program. This is an ongoing challenge insofar as teachers and partner schools routinely change year to year. Collaboration between the content area (history) and the education department is improving, but still needs growth.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

In an atmosphere of reduced budgets, diminishing scholarship opportunities, furloughs, increasing certification requirements, and aggressive competition from newly formed educational institutions, recruiting for teacher education is tougher than ever. Yet we have maintained a consistent enrollment in the darkest of times. We promote our program by demonstrating to inquiring candidates our care, excellence, and adaptability. Like our university, our program is known for being particularly friendly to military families. We should maintain this emphasis. As the “baby-boom” generation is in the process of retirement, it seems likely that the job-market will demand more new-teacher candidates than ever. This is a tremendous opportunity for us. Through outreach such as “discovery days” our program faculty takes a high-profile role to show candidates the strengths of our program. Word of mouth from our graduates has been a significant source of new candidates and we should continue to work through our alumni to promote the value of this program.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The M.A.T. and M.Ed. Secondary Social Studies Education programs at CSU are 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. History education majors have access to resources and professional development opportunities offered through the Ivey Center for the Cultural Approach to History. The viability of the program is also ensured by the sharing of resources among all secondary history education programs at CSU. Graduate history courses at the 5000-level also enroll undergraduates on a cross-listed basis. Furthermore, the College of Education and Health Professions, Department of History, Ivey Foundation, and P-12 teachers work collaboratively on the design and implementation of the secondary history education programs at all levels (B.S, M.A.T., M.Ed., and Ed.S.). Representatives from each of these groups work together to make improvements to the history education programs at CSU and to impact history education in our region. The M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in secondary history are valuable resources for teachers in our region who want to grow professionally and gain expertise in the field of history education. Graduates of the M.Ed. Secondary History program are also a valuable resource for our undergraduate program in secondary history. A substantial number of program graduates teach in systems served by CSU, especially Muscogee County. Our graduate programs in secondary history 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 History 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 history, CSU provides history teachers in its service region an opportunity to gain expertise in history education. This is an opportunity that they might not have if CSU did not offer this degree program. With the current demographic of retiring baby boomers, we need to provide every possible opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching history.

Program Improvement Plan

The Social Studies Ed Program Advisory Council (PAC) oversees the M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in Secondary History and works to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to teachers. Recommendations to improve program productivity are as follows.

- Strive for an 80% job placement for our candidates.
- Provide additional support for students in graduate history courses through advising and/or offering prerequisite courses or professional development opportunities that better prepare students for the graduate history courses.
- Increase opportunities for scholarship, grant-writing, and research through the addition of the Cultural Approach to History Center.
- Assure that the productivity and quality of the program faculty is *top-notch* with ongoing bi-annual reports to the board of the Ivey Foundation.
- Attract more students in the undergraduate history and history education programs in coordination with the Recruitment Committee.
- Develop critical, common assignments and assessments that are aligned with the program and course student learning outcomes as well as state and national standards. The critical assessment supported by its rationale statement will provide a thread of consistency for our accrediting agencies with the same course over the years regardless of who teaches the course and what venue is used.
- Fully implement edTPA for the MAT students, Fall 2014. This assessment will replace the Documenting Student Performance.
- Create and follow a retention and graduation plan for your program.

Recommendation: *Maintain the Program at the Current Level.*

The overall program quality is very 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 MAT/MED Secondary History Education Program by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Program Preparation Effectiveness Measures, State Wide Induction, Educational Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA)), improving the curriculum, providing better support and resources for students, intensifying recruitment efforts, preparing P-12 teachers to teach online, and developing a retention and graduation plan to improve program viability.

By following the above recommendation, we should attract more students.

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. Based on the changes in certification, scholarships, teacher accountability (furloughs, keys, merit pay) and the economy in general, it remains a challenge to grow the enrollment. Until we are able to recruit more students into undergraduate programs in history education, opportunities for expansion of the M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in secondary history will be limited.

As previously mentioned, CSU will continue to work to improve the current M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs in secondary history by responding to new initiatives (e.g., Common Core 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.