Assessment Report for the Liberal Studies Program 2007-2008

Mission Statement:

The Liberal Studies program is intended for individuals who wish to become multiple subject teachers. Its purpose is to educate beginning teachers who are well grounded in the wide-ranging subject matter that will prepare them, along with the professional training they will receive in the credential program, to become effective teachers. Conscious as we are of our location in a major urban center, with a highly diverse public school population, we take as our guiding mission a commitment to providing high-quality academic, pre-professional preparation for a diverse group of future teachers who will assume roles of effective teaching, mentoring, and leadership in California’s classrooms. Academic excellence and commitment to the values of diversity, community, and collaboration distinguish the vision behind the Liberal Studies program.

The Liberal Studies program must meet the standards created by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) for elementary subject matter programs. Therefore, its goals are:

A) To establish a strong foundational understanding of subject matter so that extended subject matter learning can continue during the teacher’s professional preparation, induction, and development.
B) To prepare well-educated beginning teachers who understand significant ideas, structures, and values in the disciplines that underlie the K-8 curriculum.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

Students will:
1) develop effective reading skills, oral and written communication skills and collaboration skills;
2) synthesize and apply information from multiple sources;
3) demonstrate critical thinking skills and make decisions on rational bases;
4) master content in curricular areas taught in elementary schools (Reading, Language, Literature; History, Social Science, Science, Mathematics, Physical Education, Human Development, Visual and Performing Arts); and
5) appreciate diverse perspectives.

Measures used to Evaluate these Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome four was chosen to focus on since student learning is the primary goal of any program and ultimately students cannot follow their goal of becoming an elementary school teacher unless they pass the measure of subject matter content mastery as measured by the California Subject Matter Examination for Teachers (CSET) The CSET provides an on-going method of tracking student content knowledge specified in the standards created by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Date/Timeline
The CSET is given six times per year. It is taken by undergraduates usually in their senior year or recent graduates.

Results

1583 LIBS students have taken CSET between Sept. 2003 and March 2008 (last scores available). Overall passage rate is 87% (2% increase since 2005-2006 assessment report). A second Liberal Studies program which blends credential classes and undergraduate coursework is the Liberal Studies Blended Elementary Teacher Education Program (BETEP). 168 BETEP students have taken CSET during the same time frame with a 95% passage rate. CSET subtest passage rates continue to be much higher than state averages of 70%.
Program Changes Made in Response to the Data

Faculty reflection is an important component in assessing the Liberal Studies Program effectiveness. The results of the CSET are disseminated electronically and reviewed by the Liberal Studies Faculty Council during their monthly meeting? Weaknesses and strengths in content areas are examined, discussed and the Liberal Studies Faculty Council members share these areas with faculty from their home departments. As a result of these discussions several changes to the program have taken place. Advisors have changed the strategy and thus advising for taking the CSET. Advisors now advise students to cluster classes taken on campus around the content of the three CSET subtests. This use to be a standardized advisement schedule, but now is individualized since students take classes in a different order. Students are now advised to take each section of the CSET as they complete those classes that are on that section of the CSET. This helps students focus content knowledge. Increased interest, as evident by the increased number of students seeking individual help from faculty member and equity coordinator Adriana Echandia and seeking to enroll in group help sessions, has resulted in CSET help sessions which specifically target students who have failed a portion of the test. These help sessions will continued to be offered. The lowest subsection passage rate at Sac State is subtest 1, math and Science at 90% this compares to a statewide average of only 71%. Base on this information course preparation for students over all appears to be well above the statewide preparation so no action was taken in relationship to coursework.

Procedures that will be Used to Determine if Program Changes Resulted in Improved Outcomes

CSET test scores are reviewed by the Liberal Studies Director and monitor to determine trends locally and statewide. This information as previously discussed is reviewed and discussed by the Liberal Studies Faculty Council and this will continue.

Any Other Program Changes Made in the Last Academic Year

The BETEP program is being discontinue in its present form since enrollment follows statewide trends (October 2007 State Liberal Studies Directors meeting) of decreased enrollment patterns. The BETEP program had only 13 students apply in the spring 2008 semester and the credential program and the Dean of the College of Education would not support a program that was this low enrolled. A new program is being formulated and will need to undergo review by the Liberal Studies Faculty Council and the curricular process.