

Faculty of Education – Teacher Education Program Summary of External Review – July 2018

Key Findings of the Review Committee

- The Teacher Education program is very highly regarded by its many external stakeholders, and there is a deep level of contribution and commitment to the program among faculty in the four associated academic departments.
- The committee was impressed by the passion for high quality, evidence-based teacher education within the Teacher Education Office and the availability of many support systems.
- The current program, in place since 2012, has experienced growth, made tremendous strides and has much to be proud of, for example, its West Kootenay Rural Teacher Education Program, Indigenous Teacher Education programming, and International Baccalaureate Educator stream.
- Core courses in teacher inquiry and classroom assessment have evolved over the past five years and would not benefit from a fulsome analysis of and response to student and faculty feedback.
- UBC Faculty of Education has demonstrated commitment to Indigenous education through its NITEP program, Indigenous Ed cohort and required course for all candidates. More work is needed to ensure respectful inclusion of Indigenous teacher candidates together with a broader integration of Indigenous perspectives across all courses.
- It is challenging for the Teacher Education Office to coordinate the commitments of four academic departments to deliver a program with interdisciplinary coherence. Existing collaborative governance structures could be strengthened to find ways to create a more coherent teacher candidate experience across the many courses within an intensive 11-month program.
- There are some operational challenges related to a non-academic unit coordinating a program in which courses are provided by four distinct academic departments, necessitating even greater transparency and clarity regarding decision-making authority.

Key Recommendations and Faculty's Response

Recommendation: *Improve and increase faculty commitment to teacher education.*

Response: Data provided in the self-study showed the percentage of tenure-track, lecturers and sessionals teaching in the Teacher Education Program. Tenure-track faculty teach about one-quarter of courses offered by three of the departments and none in one department. The overall number of tenure-track faculty teaching courses has decreased slightly each year since 2012, so there is room for growth. A provision of including at least one BEd Program course in faculty workloads could be considered as a way of increasing involvement. It should be noted that there is currently 100% tenure track faculty participation in the two principal governance committees (CCASA and TEAC).

Recommendation: *Create formal mechanisms for collaboration across departments to improve program coherence—which might include a faculty retreat.*

Response: A focus of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee for the past few years has been how to increase program coherence through an exploration of, for example, integrated content from each of the four departments rather than 4 to 8 separate courses offered by each as well as holding more frequent meetings of Teacher Education Program coordinators, subject area coordinators and cohort coordinators, which was undertaken in 2017-18. A deeper exploration of increased coherence as well as broader integration of Indigenous content and perspectives could provide valuable foci for a faculty retreat.

Recommendation: *Reconsider the grading system and ensure that whatever system is adopted, the associated measurement principles are understood and implemented consistently.*

Response: The Teacher Education Advisory Committee recently explored the question of using Pass/Fail vs letter grades after learning there is considerable variance in how the current system is applied across courses and instructors. The Pass/Fail grading system used in almost all BEd courses was put in place after a Faculty-wide consultation and approval process in the early 2000s and then evaluated in 2003 after which the system was deemed worthy of continuation. Given renewed interest in this topic, this is an opportune time to re-examine grading principles and practices.

Recommendation: *Elevate the status of Indigenous Education in the teacher education program.*

Response: The UBC Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP) holds an honoured place within the larger Teacher Education Program as well as the Faculty. The commitment to the ACDE Accord on Indigenous Education, while visible in one required course within the program, needs to echo across all departments and courses, and work is still necessary to ensure this happens. The Office of Indigenous Education facilitates multiple opportunities for engagement and professional learning, and a number of faculty, grad students and alumni are growing their understandings and practices as a result. Prioritization of this work across departments is necessary to ensure that students are exposed to Indigenous perspectives and epistemologies in many more of their courses, class activities and disciplinary paradigms.

Recommendation: *Identify strategies to continue the work of improving interpersonal relationships across the Faculty, including those that may have been challenged by the philosophical and pedagogical differences of perspective that surfaced during many years of teacher education program revision.*

Response: Faculty are engaging in direction-setting, and decision-making related to the Teacher Education Program is taking place through departmental representation on various committees. More mechanisms (in addition to department meeting reports) to convey ideas discussed in these meetings and relay feedback from departments would enhance and increase input to the work of committees. Additional opportunities, e.g., working groups, focus discussions, interdepartmental collaborations, etc., to bring forward suggestions and concerns would serve to increase not only involvement in visioning future versions of the program but also to develop a broader sense of ownership and alignment of beliefs as to what comprises an excellent teacher education program.

Recommendation: *Create a Teacher Education Professor Policy Guide that ensures the communication of larger conceptual framework, connections between courses and cohorts, sample course syllabi, descriptions of cohorts.*

Response: The development of a policy guide could be an output from the work of current Teacher Education program/subject/cohort coordinator meetings and/or a dedicated working group through analysis of course syllabi, student readings and assignment schedules and seeking and compiling wise practices related to increasing cohesion, engagement of cohorts with the field, and more. The Teacher Education Advisory Committee could oversee a process of information gathering and curation that would supplement the information on the TEO website and, at the same time, involve subject area coordinators in conversations about increasing interdisciplinary approaches and intersections, as was suggested in both the self-study and external review.