

Discussion of Information Provided to COA for Program Approvals October, 2011

Overview of this Report

This information item provides examples of the types of information provided to the COA on programs presented for approval and begins a discussion about whether different or more detailed information should be provided to better inform members of COA prior to their decision to approve programs of educator preparation.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item only. Direction to staff about what should be included in the program approval agenda item would be welcome.

Background

Each COA meeting, a number of new programs are presented to the Committee for approval. These programs are not yet being offered by approved program sponsors, but have gone through the Commission's program approval process. This process includes the institution preparing and submitting a response to all relevant preconditions, Common Standards or Common Standards addendum, and appropriate program standards. The program sponsor has submitted all relevant documents to respond to those items; the responses have been reviewed by experts from the field, typically BIR trained reviewers; and the institution has responded appropriately and fully to all questions and comments from the reviewers. Finally, the program proposal has been deemed by the reviewers to have met all standards.

Once this process review process is complete, staff requests a descriptive paragraph from the program that provides a summary or overview of the program. This paragraph is included in the COA item entitled, "Program Approval Recommendations" and is often Agenda Item 6 on the COA agenda.

These paragraphs are written by the institution, typically by the program director or coordinator and can vary widely in terms of content, length, and level of detail. Staff "lightly" edits these to ensure a minimum level of consistency. Two examples from the August 2011 COA agenda are provided here:

EXAMPLE 1:

Program(s) of Professional Preparation for the Clear Education Specialist Induction Program

The SDUSD Clear Education Specialist Induction Program is designed as a two-year job embedded professional development which builds upon and extends a participant's preparation in order to prepare him/her to meet the academic learning needs of all students. Each Participating Teacher is assigned a Support Provider whose role is to provide individualized support in application of Pedagogy and Universal Access in response to the assessed needs of the teacher as identified by formative assessment and reflection. The goal of the program is to offer support during a new teacher's development and advance performance by

developing thoughtful, reflective practitioners early in their career. The SDUSD Clear Induction Program promotes collegiality, the importance of collaboration, and life-long learning which in turn increases teacher efficacy and retention while improving instruction for all students.

EXAMPLE 2.

Early Childhood Special Education

The Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE), Teacher Support Services, partners with 21 Ventura County districts, one Los Angeles County district, 9 charter schools, 17 private schools, and six universities. Teacher Support serves more than 600 credential candidates annually demonstrating a commitment to the continued professional growth of veteran and novice teachers through the Bilingual Teacher Training Program, two funded University Internship Credential Programs, Multiple/Single Subjects and Education Specialist Clear Programs, and Designated Subjects Credential Programs. VCOE houses the 2nd largest multi-district Special Education Local Plan Area in the state meeting the needs of approximately 2,000 young children who receive special education services. The *Early Childhood Special Education Added Authorization* is offered for teachers who already possess an education specialist credential. Candidates take a series of courses divided into four modules addressing ECSE Standards 1-4. Each module consists of coursework, in-class activities, and assignments that are completed during supervised fieldwork. Candidates are assessed on attendance at all class sessions, participation in class activities (e.g., presentations, examinations, role-play), and four Professional Portfolios (one for each Module) demonstrating and implementing knowledge and skills of the added ECSEAA program standards. Upon satisfactory demonstration of all program requirements, candidates are recommended for the added authorization.

From time to time, members of the public, the Commission, or the COA have commented that the information provided in these agenda items are insufficient upon which to make informed decisions about the program proposals. Often implied in these comments is that, given this level of detail about the programs, COA then merely becomes a “rubber stamp” without much information upon which to determine whether or not the program truly meets standards and ought to be approved.

The Commission staff would like to begin a conversation about what kinds of information the COA would like staff and a program sponsor to include in the Program Approval agenda items in the future. Staff wants to ensure that the members of the COA are confident in taking action on new programs and wants to make sure to provide the appropriate level of detail as well as the correct type of information, and that any relevant information the COA would like to see about the review process is provided.

Next Steps

Commission staff will take all feasible steps deemed necessary by members of the COA to ensure that the appropriate information is provided in all future items related to program approvals.