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Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Initial Institutional Approval – Stage V: Consideration of Full Institutional Approval for University of California, Merced

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, the report from the Provisional Site Visit for University of California, Merced and the Committee on Accreditation's recommendation for an accreditation decision for University of California, Merced. The Commission will consider granting University of California, Merced full institutional approval.

Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Commission review the University of California, Merced Provisional Site Visit report and the Committee on Accreditation's recommended accreditation decision and consider granting University of California, Merced full institutional approval.

Presenter: Bob Loux, Consultant, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- b) Effectively and efficiently monitor program implementation and outcomes and hold all approved educator preparation programs to high standards and continuous improvement through the accreditation process.

Initial Institutional Approval – Stage V: Consideration of Full Institutional Approval for University of California, Merced

Introduction

This agenda item presents, as part of Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, the report from the Provisional Site Visit for University of California, Merced (UC Merced) as well as the Committee on Accreditation’s recommended accreditation decision. UC Merced has been offering Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential programs since August 2018. The Commission will consider granting UC Merced full institutional approval.

Background

California Education Code §44372(c) sets forth the Commission’s responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation. The Commission has established the IIA process whereby an institution seeking to offer one or more educator preparation programs in California must first satisfactorily complete five stages to be approved as a program sponsor.

At its December 2015 meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017 Commission meeting. An institution that is granted Provisional Approval in Stage IV of IIA, and subsequently approved by the COA to offer its proposed credential program, is required to host a Provisional Site Visit the year after its first cohort of candidates completes the program, as indicated in the highlighted column of the chart on the following page. The conclusion of the IIA process is determination by the Commission of whether to grant or deny the institution Full Approval (Stage V).

Pursuant to the *Accreditation Framework*, “The Commission may grant or deny full institutional approval or may grant institutional approval with a requirement that the COA’s draft stipulations must be addressed and presented to the COA for action within a designated timeframe.” If the Commission grants full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will assign the institution to one of the seven established accreditation cohorts and the institution will participate in all activities of the seven-year accreditation cycle established by the Commission. Granting full approval with a requirement that the COA’s draft stipulations must be addressed will remand the issues back to the COA for follow up to ensure that the program has sufficiently addressed all concerns raised by the team. Alternatively, the Commission may keep the institution in the provisional stage of the approval process for another year while the institution works with staff to address all stipulations. In this case, the COA will consider any quarterly or year-out reports on the institution’s progress in meeting stipulations, as it does with fully approved institutions, and within one year make a new accreditation determination. At that time, the new decision of the COA will come back to the Commission for its decision. If the Commission denies full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will inform the institution that it is no longer permitted to admit additional candidates to its programs and will work with the institution to develop a teach-out plan for any current candidates.

Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

IIA Process	Stage I	State II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
Action	Prerequisites	Eligibility Requirements	Preconditions & Common Standards	Program Standards	Provisional Site Visit
Purpose	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission's accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	Ensures institution meets all relevant preconditions Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
Requirements	Institution must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: • 12 Eligibility Criteria	Submit responses to: • Preconditions • Common Standards	Submit responses to: • Program Standards	Institution must: • Collect data • Host provisional site visit
Reviewed By	Staff	Staff	Preconditions: Staff Common Standards: BIR	BIR	Site Visit Team and COA
Authority	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
Decision	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Provisional Approval: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Program(s): 1. Approve 2. Deny	1. Grant Full Approval 2. Grant Full Approval & Remand to COA to Address Stipulations 3. Continue Provisional Status for 1 Year to Address Stipulations 4. Deny
IIA Status	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

*At conclusion of stage

**Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs

***May begin offering approved program(s)

A unique aspect of UC Merced is that, unlike most of the other UC campuses, it does not have a Graduate School of Education. Instead, a Graduate Council (GC), oversees and advises on all graduate education matters. The GC supervises and regulates all graduate courses and graduate programs of instruction. This includes making recommendations on the establishment of new graduate programs leading to graduate degrees, and any substantial change to existing graduate programs. The GC consists of representatives from all of the Schools at UC Merced, along with the Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Senate Chair and Vice Chair. The GC is the governing body for UC Merced academic policies and oversees the Curriculum Advisory Board which has oversight of the Teacher Preparation Program. This board consists of campus faculty with TK-12 backgrounds along with the CalTeach Director (a STEM focused UC initiative) and administrator from the Merced County Office of Education. They ensure that all course and program proposals maintain the UC academic quality and represent the local TK-12 community.

UC Merced completed the first four stages of the Initial Institutional Approval process including hosting a provisional site visit. The timelines for these activities are illustrated in the following table.

Activity	Date
Stage I: Prerequisites	April 2017 – Completed Accreditation 101
Stage II: Eligibility Requirements	December 2017 – Commission Granted Eligibility
Stage III: Preconditions and Common Standards	April 2018 – Commission Granted Provisional Approval
Stage IV: Program Standards Review	August 2018 – Committee on Accreditation Granted Initial Program Approval
Began operating Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject programs	September 2018
Provisional Site Visit Conducted	May 2021
Report of Provisional Site Visit to Committee on Accreditation	June 2021
Stage V: Commission considers Full Approval	August 2021

The Provisional Site Visit was conducted in accordance with the procedures approved by the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation and outlined in the *Accreditation Handbook*. UC Merced submitted a complete Program Review submission, Common Standards Review submission, and responses to preconditions within six months preceding its Provisional Site Visit. The Board of Institutional Review members assigned to the Provisional Site Visit worked together to review all evidence submitted as part of Program Review and Common Standards Review and provided feedback to UC Merced regarding its preliminary alignment to the Commission’s adopted standards. Staff assigned to the Provisional Site Visit reviewed the institution’s responses to precondition to ensure full alignment. In May 2021 the institution hosted its Provisional Site Visit and the results of the visit, including the team’s findings and

accreditation recommendation, are included in the report in [Appendix A](#) that was presented to the Committee on Accreditation at its June 21, 2021 meeting.

The Committee reviewed the report and discussed the site visit findings with the team lead and the representatives from UC Merced. The institution representatives also outlined their plan to address the stipulations and discussed the steps they had already taken. Following the discussion, the Committee on Accreditation agreed with the team recommendation and confirmed that if UC Merced were a fully-accredited institution and the site visit report resulted from a regularly scheduled Year 6 site visit, that the Committee's accreditation decision would be to accept the recommendation from the team for Accreditation with Stipulations and approve the stipulations as written on pages 2 and 3 of the team report.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission grant full approval to University of California, Merced with the requirement that the institution address all stipulations identified in the site visit team report within the time frame designated in the report and report back to the COA for their further consideration and action.

Next Steps

Depending upon the Commission's decision staff will take the appropriate next steps, which are:

- Full Approval. The Administrator of Accreditation will assign the institution to one of the seven established accreditation cohorts and the institution will participate in all activities of the seven-year accreditation cycle established by the Commission.
- Full approval with a requirement that the Committee on Accreditation's (COA) draft stipulations must be addressed and presented to the COA for action within the timeframe designated in the team report. Commission staff assigned to the institution's Provisional Site Visit will work with the institution to obtain timely and appropriate evidence addressing all stipulations within the time frame designated in the report and report back to the COA for their further consideration and action.
- Keep the institution in the provisional stage of the approval process for another year while the institution works with staff to address all stipulations. Commission staff assigned to the institution's Provisional Site Visit will work with the institution to obtain timely and appropriate evidence addressing all stipulations within the time frame designated in the report and report back to the COA for their further consideration and action. Within one year, the COA will make a new decision about the institution's accreditation status and the report will come back to the Commission for its decision about the approval status of the institution.
- Denial. The Administrator of Accreditation will inform the institution that it is no longer permitted to admit additional candidates to its programs and will work with the institution to develop a teach-out plan for any current candidates.

Appendix A
Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the
Stage V Provisional Site Visit - University of California Merced
Professional Services Division
June 2021

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at University of California Merced. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is made for the institution.

Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions
For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Met
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	Met
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Met
4) Continuous Improvement	Met with Concerns
5) Program Impact	Met

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Multiple Subject/Single Subject Preliminary and Intern	6	4	2	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Stage V Provisional Site Visit Report**

Institution: University of California Merced

Dates of Visit: May 16-19, 2021

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation with Stipulations

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel. The team obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** for the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All preconditions have been determined to be aligned.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Multiple Subject/Single Subject program were met, except Standard 3: Clinical Practice; and Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements; which were both Met with Concerns.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were Met, except Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement, which was Met with Concerns.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found all standards for the Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject credential program were met, except Program Standard 3: Clinical Practice; and Program Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements; which were both Met with Concerns; and all Common Standards were Met except Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement; which was Met with Concerns, the team recommends Accreditation with Stipulations.

The team recommends the following stipulations:

1. The institution presents evidence of the implementation of the comprehensive continuous improvement process utilizing the systems and tools developed inclusive of candidate performance data and input from key stakeholders.

2. The institution presents evidence of the implementation of a process to monitor candidate progress and determine support needs regarding specific performance expectations.
3. The institution presents evidence that cooperating teachers receive 10 hours of initial training, particularly around program expectations.
4. Within one year, the institution submits a follow-up report detailing how the above-mentioned stipulations are implemented into their program.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- University of California Merced, (UC Merced), be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- UC Merced be assigned to a cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements.

Preliminary Multiple Subject/ Single Subject Program

Accreditation Team

Team Lead

Judy Sylva
California State University, San Bernardino

Programs Reviewers

Tory Harvey
University of California Santa Barbara

Common Standards

Nancy Paranchini
University of California Los Angeles

Staff to the Visit

Bob Loux
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission

Program Review Submission

Common Standards Addendum

Course Syllabi and Course of Study

Candidate Advisement Materials

Accreditation Website

Faculty Vitae

Assessment Materials

Candidate Handbooks

Survey Results

Performance Expectation Materials

Precondition Responses

Examination Results

Individual Development Plan

Exit Survey

Clinical Practice Calendar

Interviews Conducted

Stakeholders	TOTAL
Candidates	23
Completers	8
Employers	6
Institutional Administration	2
Program Coordinators	2
Faculty	10
TPA Coordinator	1
Support Providers	8
Field Supervisors – Program	2
Field Supervisors – District	6
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Advisory Board Members	6
Program Partners	4
TOTAL	79

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed more than once due to multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background Information

The UC Merced Extension Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) presence at University of California Merced (UC Merced) during a teacher shortage combined with ongoing retention problems in the San Joaquin Valley has opened the door to opportunities for potential teacher candidates. UC Merced purposefully recruits candidates from the San Joaquin Valley, a culturally, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse part of California. Developing a teacher prep program outside the traditional setting of a department or school of education required close collaboration between the Extension and the Academic Senate. This unique academic setting provided an opportunity for TPP collaboration with regional P-12 education community leaders and to serve aspiring teachers who might not always be served in a UC program, or even in a local CSU. The TPP intentionally serves intern candidates and candidates who have struggled to be served in traditional fall -start and full- time only programs.

Education Unit

The Teacher Preparation Program debuted in 2018 to provide culturally responsive instruction to help educate the newest group of TK-12 teachers in the San Joaquin Valley. UC Merced does not have a School of Education or a Department of Education. The Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) was organized by the Dean inviting campus faculty with P-12 backgrounds as well as representation from regional P-12 leadership. The CAB reviews all course and program proposals to maintain UC academic quality and are representative of the P-12 community in UC Merced's local context, formed to represent the interests of the campus community. The CAB is made up of four faculty members representing the schools of Natural Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences Humanities and Arts. In addition, the Director of Cal Teach and an administrative leader from Merced County Office of Education make up the five members of the CAB. Under the leadership of Chancellor Dorothy Leland, the first graduate of UC Merced Extension's Teacher Preparation Program was recognized during the 2019 commencement.

Table 1: Program Review Status

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2018-19)	Number of Program Completers (2019-20)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2018-19)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2019-20)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2020-21)
Multiple Subject/Single Subject and Intern	1	18	16	25	55

The Visit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site visit was conducted virtually. The team and institutional stakeholders were interviewed via technology.

Provisional Site Visit in Stage IV of Initial Institutional Approval

During Stage IV of the initial institutional approval (IIA) process, the new institution hosts a Provisional Site Visit (PSV). The team is composed of program leaders for that type of program as well as experienced Board of Institutional Review members. Because this PSV is based on a routine sixth year accreditation site visit, the team makes decisions on all Common and applicable Program Standards as well as an Accreditation recommendation and any stipulations, if appropriate. The institution and its Commission-approved programs, in this case Multiple Subject/Single Subject and Intern, have only operated for a short time, two years for the University of California Merced.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

After review of all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be met.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Multiple Subject/Single Subject and Intern

Program Design

The Multiple Subject Credential program (MS) and Single Subject Credential program (SS) are part of the Teaching Preparation Program (TPP) at UC Merced. These programs also include an intern pathway. The SS program offers secondary subject area credentials in English language arts, history social science, mathematics, and science. The MS and SS programs, including the intern pathway, are led by the director of education programs for extension and the associate director of teacher preparation, and are supported by the director of university extension. Both programs are either typically completed over the course of three full-time semesters, including summer or five-six part-time semesters. The SS program is 35 units, while the MS program is 41 units. The MS and SS programs are in-person, traditional teacher education programs that include fieldwork and coursework. TPP currently serves 55 candidates, drawing most of their enrollment from the local community.

The director takes the responsibility for many aspects of the program, including recruiting and hiring instructors and mentors, teaching courses, and making programmatic decisions. The director also liaises with local schools and districts to develop partnerships. The associate director shares many of these responsibilities and takes the primary role in day-to-day programmatic operations and student support. The credential analyst assists in ensuring that candidates meet requirements for the intern credential. Interviews with faculty, including university mentors, indicate that there is a strong system of communication among faculty, and program leadership. Candidates and completers repeatedly reported feeling supported by the program, including by program leadership. Mentors and instructors state that they participate in monthly meetings to discuss candidate progress and program curricula. Interviews with cooperating teachers (CTs) confirm that the program is in regular communication with the field. Many mentors, instructors, and CTs serve dual roles in the program, also facilitating cross-program and program-field collaboration.

Both the MS and SS programs are organized across three full time semesters, with candidates able to start in winter or spring. All candidates take Foundations of Education and Learning, Cognition, and Instruction in their first semester. Interns are required to take these two courses and a methods course prior to beginning their internship. Taught by the program director, the two foundational courses ground candidates in creating their own philosophy of teaching from theories presented on culturally responsive pedagogy and social justice. Candidates concurrently take coursework and participate in fieldwork throughout the year, beginning field placements at the start of their program. Candidates have input into where they are placed based on geographic desirability. Fieldwork is split into two placements, one that is 200 hours and another that is 400 hours, in grade levels and content areas the candidates plan to pursue. A clinical practice handbook denotes how the time is to be spent across a placement, culminating in 4 weeks of solo teaching in the second semester. Candidates are supervised throughout their fieldwork by both a district employed supervisor (DES) and a university mentor. Intern DES typically teach the same grade or content as the intern teacher. Interviews with candidates, interns, and program completers demonstrate that candidates feel well-supported in their fieldwork by university mentors and DES. They also find the coursework to be generally applicable to their fieldwork.

As a new program, TPP has implemented and is in the process of implementing many program-level practices to ensure they are meeting program standards and the TPEs. The program recently hired a director of education programs and an associate director to work with Extension and the main campus. Each semester, they hold a formal orientation for candidates, cooperating teachers, and university mentors, designed to communicate program expectations and any new program information. Additionally, the program is advised by a curriculum advisory board (CAB), composed of university faculty. The program is also implementing a teacher practitioner advisory board made up of multiple partner stakeholders.

Decisions about program design, coursework, and fieldwork are informed by feedback from stakeholders across the program. TPP solicits formal input from candidates via end-of-semester course evaluations, exit interviews, and program completer surveys. As the program is still new, these feedback loops are still in development. Faculty and cooperating teachers have opportunities to provide feedback at monthly meetings and are in regular communication with the director and associate director. While many informal opportunities for feedback are provided to all stakeholders, it was not clear how feedback is used systematically to inform program decisions and improvement.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

A review of program documents and syllabi, that was confirmed by interviews with program faculty, program completers, and current students, indicates that courses in TPP are developmentally sequenced to align with fieldwork experiences. All candidates begin TPP taking Foundations of Education; Learning, Cognition, and Instruction; and a methods course in the first semester. These courses lay foundations in culturally responsive teaching and project-based learning.

MS candidates complete courses in integrated science and math methods, integrated humanities and literacy methods, inclusive instruction, project-based learning, and teaching practicum. SS candidates complete courses in inclusive instruction, project-based learning, reading instruction, subject-specific methods, and teaching practicum.

In the first semester, all full-time candidates participate in clinical practice that requires 200 hours of observation, small group, individual, and whole class instruction. Intern candidates complete well over these hours as teacher of record at their school of employment. In the second semester (not summer), candidates complete the remaining 400 hours, including a four-week solo teaching experience.

As outlined in program documents and confirmed in interviews with cooperating teachers, candidates, and program completers, there is a gradual release of responsibility for candidates to continually assume more classroom duties in their fieldwork placements. This model typically begins with observation and progresses to include responsibility for small group or individual instruction, co-teaching and planning, and whole group instruction. The second placement culminates in a 4-week solo teaching experience, in which candidates complete their TPA. Interviews with CTs reveal that candidates are generally well prepared to assume increasing responsibility in their fieldwork placements.

Candidates receive support from, and are evaluated by, their university mentors. Program documents and interviews with CTs, program mentors, and candidates confirm that candidates are well supported by the program in their fieldwork placements. Formal evaluation instruments, aligned to the TPEs, are used for these observations and evaluations. In addition, the candidates self-assess through TPE reflections.

Program documents state and interviews with faculty, candidates, and program completers confirm that course assignments and fieldwork are closely connected. Course assignments require candidates to connect their fieldwork and coursework through analyzing and describing their fieldwork experiences and designing and analyzing lesson and unit plans to use in their fieldwork. Throughout the year, candidates take a practicum course to help them process their fieldwork experiences and develop materials for student teaching.

All candidates take a course in diverse students and inclusive instruction. Instruction for multilingual learners and exceptional learners are addressed in this course. These courses are held separately for MS and SS candidates to meet the needs of the candidates in these teaching assignments. A review of syllabi and interviews with faculty, program completers, and candidates confirm that other courses also address the needs of English learners and exceptional learners in assignments and topics. Program completers report feeling prepared to teach exceptional learners, learners from diverse backgrounds, and English learners.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates receive information about program expectations and requirements at the beginning of the program and throughout the year, primarily through a handbook. Current and former candidates reported receiving updates and feedback on their progress from faculty and supervisors. Candidates are primarily assessed through fieldwork observation guides and CalTPA. In the first semester, candidates are assessed on formative TPA experiences and receive feedback on their work. Fieldwork is assessed six times each semester by the university mentors through an evaluation instrument aligned to the TPEs. Candidates receive feedback on their performance through inductive conversations and formal observation notes.

Candidates are also assessed through the CalTPA, which they complete in the second semester. Candidates are provided with formative TPA experiences throughout the first semester on which they receive feedback that they can use when completing the spring TPA. The program has officially been using the redesigned CalTPA since its inception in the 2018-19 school year, and COVID has impacted candidates' ability to complete the TPA so data is limited.

TPP has plans in place for program level assessment. Interviews and documents confirm that assessment instruments and data collection systems have been established, and the program now needs to collect and analyze data. The data then needs to be used for program improvement. Interviews with program faculty and mentors confirm informal systems for tracking student progress that are in the process of being formalized. Interviews with cooperating teachers indicate there is need for greater communication between TPP and the field around progress monitoring and support of candidates. Program completers and candidates report feeling well supported through a rigorous program.

It should be noted that the first year of TPP was 2018-19, with the first group of candidates starting spring semester 2019. This is significant because all candidates that the program has served to date have been affected by COVID-19.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject credential program. and Single Subject credential programs except for the following:

Standard 3: Clinical Practice – Met with Concerns

Interviews with cooperating teachers and program documents indicate that the program does not yet consistently provide district employed supervisors a minimum of 10 hours of training in effective supervision approaches such as adult learning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices. Interviews with CTs reveal that there is a greater need for the program to ensure that district employed supervisors remain current in the knowledge and skills for candidate supervision and program expectations.

Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting, and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements - Met with concerns

Systems are in place for program faculty, program supervisors, and district-employed supervisors to monitor and support candidates during their progress towards mastering the TPEs. While there are some systems in place, interviews and program documents show limited evidence that the program monitoring points to specific places where candidates need additional assistance and support.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) at UC Merced is unique in the fact that it is a program in the University Extension. The Dean of Extension/ Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management reports to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost. The University Extension in collaboration with the offices in Enrollment Management provides support for program coordination, advisement, instructional personnel, credential processing, and fieldwork and clinical practices for the TPP. UC Merced tenure-line faculty serve on the Curriculum Advisory Board. Their current role relative to the TPP is to approve course curriculum and advise as to the assessment of course level student learning outcomes. This organizational structure ensures the resources and support services are provided by the unit to operate effective educator preparation programs.

While UC Merced has just completed their third year running a strong teacher preparation program, they have run into a few challenges that no one could have predicted. Three years ago, after receiving Provisional Approval to begin a program, at the end of their first year their program manager left the program. The institution was able to fill the position with the current program manager who had previous experience with a teacher preparation program, but still needed to learn the intricacies of UC Merced's program. Just as she was beginning to fully understand the program, COVID hit, and everything that was normal had to change. Instructor's delivery models changed, intern and teacher candidate's teaching environments changed, and TPAs and other assessments were pushed forward to induction programs. All this meant that this new program was going through tremendous changes just like other seasoned programs, but without the stabilizing force of past experiences. They had nothing to base their newly modified program on but the California Teaching Commission's instructions, current standards, and the need to continue to prepare candidates for a successful teaching career. Through interviews with employers and supervisors, it is very evident that all their candidates were well prepared. But through these continual changes and shifts, some procedures temporarily fell to the wayside, and UC Merced was in the process of reinstituting these when their site visit began.

Once COVID hit, all educational institutions were scrambling to continue with their operations and coming together with other institutions to help discuss the needs and coordination of a teaching program was not a high priority at the time. The site visit team was not able to confirm that these meetings were happening in the first year prior to the change in leadership, but the current program has invitations out to several instructional personnel and relevant

stakeholders to help them with the organization and decision making for their teacher preparation program.

Site-based supervisors did not receive all the training that is required, but with such small numbers, the program was able to help each supervisor individually when needed, to ensure that their teaching candidates were able to get the proper support they needed. The institution knows that as they grow, they will not be able to sustain this model, and has begun to implement a full program of systematic training for their supervisors to ensure they are not only oriented to their supervisory role, but also evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.

With the small number of candidates UC Merced started with, and then COVID having such an impact on teaching programs, the continuous improvement plans at the institution just seemed to disappear. Be it from always having to change the processes, feeling the original plan was strong but not currently able to accurately assess it, or the fact that TPAs and other assessments were needed to be pushed back to induction programs, UC Merced had not been able to systematically collect and review program data to accurately get a portrayal of their program. They do have plans in place to implement these procedures this next school year, and with the growth they have seen in their program, they will need to do this. In the past their numbers were small enough that they could informally assess their program during the pandemic to see where they were strong and where they needed to re-evaluate their procedures, but they have realized that having a firm and comprehensive improvement process formalized will help them to continue to change to the needs of their candidates.

UC Merced did have some negative findings in their site visit, but these were primarily due to their being a small program, and many procedures were informalized when they should have been more systematic. Then having to struggle with new COVID developments just as they were beginning to create a foundationally strong program compounded the issues. But interviews with employers, graduates and current candidates all have stated that UC Merced handled all these changes well, and that the new teachers were well prepared to teach, whether in the current uncertain times, or in the more traditional settings.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California’s adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Inconsistently
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	Consistently
The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/instruction, field-based supervision, and clinical experiences.	Consistently
The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.	Consistently
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	Consistently
The institution employs, assigns, and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	Consistently
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) is a program in University Extension at the University of California Merced (UC Merced). The Dean of Extension and Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management reports to both the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. The Dean of Extension and Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management oversees the offices of Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Students First Center, Summer Session, and the Extension. University Extension in collaboration with the offices in Enrollment Management provides support for program coordination, advisement, instructional personnel, credential processing, and fieldwork and clinical practices for the TPP. UC Merced tenure-line faculty serve on the Curriculum Advisory Board. Their current role relative to the TPP is to approve course curriculum and advise as to the assessment of course level student learning outcomes. University Extension employs a Credential Analyst and program coordinator who works closely with the Associate Director of the TPP, the Registrar, and credential candidates monitoring their progress in meeting all the requirements for credential recommendation. The credential recommendation process is monitored by the Director of Educational Programs and the Associate Director of the TPP. This organizational structure ensures the resources and support services are provided by the unit to operate effective educator preparation programs.

The stated mission of the TPP is, to develop culturally responsive educators who equitably facilitate cross-disciplinary, integrative learning to catalyze student potential and empowerment. Evidence submitted by the program for the common standards indicated a consistent focus on this mission through the course curriculum, learning outcomes, and fieldwork experiences. Interviews with TPP leadership, program instructors, university mentors, program completers, and current credential candidates consistently corroborated this evidence.

Real and mutually beneficial partnerships among the TPP leadership and instructional personnel and colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community were evident in both a review of submitted documentation and in interviews with program leadership, program instructors, university mentors, employers and partnering P-12 project directors as well as district and county office of education administrators. These partnerships have been beneficial in shaping coursework and clinical experiences. However systematic stakeholder involvement in program decision-making was not clear in the documentation reviewed or in interviews with stakeholders including employers and partners. The unit provided evidence of plans to engage stakeholders in decision-making including a plan to convene a Teacher Practitioner Advisory Board and to implement the Annual Assessment Timeline to include stakeholders to be implemented beginning in Fall 2021. Given the short timeframe from the inception of the program in Fall 2018 to the current Provisional Site Visit and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this element of the standard was not

consistently demonstrated, however the team believes that the plans provided during the visit are on-track for implementation in Fall 2021.

Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	Team Finding
Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.	
The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.	Consistently
The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.	Consistently
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate’s attainment of program requirements.	Consistently
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Following a thorough review of documents and after conducting interviews the accreditation team determined that the Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) has a well-defined candidate recruitment and admissions process in place. The TPP utilizes a variety of strategies and protocols that include recruitment from the UC Merced Cal Teach program, word- of- mouth in local districts and among UC Merced alumni, information sessions and outreach processes.

The TPP has at its foundation a vision of social justice. This vision, based on theory and research, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining curricula, informs the profile of candidates recruited to enter the program. Candidates have access to the program requirements through meetings with TPP leadership and through program handbooks and monitoring documents. Current candidates spoke of the power of informal personal attention given to support their progress throughout the program. The program leadership is easily accessible and develops strong relationships with students to meet their individual needs. Although the relational support is a major strength of the program, some of the stakeholders indicated they are unaware of a coherent formal support system to deal with students who have challenges or are struggling with meeting the requirements. This is an aspect of the newly

developed continuous improvement system the unit will implement in September 2021. These support services are elaborated in multiple documents and in the program handbooks.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs offer a high-quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators and grounded in current research on effective practice. Coursework is integrated closely with field experiences to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows candidates to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required of the credential they seek.	Consistently
The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors, and school sites, as appropriate to the program.	Consistently
Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	Consistently
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	Inconsistently
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently
For each program the unit offers, candidates have significant experience in school settings where the curriculum aligns with California’s adopted content standards and frameworks, and the school reflects the diversity of California’s student and the opportunity to work with the range of students identified in the program standards.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Clear and compelling evidence submitted in program standards documentation, obtained during the provisional site visit, as well as interviews indicate that the TPP program implements

a high- quality course of study integrated with field experiences and clinical practice that prepares candidates to meet the needs of learners in the P-12 schools in California. The TPP was referenced as a program central to filling the needs of local districts for culturally responsive educators who represented the diversity of the communities served. The program instructors and university mentors are recognized leaders in their communities and the P-12 settings where they are often employed as educators, administrators, or project directors. The Director of Education Programs has a successful record of collaboration with P-12 settings in identifying placements for teacher candidates in clinical practice that meet the needs of the partners that result in full time employment opportunities for the candidates upon completion of the credentials. Interviews with site-based supervisors indicated a disconnect with the TPP to the degree that they were oriented to their role, evaluated, and recognized. The unit provided evidence of a form to track the training of site- based supervisors according to the program standard requirements for the multiple subject and single subjects credential programs. However, there was only evidence of training being available for cognitive coaching and program expectations. The Associate Director for the TPP indicated in an interview awareness of this shortcoming and the unit provided evidence of a plan to implement all the required elements of site supervisor training. The team believes that this plan will be implemented as planned in Fall of 2021 and the tracking form provided will be helpful in monitoring the implementation of the planned training.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Inconsistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Inconsistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Inconsistently
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key stakeholders such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Through an extensive document review and interviews conducted during the virtual visit, there is evidence of the development of a comprehensive assessment process. The goals of the newly designed system cover the use of data to inform program efforts and outcomes which will be shared among all stakeholders, from faculty and program directors to advisory board members

and field supervisors, school personnel, and students. All stakeholders will be involved in evaluation, particularly in reviewing data summaries and offering input to inform modifications and improvement efforts. Interviews with employers and community partners provided evidence that program leadership has created an essential teacher preparation program to serve the Merced area and spoke to the high quality of student teachers and interns entering the field. However, there is current lack of data and engagement with stakeholders to offer feedback and make modifications. The unit does not have the processes in place but has a well-designed plan for immediate implementation.

Rationale for the Finding

Due to circumstances beyond the control of the institution, the educational unit did not have the opportunity to formally implement a comprehensive continuous improvement process.

Major faculty changes and the onset of the global pandemic created circumstances that interfered with the implementation of the assessment processes. Although some data have been collected and analyzed, a systematic continuous improvement process has not been implemented. However, the educational unit has designed a robust comprehensive improvement process for implementation by September 2021. The components of this innovative system were reviewed and have potential for ensuring that the continuous improvement cycle informs unit operations to effectively improve programs and their services.

Common Standard 5: Program Impact	Team Finding
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and effectively support all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California’s students.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard.

Assessment plans for long term implementation are extensive with the intention of providing employers, districts, and the larger community evidence that UC Merced is well prepared to successfully enter the field.

Comments shared during interviews with faculty, mentors, UC Merced clinical supervisors, current candidates, and program completers, indicate that credential candidates are assessed against the Commission-adopted requirements and program standards. According to stakeholders, candidates were assessed and evaluated with multiple measures throughout the

program. Stakeholders who participated in the interviews described how student teachers and interns were assessed through observations, reflective practices, course assignments, lesson plans, TPEs and individual conversations with mentors, principals, supervisors, and faculty. Through these processes, candidates receive individualized support based on their regularly assessed needs. Faculty, university supervisors, and site-based supervisors meet regularly to discuss candidate competency, growth, and progress.

During interviews, employers differentiated UC Merced completers from other graduates coming from neighboring universities. They described UC Merced-trained teachers as highly reflective and dedicated to serving in the Merced communities. Employers credit the program for emphasizing culturally relevant pedagogical practices. They applauded the program leadership for their committed to recruiting and preparing a diverse teacher corps to serve in the communities they represent. They emphasized that the TPP graduates demonstrate dedication, are prepared to provide well-designed lessons, know project- based learning, are reflective, and have a strong foundation in culturally responsive pedagogy. Several mentor and cooperating teachers commented how much they learned from the TPP candidates.