

REJOINDER

As Dean of the School of Education at Auburn University Montgomery, I, Dr. Sheila Austin, acknowledge that I have received the BOE Final Report and offer the following as the rejoinder.

General Background and Conceptual Framework

BOE Report (page 3, 1st paragraph): “The unit is guided by a conceptual framework (CF) developed by faculty and community members and **most recently revised in 2009.**”

Because the CF forms the basis of the other six NCATE Standards, the School of Education faculty made a conscious decision not to revise it until after the onsite review. Also, a strategic planning process for the university began in 2011, which would affect the School of Education’s future mission and CF. The AUM Strategic Plan was finalized in September 13, 2013, two weeks prior to the onsite review. A redesign for the CF, incorporating modifications based on the new AUM Strategic Plan, has already begun. Stakeholders will aid in its development beginning in January 2014.

BOE Report (page 3, 3rd paragraph): “For the **most part**, the CF is integrated into course syllabi, content, and field experiences.”

The School of Education believes the CF is fully integrated into course syllabi, content, and field experiences. The indicators evaluated in each course are sequenced on the SOE Assessment Matrix for every program. (See 2.3.a. in original exhibit room.) During the onsite visit, the BOE verified that course assignments and field experiences align to the indicators assessed in every course.

BOE Report (page 12, 3.1, 1st paragraph), the BOE asserts, “Field experiences [at AUM] are based on the tenets of the CF incorporating the mission of the unit and university.” . . . The field experience manual and intern manual “are consistent with the key ideas in the CF including competence, commitment, and reflection. In addition, field experiences provide operative, reflective, and collaborative knowledge.”

BOE Report (page 17, 4.1, 1st paragraph), the BOE asserts, “the unit provided documents in the IR Addendum demonstrating clear alignment to the CF.”

BOE Report (page 21, 5.1, 2nd paragraph), the BOE asserts, “A review of syllabi for undergraduate and graduate courses indicated a consistent presence of the CF throughout the coursework.”

Standard I

BOE Report (page 5, last paragraph): “Praxis II sub-scores are available but are not being **regularly used for data analysis.**”

Praxis II sub-scores were not provided electronically to the School of Education until recently. Now that electronic scores are provided directly to the university, sub-scores will become part of the data analysis process in 2014. Electronic sub-scores will be shared with faculty in Liberal Arts and Sciences for possible revision of course content that may improve sub-score values. Sub-scores will also be used to identify weaknesses and additional coursework will be recommended to candidates accordingly so that sub-scores will improve.

BOE Report (page 7, 1st paragraph): “According to faculty interviews, the SOE assessment system was revised to meet revised Alabama standards, but the **conceptual framework and 10 learning outcomes were not changed.**”

All of the new Alabama standards in 2009 aligned to the existing CF and 10 learning outcomes. Therefore, there was no need to change the CF or the 10 learning outcomes.

Standard II

BOE Report (page 9, 7th paragraph): “ The offsite report noted syllabi show some inconsistency in terms of the presence of learning outcomes and indicators. Many just list all 10 learning outcomes and/or indicators and do not specifically align them to particular outcomes of the course. The addendum stated that during the fall 2013 semester, faculty began revising syllabi, listing only the specific indicators evaluated in their courses, and eliminating the learning outcomes to avoid confusion and add to consistency. Faculty report this effort to provide clearer information to candidates is **in only the beginning stages.**”

Corrections to all syllabi were complete by the time of the onsite visit and are not in the “beginning stages”. In the past, the School of Education used a template that required all syllabi display the Conceptual Framework and the ten Learning Outcomes that flow from that framework on every syllabus. Currently and before the onsite visit, all instructors were required to only list the specific indicators evaluated in their courses and to eliminate the ten Learning Outcomes to avoid confusion to candidates and others who might review syllabi. Course syllabi for Fall 2013 may be viewed in I.5.b. of the original exhibit room.

BOE Report (page 9, last paragraph, page 10 1st paragraph): “As noted through an **interview with the Assessment Committee, it is not clear how often and to what extent stakeholders are involved with reviewing assessment results and their role with the Assessment Committee.**”

In the BOE Report (page 25, 4th paragraph) it was stated, “During interviews, stakeholders and faculty stated these meetings were occurring on a periodic basis.” Minutes of some of those meetings are included with the rejoinder.

The BOE may have misinterpreted the role of the Assessment Committee that was interviewed at AUM during the onsite visit. For the onsite visit, the Assessment Committee was temporarily expanded by including many individuals involved in the assessment process, who are not ordinarily involved in assessment decisions in the School of Education. This was done primarily to cut down on the number of interviews that had to be scheduled in a short time frame for the onsite reviewers.

Some of these committee members were from other units on campus who help the School of Education collect and organize data for university purposes. These individuals, while they are aware how data are shared with SACS committees and the AUM Office of Institutional Effectiveness, are not part of the process of sharing data with the P-12 community. Other committee members are staff members in the SOE, whose primary roles are to input data for others’ use and who would never be involved in analyzing or interpreting data.

There were four SOE faculty members on the Assessment Committee that was interviewed, one from each department, who do report pertinent information to their respective department heads and program faculty. The Assessment Coordinator, department heads, associate dean, and the dean are much more aware of how data are shared with the P-12 community, other School of Education faculty members, and Arts and Science faculty members, but only one of these individuals (Assessment Coordinator) is part of the Assessment Committee itself.

Data are shared with small groups of stakeholders on a regular basis. For example, data are analyzed by program faculty members in the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Reading Education and shared with mentor teachers at least twice per year but the only individuals involved in that are the program faculty members, not the members of the Assessment Committee. Minutes of those meetings are found 3.3.a. of original exhibit room dating back to 2009.

Data produced and organized by the Assessment Committee are analyzed by the heads and deans to share with the Dean’s Advisory Group, by Instructional Leadership faculty members to share with their Advisory Council, and by department heads, deans, and some secondary education faculty members to share with Arts and Sciences faculty members on campus annually. Minutes of those meetings were not included in the original exhibit room or the addendum. If requested they could have been made available during the onsite visit.

Please see School and Community Partner Meetings minutes, Dean's Advisory Council minutes, and Instructional Leadership Advisory Council minutes at <https://c1.livetext.com/doc/3704382/29244315>.

In addition to sharing data with small groups of stakeholders, every five years, a large group of K-12 teachers and administrators from many school systems, as well as Arts and Science faculty members, convene to review the Conceptual Framework, learning outcomes, state standards, data from our learning outcomes and indicators, and make plans for improvement in the School of Education. One meeting was held in 2007 (See minutes of Stakeholder Meeting in I.5.c.) and the last meeting was held in February 2012. See School and Community Partner Meetings Minutes at <https://c1.livetext.com/doc/3704382/29244315>.

Standard III

BOE Report (page 14, 1st paragraph): “Through the addendum and onsite interviews, evaluative tools for field experiences for candidates were found. This clarified the issue of candidates receiving a grade of “F” if field experiences were not completed. **Less apparent was how field experiences for advanced candidates are evaluated, as they are all tied to specific course requirements found in the syllabi . . . specific requirements for field experiences are lacking.**”

Field experiences in advanced courses are required and are listed by program (please see Field-Clinical Experiences by Program in 3.4.4. in Addendum). Clinical experiences for advanced candidates have been tracked electronically since Fall 2012 and field experiences for advanced candidates were tracked electronically one month after the onsite visit. There is no reference in the standards of a requirement that field experiences should be tracked electronically. Therefore, the AUM School of Education was unaware this was expected prior to June 2013.

In early Fall 2013 (before the onsite visit) a new policy was approved by the SOE Department Heads/Dean to make the electronic survey mandatory for all field/clinical courses in all programs (advanced and initial teaching). See policy in 3.4.3. of the Addendum.

While it is true there is no field experience manual for advanced candidates and they were not electronically tracked until after the onsite visit, those field experiences were occurring prior to the onsite visit. Historically, field experiences in advanced courses have been handled completely by course instructors. Therefore, the requirements and evaluations have always been housed within course syllabi. Individual course evaluations for field experiences of advanced courses were supplied in 3.4.2. of the Addendum labeled as Field Experience Materials. Advanced courses are labeled in that table. Clinical requirements and evaluation instruments of advanced courses are found in 3.3.e. of original exhibit room. Advanced courses are labeled in that exhibit also.

BOE Report (page 16, AFI, 3.3.a.): “The unit does not ensure that all candidates in the advanced programs for teachers participate in field experiences that provide **opportunities to demonstrate proficiencies.**”

It appears this AFI should be listed under 3.3.c. instead of 3.3.a. The School of Education missed this error before the final BOE Report was issued. The School of Education will respond to it as if it belongs in 3.3.c. instead of 3.3.a.

Demonstrated proficiencies of candidates are measured through SOE assessment indicators assigned to courses in all programs, including advanced programs. See Assessment matrices in 2.3.a. of original exhibit room. The advanced programs are labeled accordingly to distinguish them from initial teaching programs.

In advanced programs, when the current assessment system was developed, program faculty chose at least one indicator (proficiency) from each of the ten Learning Outcomes associated with our Conceptual Framework to evaluate at least once in every program. Indicators (proficiencies) for advanced programs were pulled from the list of indicators for initial teaching programs, rather than creating new indicators for advanced programs. Most advanced programs evaluate more than one indicator (proficiency) for every Learning Outcome and may evaluate those indicators more than once throughout the program.

Every program, including advanced programs, have an assessment matrix that is updated periodically by the Assessment Coordinator, based upon suggestions from the Assessment Committee, program faculty, and stakeholders. Over the years, indicators have been moved to other courses and/or rubrics were changed based upon specific proficiencies program faculty wished to evaluate. Please see Assessment Matrices in 2.3.a. of the original Exhibit room for all programs to ascertain where each indicator is evaluated. Advanced programs are labeled accordingly.

Instructors who teach the courses, including advanced program courses, in which indicators (proficiencies) are assigned, create **field experiences** or other activities that relate directly to the mastery of these indicators. At the end of the semester, candidates submit their portfolios to each instructor and the instructor records summative evaluations of assigned indicators (proficiencies) for every candidate enrolled in that course, including courses in advanced programs. Field experience evaluations may or may not be housed in the portfolio but are used as a basis for a particular summative score on an indicator (proficiency) at the end of the course. Instructors have flexibility in ascertaining the appropriate internal assessments to use to assign summative indicator (proficiency) scores for candidates enrolled in their courses. See 3.4.2. of the Addendum for internal assessments on candidate proficiencies for courses with field experiences. Advanced courses are labeled accordingly.

BOE Report (page 16, Target Level Recommendations):

Initial Teaching Preparation – Movement Toward Target (**developing or emerging**)

Advanced Preparation – Movement Toward Target (**developing or emerging**)

BOE Report (page 15, 2nd paragraph): “The portion of Standard 3 regarding collaboration between the unit and school partners is at the **Target level** . . . In addition, the unit and school partners share expertise and integrate resources that support candidate learning.”

The BOE agrees, the School of Education is at least at the Emerging level (based on statement above), because there is “clear, convincing and sufficient evidence” that “demonstrates that the unit is performing as described in some aspect of the target level rubric for this standard.” The AUM School of Education believes the unit is at a higher level (Developing Level) for initial teaching and advanced programs because the unit has “plans and timelines for attaining and/or sustaining target level performance as described in the unit standard.” The BOE agrees (page 15, 3rd paragraph) by stating, the “goals for field experiences and the associated Timelines for Target Implementation document were presented in the IR . . . The unit is on target for these goals and has collected the data required thus far. The remainder of the data collection will not begin until the latter part of the fall 2013 semester according to the timeline of the goals. Thus **the unit is moving toward Target.**”

The School of Education asserts progress has been made on the goals and will continue to be made until the School is at Target level in all areas of Standard III for initial teaching and advanced programs. Progress on target goals is discussed below.

Collaboration Between Unit and School Partners

Goal Five from IR (initial teaching and advanced programs): The SOE will develop stronger collaborative relationships with P-12 schools by participating in professional development and instructional programs with each other. Furthermore, the unit and school partners will integrate more resources to increase learning of candidates and P-12 students. The timeline for this goal may be found in Target Level Performance Exhibits at the end of Standard III in the original exhibit room.

Because the BOE believed the element of Collaboration and School Partners was already at Target level during the onsite visit, this goal is considered met. (BOE Report, page 15, 2nd paragraph)

Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Tracking Field/Clinical Experiences

Goal Two from IR (initial teaching and advanced programs): Design an accurate, simple, and easy-to-use system to track field experiences and clinical practice of all candidates. This system should track racial/ethnic/socio-economic diversity and the types of experiences for different programs across the SOE, as well as allow effective data analysis of individuals and groups. The timeline for this goal may be found in Target Level Performance Exhibits at the end of Standard III in the original exhibit room.

Goal Two was completed at the end of Fall 2013, one semester sooner than expected. As new and improved systems are available, discussion will take place on whether a new system is warranted.

Quality of Field Experiences

Goal Three from IR (initial teaching programs only): Field experiences in all programs will be designed to provide more modeling by clinical faculty members and more opportunities for candidates to learn through doing. The timeline for this goal may be found in Target Level Performance Exhibits at the end of Standard III in the original exhibit room.

Goal Three will be completed at the end of Spring 2014 as originally planned.

Interaction with Community and Families

Goal One from IR (initial teaching and advanced programs): Interaction with families and school community will increase for all candidates in the SOE through community and service learning projects that are collaboratively planned and implemented by peers. The timeline for this goal may be found in Target Level Performance Exhibits at the end of Standard III in the original exhibit room.

Goal One will be completed at the end of Fall 2014.

Critiquing and Synthesizing Education Theory

Goal Six from Addendum (advanced programs only): Candidates in all advanced programs will participate in field experiences that require them to critique and synthesize education theory related to classroom practice based on their own applied research. The timeline for this goal may be found in Addendum (Standard III – Advanced Program Correction).

Goal Six relates just to Advanced Programs and is scheduled to be completed in Fall 2014.

Candidates' Development and Demonstration of Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions to Help All Students Learn

Critiquing and Reflecting on Each Others' Practice

Goal Four from IR (initial teaching and advanced programs): Candidates will work collaboratively with other candidates and clinical faculty to critique and reflect on their own and each others' practice and their effects on student learning with the goal of improving practice. The timeline for this goal may be found in Target Level Performance Exhibits at the end of Standard III in the original exhibit room.

Goal Four will be completed at the end of Spring 2014 as originally planned.

Standard IV

BOE Report (page 17, 1st paragraph): "In the offsite report, it was cited that inconsistencies in the documentation existed regarding assessment used to connect diversity proficiencies and learning outcomes. The unit faculty, during the onsite visit, **stated that at the initial level there are connections to diversity proficiencies to 10 of the learning outcomes, and one at the advanced level**".

Diversity proficiencies for most programs (except Instructional Leadership), aligned to the Conceptual Framework (I.5.c.) are taught and evaluated in 9 of the 10 Learning Outcomes, not 8 of the 10 Learning Outcomes as originally stated in the IR, due to a typographical error. Instructional Leadership, has diversity proficiencies in one of the 10 Learning Outcomes. See 4.3.c. in original exhibit room for a complete list of diversity indicators for all programs. Courses in which the diversity indicators are evaluated have specific assignments or field experiences to assist candidates learn how to work effectively with diverse students (4.3.b in original exhibit room). These assignments include an awareness of different learning styles (Indicator 6.3), instruction in adaptation of student instruction or services (Indicators 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 5.6), communication with students and families in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and gender differences (Indicators 3.6, 3.9, 3.10, 3.17, 3.23, 3.27), connecting lessons, instruction, or services to students' experiences and cultures (Indicators 3.7, 3.22, 6.4, 8.2), incorporating multiple perspectives in the subject matter being taught or served (Indicator 4.6), and developing a classroom and school climate that values diversity (3.1, 3.9, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.18, 3.21, 5.6, 6.4, 8.2, 8.4, 9.1, 10.8, 10.9).

Indicators are directly related to students with exceptionalities (3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.22, 5.6, 8.2, 8.4, 9.1, 10.8, 10.9) and related content is taught and evaluated in every program.

BOE Report (page 17, 2nd paragraph): Candidates at the initial level stated that, **while they are prepared for working with ELL students, they felt the least confident about working with these students compared to students that differed from their own racial/ethnic background or students with special needs.**

English language learners in P-12 classrooms in the geographical area have recently become more common. Currently, indicators 2.3, 2.7, and 3.3 are evaluated in all initial teaching programs and all advanced secondary and physical education programs. Indicator 3.20 is evaluated in Instructional Leadership programs. At least one English Language Learner indicator (2.3, 2.7, or 3.3) was added to all advanced programs not already evaluating them, before the onsite visit, and were evaluated beginning in Summer 2013.

Candidates are placed in school systems with some English Language Learners at least once before graduation. In 2011 and 2012 the percentage of ELL students was almost non-existent in Autauga County, 1.5% - 1.7% in Elmore County, and 3.6% in Montgomery County, which are the three primary school systems in which candidates are placed or are currently teaching. (4.3.f. of original exhibit room) While the number of ELL students enrolled in this geographical area is very low, growth is evident, especially in Elmore County, and is expected to be an area where more support will be focused in the future. Most ELL students in the state are Hispanic or Asian. Components have already been added to coursework to better prepare candidates to effectively work with ELL students and more field experiences are taking place in ELL settings.

In the BOE Report (page 17, 3rd paragraph) it was stated, “During onsite interviews, faculty confirmed that candidates are prepared to utilize multiple perspectives and work with the individual needs of learners during their various field placements and there are indicators assessing this program. Candidates stated ‘the programs truly value diversity and expect us to do so in the way we teach as professionals, as we are expected to meet the individual learning needs of all of our students’”

In the BOE Report (page 17, 4th paragraph) it was stated candidates believe “this is a strength in their preparation, as they are ready to hit the ground running and work with all learners.”

Standard VI

BOE Report (page 25, 6.1, 4th paragraph): “The IR indicated that the unit solicits involvement of P-12 practitioners and professional community through stakeholder meetings and surveys. **The limited number of minutes of stakeholder meetings available resulted in questions about the consistency of these meetings.**”

Please see School and Community Partner Meetings minutes, Dean’s Advisory Council minutes, and Instructional Leadership Advisory Council minutes at <https://c1.livetext.com/doc/3704382/29244315>.