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Continuous Improvement Pilot Visit to:

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS

201 Donaghey Avenue
Mashburn Hall Room 100
Conway, AR 72035
September 25-27, 2011

Type of Visit:
Continuing visit - Initial Teacher Preparation
Continuing visit - Advanced Preparation

Board of Examiners Report for Continuous Improvement Pilot Visit

SUMMARY FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT

Institution:

University of Central Arkansas

Team Recommendations:

Standards	Initial	Advanced
1. Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions	Standard Met	Standard Met
2. Assessment System and Unit Evaluation	Standard Met	Standard Met
3. Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	Standard Met	Standard Met
4. Diversity	Standard Met	Standard Met
5. Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development	Standard Met	Standard Met
6. Unit Governance and Resources	Standard Met	Standard Met

Not Applicable (Programs not offered at this level)

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Brief overview of the institution and the unit.

Located in Conway, the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) is a public four-year institution of higher education that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.The institution was founded in 1907 as the Arkansas State Normal School and has become a master's comprehensive university. The university enrolls approximately 13,000 students in its six colleges: Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts & Communications, Health & Behavioral Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Natural Sciences & Mathematics.

The deans, department chairs, program coordinators, faculty, program advisory committees, and the Professional Education Council involved in the preparation of school personnel work together as a professional education unit. The unit includes faculty, students and staff from five colleges. The dean of the College of Education is the head of this unit. The unit's mission is to prepare educators eager to fulfill their roles as professionals who contribute to the education and welfare of those they serve, and to society at large. The unit's vision is to enhance educators' efficacy through reflective decision-making. This vision is realized by developing eight essential attributes in its educator candidates: content knowledge, problem solving, student achievement, assessment, diversity, technology, professionalism, and collaboration. The Professional Education Council initiates, receives, and develops recommendations on policies, proceedings, and standards affecting professional education at UCA.

At the undergraduate level, the unit prepares early childhood, elementary, middle-level and secondary teachers in core academic disciplines, including the arts, world languages, health and physical education, family and consumer sciences, and music. At the graduate level, the unit prepares new teachers, advanced teachers, counselors, school psychologists, reading specialists, special education instructional specialists, library/technology specialists, leaders, and administrators. The College of Education is

organized into three academic departments. The Department of Early Childhood & Special Education has 15 faculty members. The Department of Leadership Studies has 11 faculty members. And the Department of Teaching & Learning, which houses middle level, MAT, secondary education, and the Advanced Studies in Teaching Leadership program, has 15 faculty members. According to the AACTE/NCATE annual reports for UCA for the last three years, the number of program completers for the unit ranged from 353-404.

I.2 Summary of state partnership that guided this visit (i.e., joint visit, concurrent visit, or an NCATE-only visit). Were there any deviations from the state protocol?

The state partnership calls for a state consultant from the Arkansas Department of Education and a local representative from NEA. Both persons participated in team meetings, interviews, and discussions. Neither the state consultant or the NEA representative were voting members of the BOE team, nor did they have writing responsibilities for the onsite report. There were no deviations from the state protocol.

I.3 Indicate the programs offered at a branch campus, at an off-campus site, or via distance learning? Describe how the team collected information about those programs (e.g., visited selected sites, talked to faculty and candidates via two-way video, etc.).

Two programs are currently offered in an online format. They are the MS program in Library Media and Information Technologies and the MSE in Special Education. Information was collected from both faculty and candidates during on campus interviews.

I.4 Describe any unusual circumstances (e.g., weather conditions, readiness of the unit for the visit, other extenuating circumstances) that affected the visit.

There were no unusual circumstances that affected the site visit.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

The conceptual framework establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work effectively in P–12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The conceptual framework is knowledge based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and institutional mission, and continuously evaluated.

II.1 Provide a brief overview of the unit's conceptual framework and how it is integrated across the unit.

The unit's conceptual framework is expressed in the theme statement, "enhancing educator efficacy through reflective decision-making." Within this context, UCA seeks to prepare educators with the following eight attributes: content knowledge, problem-solving, student achievement, assessment, diversity, technology, professionalism, and collaboration. These attributes are infused in each program's curriculum and assessed within the unit's assessment system. The unit ensures that each program assesses these attributes by way of elements in assessment rubrics. Based on assessment data and input from various constituencies, the word "efficacy" was added to the conceptual framework in 2010. In adding "efficacy" to the conceptual framework, the unit hopes to better prepare candidates to "work with

struggling or otherwise disadvantaged learners." All elements of the institution's mission, namely intellectual excellence, community, diversity, and integrity are articulated in the conceptual framework. Through its annual reports and meetings, members of the professional education unit have opportunities to review how the conceptual framework is being realized in teaching, learning, service and scholarship. Program coordinators are responsible for leading the review process with program area faculty and ensuring that there are opportunities for continuous improvement. Interviews with candidates, program completers, and P-12 partners revealed many different examples of the conceptual framework in action. Cooperating teachers, for example, articulated many different examples of candidates' knowledge and skills in the areas of differentiation, appropriate technology integration into teaching, extensive self-reflection, and the ability to work collaboratively with inservice teachers to address the needs of all learners. When asked during interviews, candidates and program completers were able to articulate various attributes from the conceptual framework in their own work as educators. By way of a standards crosswalk, the unit has demonstrated how the eight attributes can be assessed by various course-embedded assessments within each program.

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

1.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this standard?

For both initial and advanced programs, it appears the unit has curricula to ensure that candidates develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions for their professional roles, and that the unit's candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards. Interviews with candidates and faculty during the poster sessions provided ample evidence that candidates can demonstrate appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions. This information corroborates the findings of the Specialized Professional Association national recognition reports and state-level reports. Existing reports on dispositions, program completers, and employer surveys do not include sample sizes, only percentages, so it is impossible to determine reliabilty or validity of these data sources. The Department of Teaching and Learning is moving towards using a stand alone dispositions rubric in more of its programs. Currently the MAT program is the only program using a stand alone dispositions rubric.

Candidates demonstrate their proficiencies through a variety of assessments including, but not limited to, tests, lesson plans, projects, instructional units, portfolios, and dozens of other performance-based assessments. Interviews revealed that candidate receive feedback not only from faculty, but also from professional mentors.

1.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

The unit continuously works to meet national, state, and local standards for its educator preparation programs. Assessments have been developed and re-developed as professional standards have evolved. Interviews with faculty reveal that efforts have been made over the last several years to systematically collect and review candidate performance data with regard to knowledge, skills and dispositions. The unit now uses Chalk and Wire to help collect and analyze candidate performance data. This system

provides better candidate performance data and ensures that all courses are using the same kinds of rubrics to evaluate candidate performances. Since the last BOE visit, the unit has begun end-of-program surveys and follow-up surveys to evaluate several aspects of program quality. Though still early in the process, there is some evidence that graduates perceive their UCA programs as effective and useful in preparing them to become professional educators. Interviews with program completers and K-12 partners corroborated this finding. The unit is engaging in follow-up and employer surveys, though the quality and quantity of information provided by these assessments is not at the point where it has lead to specific continuous improvement activities.

1.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

This standard was not identified as one in which the unit is moving toward the target level.

1.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

1.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

1.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale

1.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale

1.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

1.6 Recommendation for Standard 1

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met
Advanced Preparation	Met

Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

2.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this standard?

The Professional Education Unit (PEU) at the University of Central Arkansas contains an assessment system, primarily driven by departmental programs, which have been aligned with state standards and national/professional standards. Part of the assessment system is inclusive of six (6) to eight (8) components identified as key assessments for each of the departmental programs. All of these program assessment components are integrated within the unit's conceptual framework. Candidate outcomes related to knowledge, skills, and dispositions are assessed according to rubrics established by the respective programs. Other related sources used to inform the assessment system include the following: Standing Committees (i.e. comprised of the various elements of the NCATE model--Conceptual Framework; Standard 1—Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions; Standard 2—Assessment System and Unit Evaluation; Standard 3—Field Experiences and Clinical Practice; Standard 4—Diversity; Standard 5—Faculty, Qualifications, Performance, and Development; Standard 6—Unit Governance and Resources); the PEU, and the Annual Program Reports.

The University of Central Arkansas uses the Banner system for broader university assessment purposes, while the PEU primarily uses Chalk and Wire for its specific purposes of data collection, analysis, and evaluation of candidate performances on key assessments. Interviews with unit administrators indicate that the two systems 'do not talk to each other,' but that both systems have the capability to capture performance data independent of one another. According to the Assessment System Visual, the program assessment schedules, and the Institutional Report, data are collected, analyzed, and reported during the academic term to improve the performance of the candidates and the respective programs. Using the Chalk and Wire electronic portfolio system, program and unit reports of the initial and advanced programs are generated annually. The NCATE coordinator ascertains the necessary data and the program coordinator disseminates to the faculty. The institutionalization of Annual Program Reports has created a cultural context for addressing broader issues affecting alignment, previously collected and analyzed data, and data implications as well as venues for evaluating unit operations.

Additionally, the integration of a recalibration workshop at the program level provides a systematic way of establishing fairness, accuracy, and consistency of assessments. Pathwise, a state-adopted teacher observation system, is used to determine candidates' acquisition of teacher competencies. Faculty members who mentor and supervise teacher candidates are required to receive this specialized training. The Teacher Performance Outcomes Assessment (TPOA), which originates from the work of Danielson's Framework for Teaching, serves as the premise for the Pathwise system and Praxis III. As related to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions and the assessment system for establishing fairness, accuracy, and consistency, various transition points are assessed. A variety of comprehensive measures include, but are not limited to, work products, state-licensure exams, and field internships.

Considering the triangulated analysis of data from interviews with program coordinators, PEU members, advisory board members, various measures have been established for which assessments are identified, modified, and/or reintegrated within the operations of the unit and/or the appropriate program. At the initial and advanced programs, feedback is ascertained from program advisors, faculty, candidates, and external stakeholders as part of their systematic efforts to be reflective. Interviews with the advisory board members and P-12 partners have confirmed their involvement with the PEU in both formal and informal capacities. The PEU hosts annual meetings with the advisory board and discuss issues broadly related to the quality and dissemination of the academic programs (i.e. candidate performance, end-of-program survey, and follow-up survey data). Faculty interviews also indicate a symbiotic relationship between the PEU, advisory board, and P-12 partners. The quality of these relationships results in ongoing, sustained contact regarding pertinent issues affecting the PEU to be maintained irrespective of the formally established meetings.

2.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

The PEU has been engaged continuously in various efforts to foster improvement for the delivery of its academic programs. Review of minutes from a series of PEU meetings as well as interviews with program coordinators have confirmed the following: modified conceptual framework, relocation of the graduate programs into the PEU; and each PEU member serves on one standing committee.

The PEU has also instituted the Chalk and Wire electronic portfolio as the systematic venue used for data to be collected, analyzed, and evaluated in a comprehensive manner. Data from Chalk and Wire have been used for purposes of program improvement as interviews with faculty demonstrated how various course modifications resulted from the type of data ascertained from Chalk and Wire. Two examples are as follows: at the advanced level, the School Psychology program now includes an additional 15 hours in its curriculum, as it was determined that more specialized hours were needed; and at the initial level, the Middle Level program has determined more efficient ways to deliver its course offering, given the previously shared, overlapping characteristics of its courses.

The institutionalization of the Annual Program Reports is another indication of how the PEU has been involved in continuous improvement. The Institutional Report describes the Annual Program Reports as being inclusive of the following: (1) statements about the alignment between stated program outcome and key assessments and their rubrics; (2) key assessment data collected from the previous academic year; (3) analysis of data results; and (4) narrative explaining how these results inform programmatic decisions (p. 10). Interviews with faculty and unit administrators along with the review of these reports affirm the infrastructure for Annual Program Reports exists as well as their capacity to manage and improve the unit's operations and programs.

2.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

The PEU has indicated that its assessment system is meeting the target level on Standard 2, particularly as it relates to various components of elements 2a, 2b, and 2c. For element 2b, evidence does not demonstrate how the current data collection, analysis, and evaluation processes are systematic and comprehensive utilizing data on program quality, unit operations, and candidate performance at each stage of the process. Based on a review of exhibits and several interviews, it appears that advanced programs are not collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data in a systematic manner. Existing Annual Program Reports do not provide the kind of aggregate data, for each advanced program, that could be reasonably be expected from a sufficiently mature system. Evidence does not demonstrate the unit is systematically collecting data from both internal and external sources. The unit is highly program-driven and dependent upon SPA reports. For a component of element 2c, evidence does not indicate how the unit is systematically studying the effects of changes to assure that programs are strengthened without adverse consequences. While the use of Annual Programs Reports has been institutionalized, there is no indication of how long-term studies have been implemented to examine the effects of modifications resulting from those reports.

2.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

There are no areas of the standard being addressed at the target level.

2.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

2.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale
The unit's data management system does not include data for advanced programs (ADV)	Evidence and interviews suggest that the assessment system includes data from advanced programs.
Data collection is uneven, and results are not consistently summarized, reported, and analyzed (ITP).	Programs at the initial level regularly collect performance data on key assessments for candidates. These data are reviewed by the program coordinators and appropriate faculty. A system is in place of annual reporting of candidate performance at the program level.

2.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale
Data collection is uneven and results are not consistently summarized, reported, and analyzed on the schedule for the unit (ADV).	Though the unit has a system in place to collect and analyze candidate performance data on an annual basis, interviews and exhibits suggest that the annual reporting process required by the assessment system is inclusive of all advanced programs. It is not possible to determine from existing reports, such as exit surveys and disposition assessments, the extent to which all advanced programs are included in the assessment system and regularly assessing knowledge, skills and dispositions. One example is the ASTL program. Reports for the ASTL program do not suggest even or consistent data collection over the last several years. Changes to advanced programs, and unit level operations in particular, rely on these data for the system's continuous improvement efforts.

2.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

2.6 Recommendation for Standard 2

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met ▼
Advanced Preparation	Met ▼

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

3.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this standard?

Evidence found with the onsite visit and through interviews affirms that the unit has met the requirements for Standard 3. Extensive interviews with many K-12 partners, including principals, teachers, and other professional staff indicated strong partnerships with regard to field experiences and clinical practice.

Collaboration as part of the conceptual framework – "Enhancing Educator Efficacy through Reflective Decision Making" is embedded in the relationship between school districts and the unit. A comfortable

collaboration is based on trust and respect to design and implement field experiences and clinical practices that nurture the candidate for success but also to enrich the schools and foster success for their students.

The unit has established extended relationship with a number of school districts. Schools within these districts offer varied field and clinical placement for the candidates in the initial and advanced programs. The Office of Candidate Service Field Experience (OCSFE) coordinates field placements for all candidates. The director of field experience works with the site based faculty/mentor teacher to assure appropriate placements of initial candidates in field experience and clinical practices are made. The professional education unit (PEU) requires that all P-12 candidates have field experience with diverse populations including students with exceptionalities. The director of field experience charts the placements and assures that each candidate field experience and clinical practice is aligned for multiple experiences and opportunities with diversity. Eleven school sites provide opportunities for candidate interaction with students of diverse background and/or exceptionalities. At one elementary school, a mentor teacher stated that in the school demographics there was almost no majority race. The school also has a 71 percent poverty rate. Candidate placements are found in urban, rural and suburban locations as well. A staff member of the OCSFE maintains the initial and advanced candidate records to ensure all requirements for graduation are completed in regards to field experience and clinical practice.

The P-4 and middle level programs have partnerships with three school districts which allow unit classes to be taught within the school. The unit has established a middle level methods class taught at the Bob Courtway Middle School. The addition of this methods class within a school ensures that the candidates experience interaction with middle school students, their teachers, and continually experience the reality of their school day.

All site based mentors have taught for three years, are Pathwise trained, and attend the orientation seminar. Mentors and unit faculty are recalibrated with Pathwise every two years. The unit has a designated staff member who does all of the Pathwise training. Many mentors have completed or are working on advanced degrees. The program coordinators for initial candidates choose supervisors who have teaching experience. Because program coordinators have an in-depth knowledge of the mentors and candidates, they attempt to match mentor and candidate who complement each other for the clinical practice. The advanced candidate supervisors are selected by the program coordinator and are licensed in the area of supervision.

Each unit program has a Program Advisory Board which meets once or twice each year as determined by the chair. Public schools are represented on the advisory boards. In March 2009, Middle Level Advisory Board minutes record a discussion of moving the field experience for introductory middle level to an onsite location. This change did occur. The Program Coordinator for Middle Level and the OCSFE are working with one school district "toward a Middle Level early field, internship I and II to be a two year placement." The dDirector of OCSFE stated: "The goal for both institutions would be to impact students' learning, and mentor future candidates in a more substantive and consistent manner." Discussions concerning this proposal include conversations with the superintendent, school principal and staff. Classroom teachers saw this extended field experience as a means to provide much needed assistance with challenged schools.

The unit also has a Superintendent Advisory Board. The dean of COE chairs the Superintendent Advisory Board. Superintendents from across the state are members of this board which meets biannually. Based on information from an interview, the Superintendent Advisory Board discussed candidates beginning their Internship I experience at the beginning of the public school year and not the beginning of the unit's academic year. This change was applied at the beginning of the 2011 school year.

The advanced programs have Program Advisory Committees. The committee includes students, graduates and school practitioners. In the advanced program, the Program Advisory Committee for School Leadership, Management, and Administration (SLMA) cooperatively developed the field experience. There are 11 field experiences for the candidate seeking licensure and 13 for those earning a master's degree. The suggested changes by this committee were implemented so that candidates now have 120 hours of individual internship experience with a focused field experience designed to meet the diversity criteria.

The unit receives feedback from site based faculty through surveys, the training seminars, and small group discussions as well as informal conversations at school sites. Both the mentor and supervisory feedback indicated need for more information in the beginning of a candidate's field experience or clinical practice. Mentors have received notification and information about candidates to be supervised as early as May prior to a fall placement.

Employer survey data of principals and superintendents indicate that the candidates are well prepared. On a 1 to 4 Likert scale, candidates were rated from a low of 2.81 for "design and implementation of appropriate assessments" to 3.16 as "effective ambassadors of profession." During the onsite visit, comments by the principals included: "Great teaching skills:" "collaborative;" and "content knowledge." An elementary school principal stated that of the eight teachers hired this year, six were graduates of the unit. Another mentor stated that the last two teachers hired at her school were recent unit graduates. These newly graduated teachers were hired because of their excellent preparation. Employer Survey for Superintendents and SPED Directors (spring 2010) rated from 3.0 to 3.38 as well prepared. The highest ratings were found with "ability to think critically and learn through reflection," "engages and respects students," and working with diverse students and students with exceptionalities. Initial candidates in the End-of-Program Survey, Fall 2009-10 Undergraduate Program rated "the quality of teaching in your education courses compared to non-education courses" at 4.06, 4.07, and 3.98. Advanced candidates responding to the MAT End of Program Survey Results Fall 2009-Fall 2010 rated the overall education program from 3.33 to 3.47 on a one to four Likert scale. Individual MAT courses were also rated above 3.0. Advanced candidates rated MAT 5310 (Analysis and Practice Teaching) from 3.37 to 3.47; ASTL 6305 (Classroom Assessment) from 3.45 in fall 2009 to 3.34 in fall 2010; and MAT 6699 (Internship) from 3.52 in fall 2009 to 3.42 in fall 2010. First year teachers were also surveyed. In the survey, "Ratings of Their Professional Education Program," these recent graduates rated the program from 4.02 to 4.37 in all categories. The lowest rating was 4.02 in "Classroom Management" and the highest was 4.37 in "Developing instructional units and preparing lesson plans."

The candidates in both the initial and the advanced programs complete reflection papers about the field experience. For the initial candidate reflection is a requirement that begins with EDUC 1300 field experience. The candidate develops analytical skills through reflection of practices observed in exploration, then applied through specific assignments designated in course syllabi, and integrated into the capstone of clinical practice. Through reflection, candidates assess lesson plans and the implementation of the lesson plan. Through reflection, candidates then adjust those plans to accommodate students' learning styles.

The initial program candidates have exposure to field experience in required courses at the beginning of the program. The unit has designed the initial programs so that a scaffolding effect begins with field experience in the first course - the EDUC 1300 and EDUC1240 - which are required by all. Field experience is required of the initial candidates in many of their courses based on the syllabi of those courses. Course syllabi in the middle level program indicate that field experience moves from exploratory to application to integration – the scaffolding of experience that gives the candidate initial experience of observation and reflection to integration of the information, theory and application of that theory in the clinical practice of student teaching. Currently the total hours of field experience and

clinical practice is well above 600 hours. In the middle level language arts and social studies component the number of hours is 752 hours. This early and intensive experience in the classroom begins with directed observation assignments through to the clinical practice has resulted in candidates who are confident and experienced in assessment, accommodation, and implementation of standards for the success of the students in the classroom.

The unit has determined that field experience and clinical practice create professional growth opportunities for both initial and advanced candidates. Opportunities that first focus on observation skills, and then apply strategies and techniques from the coursework to a classroom integration of knowledge and reflection on action have been developed by the unit. The unit's scaffolding process of courses is designed for initial candidates to begin exploration through observation in field experience found in the required EDUC 1300 (Education as a Profession) and EDUC 3309 (Cultural Perspective). Each of these courses requires a field experience of 5/11 hours respectively. The unit faculty changed field observations from just watching a class to a specific focus that is discussed. The intensity of field experience evolves to application of course work required by course syllabus as found in ECSE3000 (Foundations) with ten hours of field experience, MSIT 4305 with 10 hours , and ART 4350 (Art Practicum) with 16 hours to the capstone for the initial candidate of clinical practice. Candidates will integrate their pedagogical skills and content knowledge into the classroom setting for 600 hours during clinical practice.

Advanced candidates also have required field experiences within their programs. Field experiences are created by the program coordinator with a focus on that program and the candidate's needs. Advanced candidates use their own classrooms for the field experiences. ASTL Field Experience Guidelines documents required assignments. If necessary, additional assignments are made to assure candidate interaction with diverse populations. This may mean that an advanced candidate must leave his/her school to complete the assignment at another school. Candidates in the master's program for Library Media have 36 hours of required field experience. The unit's advanced programs have multiple levels of field experience for candidates and support to accomplish the program requirements.

3.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

The unit's conceptual framework of "Enhancing educator efficacy through reflective decision making" is one of the changes that had taken place since the previous visit. One of the eight attributes in which the conceptual framework is manifested is: collaboration. The unit explains collaboration as "Educators promote and utilize a collaborative approach to professional responsibilities and activities. They forge partnerships with others in other to assist in effective decision-making and provide the richest environment for learning and development of all students." The unit's field and clinical practices are enhanced through collaboration and feedback with the content programs, the school based supervisors and mentors, candidates and graduates. Changes in programs and process have been made based on these collaborations.

Mentors stated during interviews that the unit asks for areas of improvement after each semester's field experience or clinical practice. Mentor suggestions through these informal discussions or in the more formal surveys and Advisory Board meetings are examined. Some suggestions have been implemented such as candidates are in the mentor classrooms at the beginning of the school year and candidates have specific assignments for observations during the first course field experiences.

The unit has an Advisory Board for each program and a Superintendent Advisory board as well. The Program Advisory Board is chaired by the program coordinator with public schools represented. During interviews with members of the Advisory Board, the collaborative relationship of the board and the unit

was affirmed. The Advisory Board members stated that they held discussions on the positive and negative impact of proposed changes in the conceptual framework. The Advisory board discussions also included the need for efficacy within the program and a variety of assessments to measure student progress. Although the discussions were held, the interviewees agreed that the final changes were up to the unit.

The Advisory Board was instrumental in the change that Internship I begin with the first day of public school and not the first day of classes at the university. Data, such as pass/fail rates and completion of program, are shared with the Advisory Board.

The advanced programs have the Program Advisory Committees. The MAT Advisory Board meets every six months. An advisory committee member stated that discussions during a meeting resulted in a change. The School Counseling Advisory Board suggested more on-line courses to accommodate the candidates, and the unit has begun to implement more on-line courses.

In an interview, it was stated that the unit will implement a change and then evaluate whether the change is accomplishing the desired effect.

3.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

This standard was not identified as one in which the unit is moving toward the target level.

3.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

The unit has demonstrated two areas of strength at the initial level: 3a. collaboration between unit and school partners and 3b. design, implementation, and evaluation of field experiences and clinical practice.

The unit and the school partners share expertise and integrate resource to support candidate learning. Interviews with a principal and unit faculty found school faculty have conversations based on the same books used in course work – specifically citing the use of Danielson's Framework for Teaching. OCSFE's process assures candidates have opportunity to implement and assess content in diverse placement. Interviews with mentors and the director and staff of OCSFE found that the unit has successfully matched the candidates with mentors of similar teaching and learning styles. Mentors and unit faculty are exploring continuation of the candidate at the same school site or with the same mentor from the Internship I through Internship II.

A second area of strength is design, implementation, and evaluation of field experiences and clinical practice at the initial level. The OCSFE process charts the field experience and clinical practice of candidates. Candidates apply and enhance their professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills and professional dispositions through these diverse placements. Required observations allow the candidates to see mentors model best teaching practices and reflect on those observations. Early in the initial level program, candidates apply their knowledge with small group activities and assisting mentors. Conceptual framework elements of reflection and assessment are incorporated within the field experiences. Mentors stated in interviews that candidates are encouraged and include in staff development, parent conferences, and creation of student learning strategies. Mentors also stated they viewed the candidates as co-teachers in their classrooms.

The unit has established strong rapport with school faculty and administration. Interviews with school faculty and administration validate inclusion in evaluation and improvements for field experience and

clinical practice. The schools are represented on Advisory Boards that discuss positive and negative effects of proposed changes. Mentors are engaged in the design and implementation of approved change as seen in the process used to change the beginning time of the Internship I. Mentors have been active participants in the discussion for continuity of mentor/candidate through the Internship I and II. The unit has provided Middle Level candidates the unique opportunity to take methods classes on-site at a middle school. The unit is currently discussing expansion of field experiences in programs to full year for continuity with input from school partners through Advisory and Superintendent Boards.

The unit trains all mentors and unit faculty in the use of Pathwise. Recalibration workshops are also arranged by the unit.

3.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

3.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale

3.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale

3.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

3.6 Recommendation for Standard 3

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met
Advanced Preparation	Met

Standard 4: Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools.

4.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this

standard?

Interviews with candidates, cooperating teachers, faculty, field/clinical experience supervisors, and program completers suggest that this standard continues to be met. The unit is engaged in the review of its diversity curriculum and field experiences. In addition, the unit seeks to ensure that candidates have experiences with diverse faculty, diverse peers (other candidates), and diverse students in P-12 settings.

In addition to lesson plans demonstrating candidates' skills in differentiation, modifications for diverse learning needs and learning styles, and responsiveness to cultural context, interviews suggest that candidates are able to work effectively with diverse P-12 student populations. At the initial level, all candidates take EDUC 3309 (Cultural Perspectives: Families, Schools, and Community Partnerships) where they develop their beginning skills and dispositions for working with a wide variety of learners and understand the professional obligation to help all students learn. The unit provided data suggesting that the existing diversity proficiencies are being measured and aggregated at the unit level.

Interviews and exhibits indicate that field placements are in educational settings where candidates interact with students who are diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, special needs, and to some extent English language learning. In advanced programs, candidates must complete some field assignments in placements outside of their classroom/work setting and in classrooms/field settings where various forms of diversity exist.

Interviews and exhibits indicate that there is gender and ethnic diversity in PEU faculty as well as school based faculty, though both groups are predominately white and female. The College of Education is participating in UCA's strategic goal of increasing faculty diversity. According to interviews with unit and university leadership, some monies have been set aside to help with recruiting efforts. In addition to participating in a university-level initiative to diversify faculty membership, the College of Education is broadening its advertising of positions to include publications such as Black Issues in Higher Education and other outlets that have a large minority readership.

4.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

There are several examples of continuous improvement since the last visit. The unit has updated its EDUC 3309 course (Cultural Perspectives: Families, Schools, and Community Partnerships) to include methods for serving the English language learners and have a field component. Interviews with faculty suggest that these added components bring diversity from an abstract concept to a matter of professional values and practices. Candidates come to understand their responsibilities to meet the needs of all learners and to approach teaching from a multicultural lense. The Diversity Committee, which is composed of faculty and administrators from various programs housed in the College of Education, meets to discuss and address diversity as a core value. The focus of this group is curriculum, field placements, and the diversity of candidate pools in the professional education unit. As a result of the Diversity Committee's work, a course is being created by the Office of Candidate Service Field Experience to help pre-candidates pass the Praxis I. Passing this test is a barrier for some pre-candidates. Supporting pre-candidates in their preparation for the test will provide the unit an opportunity to diversify its candidate pool at the initial level. Additionally, the Diversity Committee has developed partnerships with the UCA Writing Center to insure that candidates are successful in their efforts to be effective writers within the profession. The Lighthouse Beacons program came about, in part, due to the work of the Diversity Committee. This program provides a social and academic support structure for candidates to ensure they have opportunities to be successful in the initial teacher preparation program. Faculty members can volunteer to participate in this program. In recent years, the Dean's Office has sent letters to minority students graduating from local high schools in the hope that they will consider

matriculation in UCA's teacher preparation program. In an effort to diversify its candidate population, UCA brings cohorts of prospective teachers from China to participate in the initial teacher preparation program. Though these students are not formally admitted to the initial teacher preparation program, they take professional education classes and are colleagues/peers for candidates in the program. This provides an opportunity for existing candidates to interact with peers who are English language learners from different cultures.

4.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

This standard was not identified as one in which the unit is moving toward the target level.

4.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

4.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

4.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale
Candidates have limited opportunity to interact with racially diverse professional education faculty. (ITP, ADV)	In recent years, two faculty from minority ethnic/racial backgrounds have been hired. The unit has also undertaken steps to advertise positions more broadly. In addition, the unit is participating in a university-sponsored strategic initiative to diversify its faculty. PEU faculty from underrepresented groups increased from 7.1% in 2004 to 9% in 2011.
Candidates have limited opportunity to interact with peers from diverse ethnic backgrounds (ITP, ADV)	The percentage of both initial and advanced candidates from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups has increased since the last visit, from less than 10% at the initial level (for example) to above 10%. In addition, the unit has released a minority faculty member 50% to serve as a recruiter and advisor in UCA's Academic Advising Center. The released faculty member provides the unit an opportunity to recruit and retain a more diverse candidate pool.

4.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale

4.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

4.6 Recommendation for Standard 4

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met

| Advanced Preparation | Met ▼ |

Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance; they also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

5.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this standard?

Evidence reviewed during the onsite visit and interviews with candidates, faculty, program completers, P-12 partners, and administration indicated that the unit continues to meet this standard.

Faculty hold the credentials and qualifications appropriate for teaching assigned courses in the respective programs offered at UCA. In response to the offsite report, a faculty database was provided at the onsite visit. All tenure track faculty in the unit hold terminal degrees. A review of faculty vita and credentials indicate the faculty have expertise in and knowledge of the content they teach. Non-tenure track and clinical faculty members have significant related experience, appropriate licensure, and expertise. School faculty/mentor teachers are licensed in the field they teach and meet the criteria established by UCA.

During interviews candidates and completers stated that the faculty model how to teach in P-12 settings and have a thorough understanding of the content. Mentor teachers state because of the UCA faculty, candidates are well-prepared with instructional strategies and use technology effectively in the classroom during internship. Program completers responded in interviews that UCA faculty "model what I should model as a teacher" and "(I) feel so prepared because of their teaching."

Candidates and completers indicate that the faculty use a range of strategies for curriculum, instruction, and assessment and emphasize the use of classroom technology. Syllabi address the use of technology in courses as well as how diversity is infused into courses. Data gathered from interviews with candidates indicate that they feel strongly about the caring nature of and the positive relationships they have with faculty: "They stay connected with us and give us resources as we move into our first jobs."

Faculty are active with scholarly productivity as demonstrated in journal articles, books, book chapters, presentations, grants, and other awards. Examples were displayed at the onsite visit and an updated exhibit listing recent faculty scholarship was provided.

In addition, faculty members provide service to local schools and educational agencies through consultation and professional development. Faculty vitae and interviews with faculty and school and community partners show a wide range of professional activities on campus, in the state, and in the profession. Mentor teachers and program completers report a willingness of the faculty to support P-12 teachers when curricular and instructional issues arise within their schools.

Faculty are engaged in leadership roles in professional organizations, ranging from committee memberships to roles as officers and board members. Faculty in the unit present regularly at local, state, national and international conferences.

Candidates evaluate professional unit faculty at the end of each semester. Faculty use this information as well as candidate performance data to reflect on their teaching and to make respective changes. Interviews with faculty, program coordinators, and chairs provided examples of programmatic changes and professional development related to needs identified. Leadership within the unit reported that department chairs use the results of student evaluations of faculty to support individual professional learning experiences for improving teaching. The College Administrative Council facilitates a variety of professional development offerings that are supported by the university's Instructional Development Center.

Procedures for faculty evaluation, guidelines for tenure and promotion, and policies for graduate faculty status are in place.

5.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

Several temporary faculty positions have been reworked to full time positions and one new FTE to support the growing MAT program was added. Continuous improvements to the unit and the programs are driven by annual program review reports, overall instructor rating from student evaluations, exit surveys of candidates, and feedback from mentor teachers and advisory committees. Faculty model best practices in teaching, emphasize innovative instructional strategies, and integrate technology into classes.

5.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

This standard was not identified as one in which the unit is moving toward the target level.

5.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

5.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

5.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale

5.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale

5.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

5.6 Recommendation for Standard 5

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met ▼
Advanced Preparation	Met ▼

Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

6.1 Overall Findings. What did the evidence reveal about the unit continuing to meet this standard?

Evidence reviewed during the onsite visit and interviews with candidates, faculty, program completers, P-12 partners, and administration indicated that the unit continues to meet this standard.

The dean of the College of Education serves as the unit head and is responsible for providing leadership in the development of educational programs within the unit.

The Professional Education Council (PEC) provides a means for communication and collaboration across educator preparation programs in the institution. Interviews with department chairs, program coordinators, faculty, and advisory committee members support the effectiveness of the PEC for unifying unit programs and collaborating with P-12 school partners.

Interviews with candidates and program completers confirmed they have access to counseling, advising services, and technology support services. Recruitment and admission materials, which are available online and were accessible and current.

Though the unit has experienced budget challenges over the past few years, an interview with the dean and the leadership team indicated that a collaborative spirit among the departments allowed for the shifting of resources as needed to equalize support for the various programs.

The offsite team noted the absence of an exhibit comparing the College of Education budget to other colleges. The exhibit was available and reviewed during the onsite visit. Data indicate the College of Education budget is comparable to other units at UCA. The Dean of the Graduate School indicated continued financial support for sustaining and developing programs within the college.

The concern for the absence of the faculty workload document in the offsite review was addressed through the review of the Faculty Workload Policies exhibit during the onsite visit, interviews with the dean and assistant dean, and faculty. Faculty load for teaching and supervision are appropriate.

The College of Education building is currently adequate for programs; however as programs continue to grow, space will become an issue. Technology challenges in terms of connectivity due to the structure of the building and the number of candidates and faculty attempting to be online at the same time are being addressed.

6.2 Continuous Improvement. How has the unit been engaged in continuous improvement since the previous visit?

The PEU has functioned to maintain rigorous standards for candidates in unit programs. The standing committees within the PEU have engaged all faculty in assessment work for the purposes of improving candidate performance and programs. In spite of budget challenges, the unit has supported faculty attendance at one local and one national conference each year.

6.3 Movement to the Target Level. What steps has the unit taken to move to the target level (if appropriate to this standard)? What plans does the unit have to continue to move to the target level?

This standard was not identified as one in which the unit is moving toward the target level.

6.4 Strengths. What areas of the standard are being addressed at the target level?

6.5 Areas for Improvement and Rationales

6.5.1 What AFIs have been removed?

AFI	AFI Rationale

6.5.2 What AFIs remain and why?

AFI	AFI Rationale

6.5.3 What new AFIs does the unit need to address for continued improvement? (These new AFIs may be an area of concern cited in the Offsite BOE Team Feedback Report if evidence in the IR Addendum, new exhibits, observations, or interviews indicates that an area of concern has not been adequately addressed.)

AFI	AFI Rationale

6.6 Recommendation for Standard 6

Initial Teacher Preparation	Met
Advanced Preparation	Met

IV. SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Documents Reviewed

Attached.

Persons Interviewed

Attached.

Please upload sources of evidence and the list of persons interviewed.

Persons Interviewed at U of Central Arkansas
List of Exhibits/Evidence

See **Attachments** panel below.

(Optional) State Addendum: