

Elementary Teacher Education Senate Minutes
Thursday, October 6, 2011
3:30 p.m.
Location: CBB 319

Present: Cherin Lee (Coordinator, Secondary Teacher Education), Melissa Heston (Coordinator, Elementary Teacher Education), Tony Gabriele (Professional Sequence), Linda Fitzgerald (Early Childhood Education), Jean Schneider (Middle Level Education), Kevin Droe (alternate, Music Education), Susan Brennan (Special Education), Rip Marsten (Physical Education & Health Education), Deirdre Heistad (Liberal Arts Core), Becky Hawbaker (Teacher Education Faculty Chair), Denise Tallakson (Elementary Education)

Absent: Amy Lockhart (Clinical Experiences), Deb Tidwell (Literacy Education), Wendy Miller (Art Education)

Governance Business

- ***Governance Organization Structure and update on where we on are implementation***

The Executive Council has met three times and will meet two more times this semester. The next meeting is set for November 8 and a representative needs to attend. The discussion has been to find a common space for Teacher Education which will be centrally located, possibly Bartlett Hall. Melissa, Barb, Cherin and Lori would then move to this designated space.

In the past, the expenses for Teacher Education were not able to be tracked so questions could not easily be answered. We now have a budget amount for Teacher Education and will be able to track the budget since there is a fund number assigned.

- ***Terms of service on the Elementary Senate – how to stagger membership, alternates identified***

Terms will be three years with maximum of two consecutive terms. If the preference selected is “doesn’t matter” that person will be assigned as a floater.

A handout for Teacher Education Dual Governance was distributed.

- ***Update of Teacher Education Program Improvement Board***

Melissa and Cherin reviewed all nominations from faculty and considered distribution of members with regard to gender, school size and geographic location. Cherin will be contacting the selected administrators and teachers to solicit their participation.

Two Teacher Education Faculty members need to be appointed by the Elementary Teacher Education Senate and need to attend meetings twice per year. This is also true for the Secondary Senate.

The board will meet on Saturdays since no funds are available for substitutes.

- ***Selection of Elementary Senate appointees to Standing Committees (Involvement of Alternates Recommended Where Possible)***

- Executive Council Representative from ETE Senate
 - Tony Gabriele volunteered
- Teacher Education Curriculum Committee
 - Representative for professional sequence is Elana Joram
 - Representative for the ETE Senate is Trey Leech
- Teacher Education Program Assessment Committee
 - Representative for the ETE Senate is (no volunteers yet)
This group works with Dr. Wilson, Melissa Heston and Cherin Lee

- ***Teacher Education Bylaws – process for finalizing, review assignment***

- The Teacher Education Governance bylaws were approved in draft form by the Council on Teacher Education in May 2011. If changes need to be

made, now is the time to do so. Everyone needs to review these prior to the next meeting and indicate those items which are unclear and need revisions. The Secondary Senate has already been asked to do this.

Program Business

- ***Transferring in Level I Field Experiences from Community Colleges***

Currently there is an issue with the transferring of credit for field experiences taken in high school and community college. What juniors and seniors in high school are currently doing doesn't match what we do here at UNI in Level I. The nature of field experience needs to be clearly defined. The curriculum needs to be reviewed to determine what is in the best interest of the program (not faculty or an individual major or program). Cadet teaching in conjunction with a community college course on education may not be equivalent to UNI's Level I field experience. We also have no evaluations or documentation of hours completed in the field, so we can't be sure these students satisfy Chap. 79 requirements for 80 hours prior to student teaching.

Becky Hawbaker will share the current structure of the Level I field experience with the Senates at their next meetings. There will be further discussion on this topic, as well as on the issues of dual credit for high school students taking teacher preparation courses, and the use of a lifespan development class from a community college, possibly taken for dual credit, as an equivalent for our Dynamics of Human Development course here at UNI.

- ***Background checks with "Hits"***

All students in the Teacher Education Program are required to have a background check. The charge is \$20.00 to complete this through the Office of Teacher Education. DCI charges \$15.00, but we charge \$20.00 to cover our

cost of time and printing. Almost 400 background checks were completed through the Office of Teacher Education in September 2011 alone.

Some students have had possible hits for sex offender, child abuse, and various criminal convictions. A possible hit means that further research is needed to determine a person's status on the sex offender and child abuse registries and for criminal convictions. All hits for possible sex offender status have been "false positives" to date. One hit for child abuse was confirmed, and a good proportion of hits for other criminal convictions were also confirmed. The DCI specifically notes that this information MAY NOT be since fingerprints were not used in the background check process.

It was learned recently that the Cedar Falls School District does not allow any teacher into its the applicant pool if there is any record of a criminal conviction for other than a minor traffic offense (parking and speeding). Some of our students have convictions for alcohol related offenses, drugs and drug paraphernalia, minor theft and vandalism. Students need to know that these convictions may reduce their employability.

Students have also contacted the Office of Teacher Education inquiring why they weren't eligible for a teaching license. The Office had already sent off their recommendation but the BOEE (Board of Educational Examiners) didn't tell them why they couldn't get a license. These students had criminal convictions that the BOEE was not willing to overlook at the time licensure was recommended. UNI doesn't see the FBI fingerprint level check for student teachers. The SING background check is the only check we can see here at UNI. Any information at a national level is not given to us by the BOEE. Early childhood majors do have to complete a national FBI background check with fingerprints in order to meet Department of Human Services requirements for placements in licensed childcare facilities. This is process is also done through the Office of Teacher Education, with the assistance of the UNI Dept. of Public Safety.

Nothing in Chap. 79 mandates that UNI has to do a background check. Some Teacher Education programs at other institutions are requiring a background check, and questions were raised during the state program approval visit

regarding the risk of not doing a background check. The Council on Teacher Education decided to make completion of a background check through SING a minimum requirement here.

The SING background check must be complete for students completing their field experience at a DHS licensed child care facility. Those students in early childhood must complete a SING background check every two years. For Level I Practicum, just one background check is required. With the exception of early childhood majors, no additional background check is required during the program. The background check just prior to student teaching is a licensure requirement, not a UNI requirement per se. DHS and BOEE will not share background information with each other.

A clear policy needs to be developed. Do we here at UNI take a no tolerance position? Which students can move forward and which cannot? What are the criteria? Currently, Iowa State has a policy in place that states each student applying needs to report any criminal charges within 24 hours of the occurrence during the academic year and within 1 week during the summer session. Students can be removed from the Teacher Education program if a review board deems so.

Once the UNITED system is in working order, the SING background check certificate will be available for students to download from this system.

It was suggested that these issues be presented to the Executive Council as a discussion point. The Provost and Deans need to know about the issue and possible ramifications of mistakes. We need a clear policy as to how we should proceed here at UNI.

- ***Blueprint for Iowa Educational Reform, Etc.: Key Issues for Us***

The Federal DoE is pushing for money from the current TEACH grant program be distributed only to the best schools and to the best students with the highest need, and only for their senior year of schools. UNI students make very heavy use of the current TEACH grant program. Unless UNI is considered a sufficiently good teacher preparation institution, our students may no longer have access to this federal funding. The current TEACH grant program carries

with it a four year obligation that must be completed within 8 years in high need contexts. Students can currently receive up to \$4,000 per semester (undergrad and grad).

The state may mandate a 3.0 admission GPA for Teacher Education. Currently 82% are admitted to Teacher Education here at UNI with a 3.0 or above. The PPST score requirements are expected to change as well.

- ***Role of the Senate and Teacher Education Coordinators in the UNI Strategic Plan Goal 3 Action Plan***

Cherin and Melissa are “point persons” for parts of the UNI Strategic Goal 3 Action Plan. Part of their work is to figure out benchmark measures for determining progress. Each goal objective area needs to be discussed with regard to stakeholders and what we are going to do to meet the strategic plan goals.

- ***Additional Agenda Items***

A Senate member raised the question: How many students are not actually following the professional sequence?

It was noted that more community colleges are seeking to offer a Human Relations equivalent. Our Human Relations Faculty have said they will not accept transfers of Human Relations courses from community colleges. All Human Relations courses/curriculum for licensure must be approved by the BOEE prior to inclusion. The analysis of Human Relations syllabi from community colleges indicate these courses are not equivalent to UNI’s course. The assignments also do not match.

Concern was raised about the fact that UNI can’t staff enough sections of Classroom Assessment (MEASRES 3150) to handle all students taking the co-requisite, Learning and Instruction (EDPSYCH 3148). Whose job is it to review this issue and address this so that there are enough sections of classes to match everything?