

Request from The University of Tulsa
School of Urban Education
to the State Board of Education
April 26, 2012

The Teacher Education program in the School of Urban Education at the University of Tulsa is nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The program (or unit, in accreditation parlance) is also accredited by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. In 2005, we chose not to pursue state accreditation for most individual programs (each separate subject area) since these programs produce a small number of graduates (five or fewer) in the last three years. These programs have been on hiatus since 2005. Our elementary education, deaf education, music education, physical education, and speech-language pathology programs have larger numbers of graduates and we sought program accreditation in these areas and they are currently approved by OCTP. This left our graduates in math, sciences, English, history, and foreign languages to pursue certification through the alternative route to certification.

Each of these programs that are not OCTP-approved, however, are identical to all other subject area programs in the Teacher Education Program that lead to a bachelor's degree in education, and in no way lessens the rigor of the program in preparing our students to teach. Our choice to not pursue approval of art, math, science, social studies, English, languages, and theatre was largely one of manpower; we simply didn't have enough faculty members to complete all of the reports, which are a significant undertaking.

Our national accreditor, TEAC, has recently renewed our accreditation, which includes the approval of all of our programs (art, deaf education, elementary, English, Spanish, French, German, social studies, math, music, physical education, the sciences, and theatre). Nationally, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has merged with TEAC, forming a new over-arching organization called the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. This will bring the TEAC accreditation in line with the state rules, all though as yet, this change has not yet been implemented.

When our first set of graduates were seeking certification under this approach, the SDE informed us that our graduates had only to complete appropriate applications, pass state tests, pass a background check, and have a letter from the certification officer stating that they had completed a nationally-accredited program in the appropriate subject area. These graduates' applications were expedited by the certification office, allowing them to skip the interview by the Teacher Competency Panel (and the \$100 to have complete it). They were not required to take any other coursework in order to prepare them to teach. These exceptions were made to the typical alternative certification process, because our graduates were not typical alternative certification candidates, having already completed a teacher preparation program including 15 weeks of full-time student teaching. In essence, the certification office was treating these graduates more as standard certification

Our intent was not to skirt the law, but to make it possible for us to provide our students with a strong professional preparation without undue burden for accreditation, given the size of our School. The certification office treated our graduates as meeting the same requirements as all other candidates in the state. We didn't request this from the SDE, but gratefully accepted it and informed current students that were in the pipeline that the process would be the same for them.

We were informed last year that this process would continue even with the change in superintendents; however, with the turnover in staff in that office, our graduates are now being

required to take graduate credit before being allowed to have their applications for alternative certification considered (including the extra expense of the interview). In addition, they are being assigned 18 credit-hours of coursework through a school of education, the largest possible number of hours required from alternatively certified teachers.

We have this month submitted new reviews for *all* of our subject area programs for approval for the next seven years, and we anticipate approval of all programs by June. In the meantime, we have 17 graduates (or soon to be graduates) who are caught in the middle.

In light of these issues, we ask that you give our teacher education program completers the same credit for prior related work experience as you would applicants coming directly from a teacher preparation program in any other Oklahoma institution. We also ask that their completion of our teacher education program allow them to forego any additional coursework in education as they have already completed such coursework.

These graduates have completed all requirements for a major in their subject area at the University. They have completed every requirement for teacher education that normally lead to teacher certification in our other subject areas in our Teacher Education program. They have completed a full semester of methods course with field experience (including developing and teaching lessons in a secondary school). They have also student-taught full time for 15 weeks. They have met all requirements of our nationally-accredited teacher education program and all requirements of Oklahoma State law, and, we believe, are competent to teach in Oklahoma schools.

Respectfully submitted,

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