

## UNIT REPORT

**Annual Highlights Report**

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**Annual Report: Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education****NON-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS ONLY: Highlights of the Year:****A1. Highlights Related to AA Goal 1: Educate a diverse student body through an integrated academic experience that positions graduates for personal success and civic responsibility in the global environment of the 21st century.:**

- MDSK's PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with an urban focus, has continued to grow. According to Institutional Research, there were 56 enrolled students in the program in fall 2014, compared with 75 students in spring 2018, representing a growth of 34%. The program is now the second largest doctoral program in the College, and its graduates work at prestigious institutions across the country (e.g., Baylor University, Towson University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Louisiana Lafayette, and the University of South Dakota).
- MDSK offers an undergraduate Civic Minor in Urban Youth and Communities that continues to maintain strong enrollment. According to Institutional Research, in spring 2013 there were 19 students enrolled in the program, and in spring 2018, there were 99, an increase of approximately 521%.
- MDSK offers an undergraduate Minor in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The TESL Minor serves the critical need of preparing teacher candidates to meet the needs of the growing ESL population in the Charlotte area. State-level data have shown this is an area where many of our teacher candidates feel they need greater preparation. Since its launch, the Minor in TESL has grown from an enrollment of 10 students (spring 2014) to 17 students (spring 2018), a growth of 70%.
- Further responding to the need to better prepare area teachers to teach the growing ESL population in the Charlotte region, Drs. Scott Kissau, Lan Kolano, Michelle Stephan, and David Pugalee implemented a \$284,000 grant-funded project that offered professional development to K-5 teachers at high needs school with a large percentage of English language learners. Twenty-three of the 28 teachers that participated in the project have decided to continue their studies at UNC Charlotte and complete their M.Ed in TESL.
- Initially funded by a Goodnight Foundation grant to provide an innovative and tailored M.Ed program to middle and secondary school teachers in Union County, the unique and highly successful blended (on-site/online) M.Ed program has since been expanded to include cohorts from under-served counties in the region, such as Stanly, Rowan Counties, and Iredell counties. A five cohort drawing from counties north of Mecklenburg County is currently being recruited.
- Peter Johnson, a candidate in the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language (M.A.T - TESL) pro-gram, was the recent recipient of the 2017 UNC Charlotte Student Teacher of the Year Award.
- Dr. Scott Kissau received a Chancellor's Diversity Challenge grant to fund a half-day professional development opportunity led by Dr. Jewell Cooper intended to help MDSK faculty infuse topics related to diversity across initial licensure programs.
- Dr. Paul Fitchett received a \$10,000 grant from the Foundation for the Carolinas Re-emprise fund to conduct a program evaluation of the Teaching Fellows Institute of Charlotte.

**Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::** External Partnerships

Student Success

Faculty Success

New Educational Programs

**A2. Highlights Related to AA Goal 2: To expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative programs that span the disciplines in research, creative activities, and graduate education.:**

- Initially funded by a Goodnight Foundation grant to provide an innovative and tailored M.Ed program to middle and secondary school teachers in Union County, the unique and highly successful blended (on-site/online) M.Ed program has since been expanded to include cohorts from Stanly, Rowan Counties, and Iredell counties. A five cohort drawing from counties north of Mecklenburg County is currently being recruited.
- Dr. Charles Hutchison continues to serve as the editor of *Insights into Learning Disabilities journal*.
- Dr. Paul Fitchett serves as Associate Editor of *Theory & Research in Social Education* and Guest Editor of the *Journal of Social Studies Research*.
- MDSK held its 2nd annual Faculty/Graduate Student Research Symposium that involved faculty and students sharing their research via over 20 poster presentations.
- Dr. Tina Heafner continues to serve as Vice-President of the National Council for the Social Studies. NCSS is an organization of approximately 20,000 members and represents social studies educators and scholars from across the nation. She will be the NCSS President from July 2019-2020.
- Dr. Tina Heafner was the recipient of the 2018 AERA TACTL Best Paper Award for her paper, Online and Face-to-Face Teacher Preparation Programs Comparisons.
- The M.Ed in Urban Education was approved in Curriculog and is expected to launch in Fall 2019.
- A TESL concentration was approved for the M.Ed in Middle and Secondary Education. The name of the degree will change as of spring 2019 to the M.Ed in Curriculum & Instruction.
- Approval was granted to deliver the M.Ed in TESL at Newell Elementary as part of a grant-funded project.
- Dr. Jeanneine Jones and Dr. Tina Heafner are delivering an on-site M.Ed program in Iredell and Rowan Counties.

**Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::** External Partnerships

Faculty Success

**A3. Highlights Related to AA Goal 3: To engage community partners in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region.:**

- Dr. Lan Kolano was the 2017 recipient of the College of Education Faculty Award for Sustained Service to Public Schools. Civic responsibility and community engagement are central components in all MDSK programs.
- Students in TESL 4204 complete coursework and clinical experiences that has them providing support to ESL students at Newell Elementary School.
- Students in Dr. Heather Coffey's LBST 2215 spend hours each spring semester tutoring middle school participants in the AVID program at Walter G. Byers School in Uptown Charlotte, volunteering at a homeless shelter, and have volunteered to help restore a greenhouse at West

Charlotte High School.

- Candidates in the PhD in the Curriculum and Instruction program spend many hours working with students and teachers at Turning Point Academy, a CMS school for students experiencing disciplinary challenges.
- Drs. Scott Kissau, Lan Kolano, Michelle Stephan, and David Pugalee implemented a \$284,000 grant-funded project that offered professional development to K-5 teachers at three high needs school with a large percentage of English language learners (Newell Elementary, Lebanon Road Elementary, and Hidden Valley Elementary).
- In LBST 2215, Dr. Heather Coffey has her students in LBST 2215 participate in service learning experiences at Room at the Inn, a temporary homeless shelter on Monday evenings from December through March of every year. Students in the course volunteer to sort and organize donations such as clothes, toiletries, and bedding each week as well as help with setting up the temporary beds and comforts of the shelter. In addition to these tasks, students help cook and serve meals, and then they eat dinner with the 14 neighbors (homeless) who are served by this shelter.
- Dr. Coffey has also established a partnership with a tutorial program that serves the needs of K-12 students living in the Robbinsdale neighborhood directly across the street from the University in the College Downs community. Each Sunday evening, members of the church pick the children up, bring them to church, feed them dinner, and tutor them in all content area. This program officially began in the fall of 2017. Dr. Coffey served on the planning committee in the spring of 2017, and planned to make this tutoring program a reality. Since its inception, students in LBST 2215 have tutored and mentored students each Sunday evening.
- Dr. Michelle Stephan actively involved in the professional development of teachers at A.L. Brown High School and Kannapolis Middle School.
- Dr. Kissau, as part of \$900,000 grant from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, has placed 23 experienced Saudi English teachers in schools across Union, Kannapolis, and Cabarrus Counties where they work alongside their American colleagues providing additional support to English language learners.
- Dr. Paul Fitchett continues to deliver the On-Site Secondary Education Program (OSSEP) at A.L Brown high school in Kannapolis. The project involves initial licensure candidates completing coursework on-site at the school and then observing and applying what they learned in high school classrooms.
- Dr. Fitchett continues to organize a tutoring program with his teacher candidates at Central Cabarrus High School as part of a embedded methods class held at the school. Examination of NC report card data indicates that CCHS student scores have consistently improved on social studies-related, NC final exams since the inception of the program.
- Dr. Spencer Salas implemented a year-long book club for Concord Middle High School teachers and administrators related to educating immigrant children. He also worked with his graduate assistant to provide writing support for English language learners in the college application process.
- Dr. Susan Harden completed and published a major technical report in 2017 for the Levine Museum of the New South, the culmination of 10 years of research with the museum.
- Dr. Susan Harden was recognized with the 2017 Leadership Charlotte Legacy Unsung Hero Award.
- Dr. Lan Kolano has developed a partnership with the Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC). *The Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC)* is a local grassroots non-profit organization that was established in 2012 to create a voice that addresses the needs of the Southeast Asian population in Mecklenburg County and surrounding areas in North Carolina. To support students academically, SEAC developed the Youth Program in 2013 to teach students about civic engagement, advocacy, and to support them academically. They currently serve 50 SEAC youth who attend West Mecklenburg, Garinger, Myers Park, and East Mecklenburg High Schools in Charlotte. Goals of the partnership include: 1) supporting immigrant youth in academic and English language development through after school tutoring during the SEAC youth program; 2) providing positive role models to immigrant youth by encouraging pursuits to higher education; and 3) working in collaboration with university partners to create spaces of understanding for teacher education candidates – to learn about the complex linguistic, academic, and social needs of the immigrant community and how to positively impact teaching practice.
- MDSK students in TESL programs partner with a small group of immigrant students (grades K-7) during the ourBRIDGE afterschool program for 1-2 hours weekly during the semester or 2-3 hours during the summer program to assist students with all academic work.
- Dr. Bettie Ray Butler and doctoral candidates in the Curriculum & Instruction program have partnered with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department to 1) engage with diverse populations; 2) gain greater understanding of policing to inform school-to-prison pipeline; 3) gain greater understanding of the criminal justice system; and 4) develop greater understanding of police-involved shootings. Activities included jail tours, guest speakers from CMPD, and participation in Policy Ride-Alongs.
- Dr. Chance Lewis helps lead Freedom Schools - an eight week, full day reading enhancement and summer activities program for kindergarten and middle school children from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- Dr. Chance Lewis works collaboratively with West Charlotte High School and various community organizations to host their WestFest Back-to-School event. Additionally, they work with community organizations to collect school supplies to support students.
- Dr. Jeanneine Jones and Dr. Tina Heafer are delivering an on-site M.Ed program in Iredell and Rowan Counties.
- Dr. Joan Lachance offered SIOP and WIDA training to teachers of English language learners in Burke and Wake Counties.
- Dr. Charles Hutchison is the Vice chair of the Board of Directors of Carolina International School.

#### Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above:: External Partnerships

Faculty Success

External Public Relations/Outreach

#### B. Examples of Data-Based Improvements During the Year:

A critical piece of the Department's efforts to build and sustain quality programs is to gather and analyze program-specific data and then make data-driven decisions. Starting in the fall of 2015, MDSK implemented official "Days Days" when all faculty members gather by program area, analyze data from the previous academic year, and discuss changes to be made to improve programs and learner outcomes. This year we have continued to refine how we go about reviewing and analyzing data. Instead of meeting as a large group, analyzing multiple sources of data, and reporting the main findings of the analysis, all in one meeting, this year, directors of the 14 different MDSK programs organized individual program meetings with affiliated faculty to analyze program-specific data, summarize findings, and make at least 1-2 data-driven decisions for the coming year. The main findings of the analysis were then reported to the entire MDSK department faculty at a spring department meeting. Listed below are 4 specific examples of data-driven decisions made as a result of last year's analysis.

**EdTPA support.** MDSK has been innovative in providing support to its candidates. As a result of such innovation and support the percentage of MDSK candidates who reach the "benchmark" edTPA passing score recommended by Pearson continues to increase. While MDSK candidates who submit complete portfolios that meet edTPA guidelines pass at increasingly high rates, a relatively large percentage of candidates are not adhering to all edTPA guidelines, and as a result, are receiving scores of Incomplete. For example, 57% of all candidates in the Graduate Certificate in foreign language education received a score of Incomplete in 2017. Of those who did submit complete portfolios, all passed the performance-based assessment. As a result, the department has taken the following steps in 2017 to prevent candidates from submitting portfolios that fail to adhere to guidelines:

1. Trained edTPA scorers in the department were enlisted to create an edTPA quiz that all candidates are required to complete in their student teaching seminar. The quiz requires candidates to read the edTPA handbook and demonstrate their knowledge of the edTPA rules and guidelines. With this knowledge, we hope fewer will fail to follow the guidelines and receive Incomplete scores.

2. As an additional step, trained edTPA scorers in the department created a checklist that seminar instructors review with candidates individually prior to submitting their edTPA portfolios. The checklist aligns with edTPA guidelines and should serve to further prevent candidates from submitting portfolios that do not follow edTPA rules.

**Classroom Management.** A year-long period of data collection and analysis to inform programmatic decision-making and enhance teacher candidate preparation has revealed an area of weakness in our initial licensure programs. This limitation runs counter to the University's status as the state's "urban research university," and the College's mission to prepare teachers to provide their students with the highest quality education possible, regardless of the students' background. According to the results of a 2013-2014 survey of UNC Charlotte College of Education graduates published by the University of North Carolina General Administration, 41% reported to be ill-prepared to maintain classroom discipline. Similar concerns were voiced at the Cato College of Education Charrette (November 15, 2016), where school and community partners came to campus to hear presentations from current candidates and recent graduates on what they learned at UNC Charlotte. Feedback from employers of our graduates has echoed these concerns. On January 20, 2017, for example, the Department of Middle, Secondary & K-12 Education invited content area experts from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) to begin conversations of what the school district needs in terms of training their teachers. The CMS Diversity Officer, explained that many of our graduates are under-prepared to address classroom management issues they encounter in urban schools. Despite this consistently reported concern, classroom management is not a component of any plan of study in MDSK initial licensure programs. In response, the department allocated resources for a faculty member with expertise in classroom management and urban education to develop a course, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management, over the summer of 2017, and to pilot the course in fall 2017. The course was intended to be delivered 100% online and at a reduced number of credit hours (2) to make it more attractive for teacher candidates. In its pilot semester, over 20 candidates completed this elective course. The department chair and faculty member who developed the course also sought and received funding to study the impact of this course on candidate self-efficacy and classroom practice. It is hoped that some version of this course will become a part of our re-designed programs. As the Department embarks on a redesign of its initial licensure programs, data are needed measuring the effectiveness of this curricular innovation in addressing the aforementioned program limitation, to determine whether or not to include the course as part of the required course sequence in the redesigned curriculum.

**Oral Proficiency.** Reflecting national trends, approximately half of all UNC Charlotte foreign language teacher candidates since 2010 have been unable to demonstrate advanced oral proficiency on a gatekeeper performance assessment (the Oral Proficiency Interview: OPI), as required by national accreditation standards. At a time of declining enrollment in teacher training programs and critical shortage of qualified foreign language teachers, we cannot afford to lose so many aspiring teachers. In response, Dr. Kissau and Dr. Davin, faculty in the foreign language teacher education program submitted and received funding to develop a convenient and cost-effective online (distance education) course to be taken by all aspiring Spanish teachers at UNC Charlotte. Interdisciplinary and interactive in nature, the course will focus on enhancing students' oral communication skills in Spanish, exposing them to the type of language skills and vocabulary they will need as K-12 Spanish teachers, and familiarizing them with the procedures and expectations of the OPI. The project has the potential to a) enhance teacher candidate preparation to complete licensure tests, b) improve graduation rates among aspiring Spanish teacher candidates, c) help to alleviate the local and national shortage of qualified Spanish teachers, and d) provide a model to other departments across campus of how to work together to enhance candidate outcomes. The course will be piloted in fall 2018, and with grant funding, Drs. Kissau and Davin will be able to analyze the impact of the new curriculum on candidate self-confidence and oral proficiency socr

**Communication across the Curriculum (CxC).** To address Student Learning Outcome 5 for undergraduates (Candidates demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication skills appropriate for educators), in MDSK we collect data on our candidates' communication skills, yet we do not actually teach in our coursework, per se, how to communicate effectively as professionals. Further, each year we have a small number of teacher candidates at both the graduate and undergraduate levels that experience communication-related dispositional challenges in their clinical experiences or internship. For these reasons, MDSK piloted Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) program in 2016/2017. The goals of our participation are 1) to prepare candidates to communicate appropriately in a professional setting; 2) prevent some of the communication-related dispositional challenges our candidates encounter each semester; and 3) better support our candidates in the successful completion of edTPA. After collecting data from students, faculty, principals, and cooperating teachers related to the type of professional communication skills our teacher candidates need to be successful in schools, we used that data to develop online modules that target those skills and that are infused across coursework in our initial licensure programs. Each module consists of a screencast video that will include examples of communication skills, interviews with school partners, supervisors, and former candidates discussing the importance of communication "best practices". Each screencast is followed by a link to a survey that candidates will complete related to what they learned from the screencast and how they used what they learned. Each screencast also describes tasks that candidates are asked to complete at their assigned clinical observation site to practice the communication skill addressed in the module. These assignments are linked directly to what would be expected at each level of the program and align with the course in which the candidate is enrolled. Finally, each course instructor in each of the first 3 semesters debriefs the clinical practice tasks with the candidates as a group following a detailed script to facilitate moderating the discussion. In fall 2017, we launched this pilot program, rolled out the modules, and hired three "Communication Consultants" with funds provided thru the Communication across the Curriculum Initiative. These consultants worked with our candidates to support their communication skills and assisted in the development of the online modules. Once the project is fully launched (fall 2018), we have a system in place which will allow us to monitor the impact this support has on candidate communication skills and edTPA scores.

#### Major Accomplishments: Discussion:

- Heather Coffey was selected as the recipient of the Bonnie E. Cone Early Career Professor in Teaching Award. This prestigious award was established in 2006 and is granted annually to just one faculty member across the university who has been awarded tenure within the last three years. The appointment is for a three-year term, and the announcement is made to the campus community at the annual university convocation.
- Dr. Susan Harden was recognized in May 2017 with a Leadership Charlotte Legacy award for Community Leadership. Heather Coffey was selected as the recipient of the Bonnie E. Cone Early Career Professor in Teaching Award. This prestigious award was established in 2006 and is granted annually to just one faculty member across the university who has been awarded tenure within the last three years. The appointment is for a three-year term, and the announcement is made to the campus community at the annual university convocation.
- Dr. Chance W. Lewis was named the first Diversity Faculty Fellow by Provost Joan Lorden.
- Dr. Scott Kissau, in collaboration with the Office of International Programs and the English Language Training Institute (ELTI), recently received a grant of more than \$900,000 from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to The United States that brought a cohort of 25 Saudi English as a foreign language teachers to campus for a year. During this time, they will take ELTI and MDSK coursework to hone their English skills and learn second language teaching strategies.
- Dr. Paul Fitchett, faculty member in the Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education since 2008, accepted the position of Assistant Dean of Teaching and Innovation in the College of Education.
- Dr. Tina Heafner was the recipient of the 2018 AERA TACTL Best Paper Award for her paper, Online and Face-to-Face Teacher Preparation Programs Comparisons.
- Dr. Jeanneine Jones was the 2018 recipient of the UNC Charlotte Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Award. The Distinguished Faculty Award honors faculty members who have brought distinction to themselves, credit to their academic college and university, and benefit to their communities through their vocation.

- Peter Johnson, a candidate in the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language (M.A.T - TESL) pro-gram, was the recent recipient of the 2017 UNC Charlotte Student Teacher of the Year Award.
- Dr. Jeanneine Jones in the Department of Middle, Secondary & K-12 Education was recently named recipient of the C. Kenneth McEwin Distinguished Service Award. This is the highest award the NC Middle Level Association gives each year. The award is presented to an individual or to a school or organization that has had a significant long-term impact on the advancement of middle-level education in North Carolina.
- Dr. Heather Coffey, faculty member in MDSK, was named the new Director of the Teaching Fellows program in the Cato College of Education.
- The M.Ed in Urban Education was approved in Curriculog and is expected to launch in Fall 2019.
- A curriculum proposal to close the M.Ed in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and to add TESL to a concentration in the M.Ed in Middle and Secondary Education was approved, as was the proposal to change the name of the degree (starting spring 2019) to the M.Ed in Curriculum & Instruction.
- The 3rd cohort of the innovative blended (online and off-site) M.Ed in Middle and Secondary Education (Rowan County) will graduate in May 2018. A 4th cohort (Iredell County) started the program in fall 2017.
- Dr. Bettie Ray Butler and Dr. Scott Kissau received a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grant for their project, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management: Preparing Teacher Candidates for K-12 Urban Classrooms, which investigates the extent a new online course (EDUC 6000) enhances teacher candidate self-efficacy to manage their classroom and improves their classroom management performance.  
Dr. Kristin Davin and Dr. Scott Kissau received a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grant for their project, Advanced Oral Proficiency: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Preparing Spanish Teachers, which investigates the extent candidate completion of an online proficiency-based course affects their confidence and proficiency to communicate in Spanish.
- Dr. Chance Lewis organized the biennial Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education Conference at Center City, drawing over 300 K-12 educators from around the country.
- Dr. Lan Kolano secured funding (\$96,000) to complete a three year evaluation of ourBRIDGE for kids.
- Bridget Hernandez, AP Science Instructor at Harper Middle College High School was recently named the 2018 Teacher of the Year. Bridget is a recent graduate of the M.Ed in Middle and Secondary Education.

**Start:** 07/01/2017

**End:** 06/30/2018

**Progress:** Ongoing or Future Activity

**Providing Department:** Middle Grades, Secondary & K-12