UNIT REPORT
Annual Highlights Report
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Reading and Elementary Education (Highlights)

NON-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS ONLY: Highlights of the Year:

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS: Goal #1:

The Department of Reading and Elementary Education had a very successful and impactful year, thus there are a number of accomplishments to report upon. Programmatic development continued to be an important activity over the past year and the initial delivery of the graduate certificate/residency program represented an important accomplishment, especially given the significant increase in enrollment that was experienced for the Fall 2019 Semester. Notably, these efforts were successful due to faculty leadership, especially Dr. Tracy Rock and Dr. Karen Cross, as well as extensive faculty involvement in the development and delivery of the courses. Furthermore, we developed the TA to Teacher program, a unique program that is focused on helping paraprofessionals currently working as teacher assistants to achieve certification within two years of starting the program.

A second significant accomplishment within the department was the culmination of the inaugural year-long internship in partnership with Kannapolis City Schools. Preliminary data has revealed the potential for the partnership to be a powerful way to structure collaborative relationships to maximize candidate development. More than 80% of the participants were offered positions in Kannapolis City Schools and 72% of the participants accepted these offers of employment. A second cohort commenced in August, 2019, and we continue to receive positive reports about candidate performance.

In 2019, the Department of Reading and Elementary Education was awarded the Provost's Excellence in Teaching Award. While this accomplishment represented the collaborative work of the department, there were also a number of individual honors that demonstrate the impactful work that faculty members are engaging in. While the list is too extensive for this report, some of these honors include Race and Social Equity Academy Faculty Fellow, CTL Faculty Fellow, CTI Fellow, Kingston Resident Director, Global Teacher Education Fellow, SGA Professor of the Year, and the 2019 AERA SIG Research in Reading and Literacy Graduate Student Award for Literacy Excellence.

The department continued to be a leader within the Cato College of Education in the implementation of practice-based teacher education. Especially noteworthy were the efforts of Drs. Polly, Colonnese, and Reinke who worked with Dr. Fitchett to provide model classroom lessons for observations of faculty from around the College. Dr. Reinke was also selected by Deans for Impact to have his instruction recorded as they sought to create a case study of innovative practice-based teacher education using rigorous instructional tasks. The videos have been published on DFI's website and are available to serve as a model for reflection for any institution interested in implementation of these practices.

Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::

 External Partnerships (internships, joint ventures, community engagement)
Student Success (Retention, graduation, high impact experiences, publications, scholarships, awards)
Faculty Success (Publications, grants, awards)
New Educational Programs
External Public Relations/Outreach

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS: Goal #2:

The Department of Reading and Elementary Education continued to address Academic Affairs Goal #2 through the active dissemination of research and scholarly activities through publications and presentations. In 2019, faculty in the department published one book, 11 book chapters, 34 articles in refereed journals, and 10 other publications (i.e., technical reports, conference proceedings). Eight of these publications included doctoral candidates. Furthermore, faculty made 20 international presentations, 39 national presentations, 11 state presentations, and 12 local presentations. Five faculty members also gave invited presentations. Twelve of the presentations were made with doctoral candidates. Finally, the department obtained funding from internal and external sources totaling $320,651.

The Department engaged various efforts to update its graduate programs. Literacy faculty engaged in revising the M.Ed. in Reading Education to address current professional practices. This work included the development of a graduate certificate in coaching. As previously noted, the revised Graduate Certificate in Elementary Education was offered for the first time in the Fall 2019 Semester. Current enrollment in this program stands at 110, up from 39 in Spring 2019. Coursework associated with the graduate certificate in Anti-Racism in Urban Education was updated to enable cross-listing with doctoral courses.

Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::

 Student Success (Retention, graduation, high impact experiences, publications, scholarships, awards)
Faculty Success (Publications, grants, awards)
New Educational Programs

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS: Goal #3:

The partnership with Kannapolis City Schools continues to thrive, with current plans in development to deliver the program for a third year. As noted previously, more than 80% of the participants in the first year were offered positions in Kannapolis City Schools and 72% of the participants accepted these offers of employment. Activities for the second cohort were abbreviated because of COVID 19, but we're engaging in data collection

now to determine if the level of success was retained. Furthermore, three other faculty are currently engaging in activities with KCS, including the development of a grant focused on helping students in the district to develop a growth mindset.

Individual faculty retain partnerships with specific schools/organizations in the area to deliver professional development, to support curriculum development, or to support specific initiatives (among other activities). Many of these activities involve candidates, from the undergraduate through the doctoral level. Examples include:

Dr. Daniel Alston - Veritas Community School, United Community Charter

Dr. Ian Binns - Cox Mill Elementary

Dr. Miranda Fitzgerald - Lake Norman Charter School

Dr. Amy Good - Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (Aspiring Teacher Curriculum Showcase)

Dr. Adriana Medina - Camino Community Center

Dr. Paola Pilonieta - Sugar Creek Charter School, Charlotte Lab School

Dr. Drew Polly - Schools in the Southwest Educational Alliance

Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::
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External Public Relations/Outreach
Examples of Data-Based Improvements :
The Department of Reading and Elementary Education directed significant focus on using data for programmatic improvement to ensure our candidates were effectively prepared to be successful on the state assessments required for licensure recommendations. EdTPA represents one of these assessments. Examining data at several points during the academic year resulted in modifications to how we prepared our candidates relative to multiple tasks/rubrics associated with edTPA. For example, due to identified challenges related to rubrics 2 and 3 on Task 1, faculty developed activities to assist the candidates in documenting their knowledge of students' cultural, personal, and academic backgrounds, and making explicit connections between that information and their learning segment. Furthermore, faculty incorporated explicit language from the edTPA prompts into the clinical assignments and reflections to allow candidates to make connections to what they are learning throughout the program. To support candidates on assessment-related rubrics, an area that has proven problematic in the past, discourse and syntax supports were introduced in lesson and unit planning to improve candidates' performance in providing feedback using assessment data (Task 3). Relative to Task 4 (mathematics), revisions were made to MAED 3224 to improve candidates' conceptual understanding of mathematics, including the introduction of portfolio assignments and the requirement that candidates video record themselves explaining mathematical concepts. Furthermore, assignments were developed in the math courses that focused on having the candidates analyze student work and write about their findings, which is consistent with the narratives necessary for edTPA.

An edTPA task force was created in 2019 to specifically examine various facets and data points associated with edTPA. As a result of this analysis, the following resources were created to support faculty and students:

- An annotated Understanding Rubric Level Progressions document that aligned each rubric with the relevant prompts, expectations for each score level, and additional comments to support candidates' understanding of edTPA expectations.
- An annotated Workshop Lesson Plan template that incorporated sections that would increase candidates' chances of success on edTPA and in the classroom.
- A scaffolded theorists database to help candidates support their instructional decisions with research.
- A scope and sequence to support faculty's understanding of how edTPA is supported throughout our programs.
- A Weebly of resources to support candidates during their process of completing edTPA, including literacy resources to support our primary grades candidates in reaching the expectations for comprehension and composition established by edTPA in classrooms where students are in early/emergent stages of literacy development.

Candidate performance on the NC Foundations of Reading remained a focus during the past year, and one key change relative to this assessment was the inclusion of READ 4161 as a required course within the program of study for the first time. Focused on data-based decision-making, the course presented an opportunity to review content introduced within previous courses on literacy and to apply the content, especially effective assessment practices, in an authentic context. This direct connection between theory and practical application was hypothesized to enable candidates to more effectively learn content that has direct relevance to the NC Foundations of Reading test, improving candidate performance. Analysis of data and candidate feedback also revealed candidates needed multiple opportunities to review content at various phases within the program. Thus, the department incorporated tasks and common assessments that are now administered across the program to provide practice for the exam and to review key test objectives. This includes embedding opportunities for candidates to take practice assessments during specific READ courses and to receive feedback from course instructors. Candidates were also given access to an annotated study resource that pulls together the outline of all the sub-areas of the test, provides Pearson's definitions for the relevant terminology (found throughout the various Pearson study resources and released test items), and aligns practice test questions for each subarea of the test. This allows candidates to review material while practicing relevant test questions. Additionally, content-specific videos were added to coursework to provide candidates with opportunities to engage with content in a

different medium. In combination, the articulated changes will provide multiple opportunities for course instructors to identify candidates who may benefit from additional resources/support prior to taking the assessment and to provide individualized supports for those students, thus impacting future performance.

Student Learning Outcome 4 (Candidates model and apply technology standards to design, implement, and assess developmentally-appropriate learning experiences to engage students and improve learning) represented an area of focus in 2019. Notably, overall proficiency on several criteria was below 40% in Spring 2019. Reflecting on this performance, faculty engaged in more deliberate efforts to familiarize candidates with the expectations associated with technology integration, including multiple opportunities to develop their understanding of instruction and assessment that incorporated technology. Faculty members also intentionally helped candidates reflect upon their performance on the technology integration assignment. As a result, scores relative to all four criteria included in the assignment rubric increased, as demonstrated through an average of 75.7% proficiency on all rubrics. There remains room for improvement, a fact acknowledged by faculty, and we will continue to examine ways to improve candidates' development in this area.

The preceding examples represent a portion of the work that involved the use of data for programmatic improvement. Importantly, the department's efforts to effectively use assessment data to enact programmatic changes resulted in recognition by the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. The Department's efforts were noted among "exemplary colleges, departments and units who have modeled the effective use of assessment results for improvement in student success" (email from the Office of Assessment and Accreditation).

Other Major Accomplishments: :

Start: 07/01/2019

End: 06/30/2020

Progress: On Track

Providing Department: Reading & Elementary ED