The faculty and staff of the Department of Secondary Education endeavor to continuously review various types of program data to ensure 1) our program continues to meet the educational needs of teacher education candidates; 2) our curriculum is consistent with current research, best practices, and legal/educational policy guidelines; and 3) our graduates have developed the skills and dispositions necessary to move learning forward for the students they serve.

To organize that work, we have created four committees. Three of these committees (Curriculum, Assessment, and Field Placement) respond to immediate issues and gather the information and data necessary to bring decision recommendations to the chair and department as a whole. A fourth committee (Continuous Improvement Study Group or CISG) serves the function of generating claims and assessments, processing data, and making recommendations for long-term revision and/or implementation. The CISG’s current work plan includes building a framing document for assessment, revising our annual assessment plan to include new program level assessments and decision points, designing relevant faculty development, and creating a plan for the implementation of the new Teacher Performance Assessment. In the end, it is expected that the CISG will recommend specific changes to the respective committees (Curriculum, Assessment, and Field Placement). These committees will then bring decision recommendations to the chair and faculty as a whole for final decisions.

Data analysis and planning related to program assessment and improvement are therefore held in multiple venues throughout the academic years, including retreats, faculty meetings, committee meetings, and ad-hoc committee meetings. A brief summary of several of those assessment activities follows.

Section 1: Program Assessment System: Transition Point Assessments

Recruitment: Over the last two years, we have been gathering quantitative and anecdotal data of our efforts to recruit members of underrepresented groups into our programs. From these data, we have recognized a need to review and update our application paperwork requirements.

Program Admission Data:
Undergraduate: For undergraduate admission, a minimum 2.75 GPA is required for the last 45 credits; for post-baccalaureate admission, a minimum 2.75 GPA is required for the last 45 credits or degree, whichever is higher. Required for both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate admission are passing scores on the WEST-B; a grade of “B” or better in an English composition course; the recommendation of the content endorsement department as determined by performance in the major; evaluation of essay and academic and professional letters of recommendation; scores of the Secondary Education faculty based on evaluation of experiences with adolescents and diverse populations, written communication skills, and two letters of recommendation (one academic and one from field).

Graduate: For admission as an MIT teacher candidate, the Graduate School and the Secondary Education Department require a minimum GPA of 3.0 on the most recent 90 quarter or 60 semester hours; GRE or MAT test (while the Graduate School does not have a required minimum score, Secondary has target scores); passing scores on the WEST-B; a grade of “B” or better in an English composition course; and three letters of recommendation (one from someone who can attest to the candidate’s academic potential in...
the endorsement subject and graduate-level courses; one from someone who can attest to the candidate’s ability to interact with middle/high-school-aged adolescents and/or diverse populations; and the third from either of the above. In addition, candidates are expected to earn a minimum 60% (usually closer to 70%) of the overall points for the group interview (evaluated by two members of the faculty); an individual interview with a different faculty member, experience with middle/high-school-aged adolescents and diverse populations (combined from application materials and interview information); and overall fitness for the profession (evaluated throughout interview).

Entry to the Field
For all students, fingerprint clearance, sexual harassment prevention training, blood-borne pathogens training, abuse reporting training and completion of course requirements are required for placement in middle-school and high-school practica.

Entry to Internship
For all students, successful completion of all courses required for certification (except student teaching); a grade of “C” or higher in all endorsement courses; passing scores on the WEST-E; a grade of “S” or higher on two practicum course evaluations; and the recommendation of the department as determined at a faculty department meeting review are required for entry to the internship. In addition, undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75; graduate students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Recognizing that course grades and course-based performance task scores (e.g., scores on unit and lesson plans, lessons to peers, readability/text evaluations, written concept and issue papers, journal reading reflections, and content informal reading inventories) did not provide data on impact on K-12 student learning, and, therefore, did not adequately provide program level assessment (PLA) data on candidates’ success at meeting Standard V criteria, eight members of the department met over the summer of 2010 to design a series of Program Level Assessment (PLA) tasks (context, planning/assessment/instruction, and professionalism/ethical practices). These tasks are being modified by the CISG and the Assessment Committee and piloted this academic year in Bellingham and Everett. Recognizing that reflective writings (e.g., introductory essays and practicum journals) had limited utility in assessing how well candidates met targeted standards for reflective practice, faculty are piloting a rubric for measuring the efficacy of integrated reflective writing. To address the needs in gathering data on professional growth (dispositions), a professional dispositions assessment, developed by another department, is also being piloted on a limited basis.

Exit from Internship
Passing IDES scores and the State Pedagogy Assessment are required to successfully complete and exit the internship. Faculty have become increasingly aware that program level assessment would improve were we to spend more time as a group, assessing scores on IDES midterm and final evaluations.

Program Completion
For all students, all courses required for certification (including successful student teaching); a grade of “C” or higher in all endorsement and Secondary Education courses; and the internship survey are required to complete the program. Undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students must maintain a GPA of 2.75; graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0. In addition, MIT program completion requires successful completion of SEC 691. Disaggregation of internship survey data (undergrad/post-baccalaureate, and graduate) provides valuable data on program strengths and areas for improvement.

After Program Completion Follow-Up
Follow-up surveys with graduates and employers are conducted: EBI Teacher Education Alumni and Principal Surveys in the past, and the Woodring Intern Survey. EBI survey results indicate that the
respondents were satisfied with the teacher education program at WWU. The survey did not provide information specific to the Secondary Education Department, so the utility of the information is limited.

**Section II: Use of Data for Improvements of Programs and/or Operations**

**Field Placements**

During 2009-2010, the Secondary Education Department received multiple sources of data indicating the need to examine the quality of candidate field placements; the nature of the outcomes of those experiences; and the means by which those experiences are assessed for meeting standards. For example, on the Internship Survey, 26% of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate candidates and 32% of graduate candidates reported “not at all” or “very little” to the prompt that their teaching skills were enhanced through the experiences in their practica. Twenty percent of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate candidates and 40% of graduate candidates reported “not at all” or “very little” to the prompt that they were able to collaborate with mentors and supervisors to reflect on and improve their teaching. In the open-ended comments section, one candidate wrote, “My practica experiences were mostly observation-based, so there was not much opportunity to work with students.” Another candidate commented, “I felt the practica was ineffective, many times all you do is observe, or you are not in a classroom, but more tutoring, which is nice, but at the end of the experience it would be more effective to be in classrooms that could use students and help them get ready for their student teaching experience.” Yet another commented, “The practica experience was simply horrible. A two hour commute via shuttle bus to spend time in a class with a teacher who had his students watch movies and showed little interest in the value of art (my endorsement area)…” And finally, this comment, “The practica could have been more beneficial if the expectations were more structured and we actually participated in the grading/planning process.” Examination of course and instructor evaluations (see SharePoint documents) repeated similar concerns. In fact, a significant number of students enrolled in our Peer Teaching Laboratory classes lamented that as valuable as it was to teach sample lessons to peers under the supervision of a veteran practitioner, that supervised teaching experiences with K-12 students would be far more valuable.

Utilizing these data, during the Spring of 2010, Secondary Faculty formed a committee which subsequently provided a) learning content alignment (between concurrent courses and practica); b) placement expectations (grade level, content area, group size); and c) candidate outcome expectations (i.e., what candidates will have the opportunity to do and what standards they will be expected to meet) during placements. During the Summer of 2010 (made possible by the subsequent retirement of a field supervisor), Secondary hired a National Board Certified practicum coordinator with the charge to work with the Office of Field Experiences (OFE), the Secondary Field Placement Committee (FPC), and the CISG to enlist a cadre of highly qualified practitioners for field placements, effective Spring 2011. Members of the CISG are moving forward towards the goal of providing collaborative partnerships with this cadre of teachers with an emphasis on collecting evidence of meeting the new practicum expectations. In November 2010, the FPC brought forward and the department faculty approved a plan to combine the Peer Teaching Lab and Secondary Practicum classes for candidates attending the Bellingham campus, as a combined 40-50 hour placement in the high school classroom.

**Advising, Case Management, and Criteria for Advancement**

During 2009-2010, the Secondary Education Department received multiple sources of data indicating the need to examine the advising and case-management relationships between faculty and teacher candidates with an eye towards improving decision making and supporting documentation of how candidates meet or don’t meet criteria for advancement. For example, on the Internship Survey, 17% of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate candidates and 4% of graduate candidates responded “seldom or never” to the prompt, “How useful was the advising you received from Woodring College of Education.” Twenty-seven percent and 19%, respectively, responded to this question with “about half the time.” In response to these data and in an attempt to solidify advising relationships between faculty and candidates, the department modified its
orientation format. Faculty now meet with their advisees during this orientation and establish appointments for further discussion and support within the first three weeks of the quarter, with the plan of study due by the 9th week. Matters of concern that arise within the Secondary Department office (e.g., attendance issues in classes, concerns expressed from practicum experiences) are referred to the appropriate advisor for follow-up. Matters of professional conduct or concern are also referred to the advisors.

In 2010, the department revamped its “Student Performance Evaluation: Mentoring and Due Process” document (contained in the student handbook) in order to facilitate early identification and resolution of areas of concern. (An area of concern is defined as a behavior or set of behaviors that indicate a candidate is not meeting standards or the professional code of ethics to the point that they may be at risk of not succeeding in the program.) This process is progressive and includes a) mentoring; b) faculty referrals; and, c) review-team conferences. The current and preceding chairs provided data revealing that faculty frequently noted concerns at the “eligibility for internship” decision point, with little or no documentation of interaction with the teacher candidate prior to this decision point. Faculty expressed concerns about their roles as prescribed in the “Mentoring and Due Process” policy and subsequently decided they would benefit from training in case management with a specific emphasis on what the role of the advisor should be at early decision points. Furthermore, faculty decided they wanted training in the role of the instructor of classes in which the teacher candidates’ behaviors led to concerns in the first place. The Dean of Students office was contacted, and an introductory training on case management will be provided by a member of that office on December 3rd, with follow-up sessions scheduled in the quarters to follow.

Admissions Application Paperwork:
Although data indicate an increase in the number of applicants from underrepresented groups to our programs (currently 25%, up from 11%), our goal is to have 35% from under-represented groups—the same percentage as the students in many of the school districts we serve. Secondary’s representatives to Woodring’s Recruitment and Retention Task Force recommended that we re-evaluate the format and prompts of the application paperwork. We have initiated that process.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Wolpow, Professor and Chair
Secondary Education
January 5, 2011