

Teachers College of San Joaquin

External Review

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External Review

To: Dr. Gary Dei Rossi, President

Dr. Sylvia Turner, Accreditation Liaison Officer

Dr. Diane Carnahan, Dean

Re: External Review of Teacher's College of San Joaquin

Evaluator: Michael Elium, Ed.D.

This report was prepared at the request of Dr. Diane Carnahan and Dr. Sylvia Turner to meet the WASC accreditation requirements.

The organization of this report is guided by the following elements of the TCSJ program review:

- A. Mission, Core Learning Outcomes and Strategic Plan
 - 1. Has TCSJ articulated its mission, Core Learning Objectives (CLOs), goals and objectives?
 - 2. Are they realistic and appropriate?
 - 3. Will the strategic plan enable TCSJ to accomplish their priorities?

- B. Program Capacity
 - 1. Does the program have adequate facilities, equipment, resources, and support services?
 - 2. Are the faculty and staff well qualified to perform their duties?

- C. Methods and Procedures to Assess TCSJ's Program
 - 1. Has TCSJ clearly articulated and applied its methods and procedures for program review?
 - 2. Does the program review adequately assess TCSJ's effectiveness?

- D. Overall Health of the Program (Strengths and Weaknesses)

- E. Action Recommendations
 - 1. How could the program be improved over the next five years?

Data and Information Employed/Reviewed

The following documents were provided to the reviewer by TCSJ:

The array of WASC review documents.

External Review

The following personnel were interviewed by the reviewer:

Dr. Diane Carnahan, Dean

Dr. Sylvia Turner, Director of Graduate Studies and Research

Kathy Athey, Coordinator of BTSA and Induction

Elizabeth Asplund, Coordinator of Practicum Supervisors

Stephanie Hitchcock, Coordinator of IMPACT credentialing

Lisa Neugebauer, Registrar

Pam Dunham, Director of Educational Leadership/Administrative Credentials

Louise Gammon, Credential Advisor

Leslie Pombo, Faculty

Veronica Tigert, Faculty

Katie Burns, Faculty

Jeannine Huffman, Faculty

Dr. Cid Gunston-Parks, Faculty

Area A: Mission, Core Learning Outcomes and Strategic Plan

1. Has TCSJ articulated its mission, Core Learning Objectives (CLOs), goals and objectives?
2. Are they realistic and appropriate?

TCSJ's mission:

To develop a workforce of teachers and school leaders who are comfortable with collaboration, understand the need to prepare students for both work and higher education and have the skills to develop, implement and sustain innovative educational ideas.

TCSJ exemplifies the notion of learning opportunities that are rigorous, provide relevance, are relationship-driven and incorporate reflection for professional growth.

The leadership team has carefully taken the organization's mission and articulated it into a well-designed program where assessment and continuous improvement are integral as a way of doing

External Review

business toward achieving the CLOs. Interviews with each level of employee revealed that all were thoroughly versed in the assessment process and how it was developed. It was clear that the leadership team had led the development process through a series of retreats, and has engaged in detailed work sessions with faculty to take each syllabus and ensure that the learning outcomes are linked to the content and assignments in the class. Following that process, an overall view was taken to ensure that all required elements of each program were addressed.

The core learning objectives are both realistic and appropriate for TCSJ and their mission.

3. Will the strategic plan enable TCSJ to accomplish their priorities?

The leadership of TCSJ has realistically examined their place in their geographic market niche and has put concrete steps in place to solidify their ability to meet the needs of that market.

The Strategic Plan has three priorities:

- 1) Academic Engagement for Student Success
- 2) Operations and Governance
- 3) Fiscal Stability

Within each target specific activities are outlined, with timelines through 2017.

Academic Engagement for Student Success covers their master's concentrations and credential programs; faculty professional development and evaluation; research and publications; technology; and partnerships with business and industry

Operations and Governance addresses staffing; faculty diversity; facilities; library resources; recruitment; and marketing.

Fiscal Stability covers a plan to reduce financial reliance on the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) while increasing reserves and building grant, foundation, and revenue generating partnerships.

The strategic plan contains the guiding points for forecasting program development needs, financial viability, and infrastructure development. What is impressive is the building of the organization's infrastructure to enable TCSJ to become permanent and sustainable, and able to weather political shifts in teacher preparation.

Area B: Program Capacity

1. Does the program have adequate facilities, equipment, resources, and support services?
2. Are the faculty and staff well qualified to perform their duties?

External Review

A tour of the facilities was conducted. Classrooms are of standard college size, many with the ability to hold up to 30-40 students, furnished by tables and chairs. This arrangement allows for easy movement of tables for collaborative learning processes. Classes are equipped with installed overhead LCD projectors with the ability to connect with the laptop, tablet, or notebook computer of any instructor, either wirelessly or via cables. Images are projected onto an erasable white board.

Technical assistance is available from any of several individuals at the TCSJ front desk, several of whom have been cross-trained for this purpose. Laptops may also be checked out from the front desk.

Each classroom has a cabinet fully stocked with supplies (colored markers, chart paper, stapler, dry erase markers, post it notes, computer cabling and connectors for PC and Mac). Classroom space is also used in a SJCOE building across the east parking lot.

There are meeting and conference rooms and convertible spaces near the administration and faculty offices. Each person is easily accessible for quick drop-in conversations, planning, and problem solving which contributes to collegiality and morale. When large scale training events are required, the relationship with SJCOE allows use of large scale training halls, fully equipped with technology. The largest of those is to the west, within walking distance.

Parking is free of charge to students and visitors and is more than adequate, with a large lot to the south, to accommodate current enrollment and projected growth. This lot is shared, during day hours, by SJCOE office and a charter school staff. 24-hour security is provided and the lots are maintained and well lit. With TCSJ's class schedule beginning at 4:30 in most cases and ending by 10:00 at the latest, the lot is available during all TCSJ's highest times of need.

The category of faculty and staff qualifications also relates to adequacy of resources. TCSJ is able to collaborate with the human resources office of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, which provides with them with a full complement of services; from recruitment, fingerprinting, document processing and maintenance, benefits, training, and legal support for disputes.

This level of support directly and positively impacts the quality of the personnel talent pool available for TCSJ. SJCOE routinely recruits throughout the region and as an employer, offers a reputation for stability, competitive compensation, and attractive fringe benefits.

In terms of qualifications to perform their duties, personnel categories exist with the SJCOE that correspond or compare to equivalent positions in TCSJ. Therefore recruitment can occur via employee transfers from other SJCOE units, allowing TCSJ to benefit from experienced employees, as well as from the considerable recruiting avenues and reach of SJCOE. For example TCSJ has positions of Director I and Coordinator I & II, which are categories that have

External Review

been used throughout SJCOE's programs historically. It has been helpful for TCSJ to "plug into" that infrastructure.

For full time faculty and leadership positions, TCSJ has matched their roles and expectations carefully with other institutions of higher education, therefore requiring similar to identical qualifications. For example the top leadership of TCSJ holds doctoral degrees in education. Most faculty members are practicing educational professionals, teaching for TCSJ in an adjunct capacity, yet they can be described as affiliate faculty because they teach repeatedly for TCSJ, attend faculty meetings, are involved in the assessment and alignment process, and reflect the culture, values, and mission of TCSJ. For example those teaching courses in the master's degree program concentrations hold a master's degree at minimum, and have significant & current experience and accomplishment as educators in the public education sector.

The leadership team has projected a number of new positions that will be required to meet the target objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Those projected additional positions include:

Administration

President (a full time President will be needed per WASC recommendation)

Technology and Program Resources Manager

IMPACT Teacher Credentialing

Director of Teacher Preparation – Director I

A second Coordinator of Practicum Supervision, resulting in one for special education and one for general education

A second IMPACT Student Advisor, resulting in one for special education and one for general education

Stanislaus County Office of Education Program Coordinator – Coordinator II (2015-16) for on-site administration of the expansion opportunity to Stanislaus County

The strategic plan contains the guiding points for forecasting program development needs, financial viability, and infrastructure development. What is impressive is the building of the organization's structural capacity to enable TCSJ to become permanent and sustainable, and able to weather political shifts in teacher preparation

External Review

Administrative Assistant

Graduate Studies

Coordinator of Advanced Educational Programs – Coordinator II

Staff Secretary

Admissions

FAFSA Technician

Credential Technician

Administrative Assistant n

Area C. Methods and Procedures to Assess TCSJ's Program

1. Has TCSJ clearly articulated and applied its methods and procedures for program review?
2. Does the program review adequately assess TCSJ's effectiveness?

The leadership of TCSJ has gone to great lengths to design, outline, and implement its program review process. It is clear from the individual interviews that everyone can describe the review process and procedures and their respective roles.

The schematic overview of their program review cycles, A-D, is clear and is actually in progress. A review of their documents validates TCSJ's clarity and fidelity to an articulated review process. Interviews with all levels of employees revealed a grassroots level of knowledge of the review and their roles. At staff meetings, syllabi were analyzed to ensure coherence with Core Learning Outcomes and thoroughness of depth. Each staff member, from administration to adjunct faculty members had participated in these meetings and all were familiar with the rubrics for analyzing syllabi.

Data from numerous sources, all outlined in their review documents, were analyzed to make adjustments on a continuous basis. TCSJ's strength is its "ear to the ground" relationship with the front lines of educational policy and practice. The benefit of having practicing educators as the core of the faculty base allows TCSJ to avoid being engaged in ideological silos that wax and wane in the field of education. School districts must respond promptly to legislative mandates and class action lawsuits in adjusting practices. TCSJ will be able to receive the benefit of the new practices via its faculty without waiting for the secondary cycle of conference presentations and journals that are often one to two years behind events in the field. To its credit, TCSJ has embraced this strength as its model.

External Review

The leadership team, administrative staff, and faculty use considerable candor when addressing the challenges of serving students in California's central valley. They remain totally grounded in their service and in their self-assessment. The program review process more than adequately addresses TCSJ's effectiveness. It is their ability to be nimble in responding to the educational needs of school districts that makes them the program of choice for districts in the area for both teachers and administrators.

Area D. Overall Health of the Program (Strengths and Weaknesses)

Strengths:

- Affiliation with San Joaquin County Office of Education and its reputation for entrepreneurship and innovation, financial support, and established administrative functions
- Financial foundation and growing reserve
- Reputation and relationship with area school districts
- Faculty and administration have direct and current experience with the demographics of the region
- Affordable tuition
- Payroll deduction arrangements with school districts to facilitate the payment of tuition by students, who are employees in the region
- Program schedules that cater to the adult learner and the adult career changer
- Easy access from highway 99 with no delays in finding parking
- Understanding by leadership of the importance in establishing a market presence
- Understanding by leadership that programs preparing teachers and administrators must be grounded in practicality vs. theory
- Willingness by leadership to send faculty to conferences
- Willingness by leadership to pay for webinars
- Willingness by leadership to purchase resources to support students and program.
- Core Learning Outcomes are evident in every syllabus
- The leadership has the organization, and everyone in it, "on the same page"
- Enthusiastic, devoted, and hardworking employees
- Strong morale
- Willingness to confront any shortcomings and move to address them
- Being an organization solely dedicated to preparing teachers, and being housed within an educational organization (SJCOE), facilitates decision making for programmatic efforts.
- Approval processes are quicker and more streamlined with everyone in the same field of endeavor, speaking the same language
- Being newer to the higher education scene means they are not bound by tradition or institutional restraints. As a result they are developing their IHE culture.
- Relationships with school districts results in recruiting pipelines

External Review

- Partnerships with University of the Pacific, a local private university with a national reputation. Innovative practices like “program pricing” for reduced tuition for a master’s degree in special education and doctor of education, both meeting classes at TCSJ facilities, enhances recruiting, resources, and pedagogy available to students
- Relationships with school districts results in an extensive range of field placement options

Weaknesses:

- Regional, five-eight county emphasis
- Majority of employees are from the immediate area
- Majority of faculty have experience in local schools only
- Faculty members who hold a full time job as a practitioner may have less time to devote to teaching TCSJ courses and for student contact out of class time.
- All students served are local, which could result in discussions and collaborative practices that are based solely on local experiences

Area E. Action Recommendations

1. How could the program be improved over the next five years?

Some strengths are also weaknesses, i.e. currently practicing educators must be local in order to teach in an adjunct role while practicing full-time as an educator.

TCSJ should expand its employee recruiting efforts more widely geographically. Continuing to expand its market presence, as is being done in Stanislaus County, will potentially generate more income which can be employed to recruit employees from greater distances. Bring in “guest” instructors from other regions, both physically and via distance learning.

Expand online infrastructure support and offerings, which will potentially increase the variety of students reached and the variety and quality of faculty available.

Investigate a data management system to support administrative processes such as admissions, graduation tracking and credential management.

Continue to streamline by separating from the geographically distant satellite programs begun by prior administration, in a different policy era. The need for the separation was identified by the current leadership, the separation is in process, and will allow for more quality control over remaining programs.

Continue to keep the tuition affordable.

External Review

Expand its sources of financial aid to students. This has been identified as a need by the current leadership.

Retain/elevate the current leadership team. Drs. Diane Carnahan and Sylvia Turner are providing dynamic and solid leadership to the institution. Their combination of vision, attention to logistics, and collegiality has created a positive morale within the organization as well as a willingness of other organizations to partner and work with them.

Add additional management level positions. As the organization grows in enrollment, breadth of programs, and data reporting complexity, additional personnel at this level will be necessary for expansion and ensuring integration and quality.

Work with SJCOE for additional classroom space. TCSJ is in the position to have access to additional classroom space without the capital investment required of unaffiliated institutions.

Remain true to its market niche. The adult career changer, in the field of education, is voting with their presence, to be in traditional in-person classes. TCSJ should expand its online and hybrid offerings, while being careful not to rush to the online marketplace that might hinder the interpersonal level of contact and atmosphere that exists.

Retain the friendly and supportive atmosphere that characterizes the entire building every evening. The ample seating and work space in the lobby areas contributes to collaboration and support.

Continue to follow WASC recommendations for a separate governing board of directors and for increased independence, but not separation, from SJCOE.

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