IU Bloomington School of Education

SHORT-TERM TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS, IN RESPONSE TO GRADPACT

The following recommendations have been widely discussed within the School of Education. They are the result of a rather concentrated process that began in January, 1995, at the end of the School of Education retreat on teacher education. At that time volunteers in each program are were asked to undertake an examination of their program so that it would comply with what was then dubbed the "Indiana 4-Year Path" (now known as "GRADPACT"); this option allows incoming first-year students to select particular programs that Indiana University will guarantee they will be able to complete within four years. The School of Education recommendations generated through this process were presented by the program area representatives at an open meeting held on March 3, and subsequently circulated to all faculty members, all teacher education associate instructors, and selected undergraduate students for their feedback, questions, and alternative suggestions. The numerous and sometimes animated feedback that resulted formed the basis for a second open meeting, held on March

At that meeting, a consensus was reached about the short-term changes that will allow our programs to respond to the GRADPACT initiative. Thus, it is fair to say that these recommendations have been aired widely, and reflect a quite strong consensus about what short term recommendations should be forwarded in conjunction with this initiative.

The recommendations included below were approved by unanimous vote of the Teacher Education Council at their meeting of April 12, 1995.

However, it must be emphasized that virtually every member of the teacher education community would prefer not to make these short term changes. While GRADPACT did provide an incentive to continue our efforts at reform, the particular changes recommended here represent only the beginning of what will be undertaken to make sure our programs provide the best possible context in which to prepare public school teachers. The process of coming together to discuss options, share ideas and perceptions, discuss current offerings, etc., was important and productive. Yet no one has been enthusiastic about the need to change rather complex programs so quickly, especially given the general review of teacher education that is underway, and the likelihood that additional, more comprehensive recommendations for change will be forthcoming in the not too distant future (i.e., probably within the next two years). Therefore, these recommendations must be seen as provisional, created by external constraints that are, in important respects, at odds with the schedule of events within the School of Education. They are presented as stopgap measures only, almost surely to be superseded or amended by the processes of change that are continuing.

1. Art Education

It is recommended that the Secondary Visual Arts Program be deleted from our offerings. There are two interrelated reasons for this recommendation. First, employment opportunities for graduates of the secondary art program are very limited, given the preferences of school districts for K-12 teachers. Second, this option has not been selected by any student during the last five years. Moreover, it is worth noting that the all-grades program requires only four additional courses beyond those required for the secondary program.

1. Special Education

The current all-grade program in special education includes a total of 129 credit hours. To comply with the GRADPACT initiative, it is recommended that:

* 1. the current requirement for an area of concentration in courses in the College of Arts and Sciences, totaling 18-20 credit hours, be eliminated.
  2. students be required to complete 13 credit hours of electives from the College of Arts and Sciences or any of the other units of the University, including the School of Education.

These changes would mean that the all-grades program in special education would total 124 credit hours, distributed as follows:

1. 63 credit hours in professional education.
2. 48 credit hours in general education/College of Arts and Sciences (15 in language arts, 5 in fine arts, 7 in math, 12 in natural sciences, and 9 in social studies).
3. 13 hours of electives.

Students could still elect to complete an 18 hour area of concentration, or the courses required to complete another endorsement area. Those options would not, however, fall within the guarantees for graduation that are a part of the GRADPACT initiative.

Ill. Early Childhood Education

No course deletions or new course additions are recommended for this program, since it requires only 124 credit hours to complete. However, there have been problems in students actually graduating within the typical four year time frame. These problems can apparently be attributed to 1) the timing of students' decisions to enter the program, 2) general education course availability, and 3) professional education course availability. The first two problems should be dealt with through the general arrangements that will be a part of the GRADPACT agreements, which will apparently be worked out this summer. In addition, it is recommended that the required professional education courses be offered every semester. This should

eliminate the remaining problem students have had in completing the Early Childhood Program within four years. Thus, E330, Infant Learning Environments, would be offered both fall and spring terms, rather than fall only; E337 would be offered both fall and spring semesters, rather than spring only. E335 would continue to be offered both semesters.

1. Secondary Education

Current secondary education program requirements range from 124 to (in the cases of science and social studies) 130 credit hours. The recommended changes in secondary education allow for a maximum of 128 total semester hours.

Since social studies is a College of Arts and Sciences program, the School of Education need not concern itself with its conformity with the requirements of GRADPACT.

The secondary science program, which totals 130 credit hours, includes a 5 semester hour course in methods of teaching (M446). This requirement was created to meet the state certification requirements and the National Science Teachers Association professional standards. Thus it is recommended that M446 remain at 5 credits. This would mean the total semester hours required in science education would be 129, including 4 electives. Given the total credit hour requirement, and the fact that very few students decide as freshmen to complete a program in science education {reportedly, this figure is approximately 1 every 5 years), it is recommended that the secondary science education program be removed from the list of programs that will be affiliated with GRADPACT.

To accomplish the reductions necessary in total hour requirements for the other program areas, and to increase the number of electives for students, it is recommended that:

* 1. for each of our programs in secondary education, the general education requirement be reduced from 45 to 40 credit hours; the new total meets the requirements for general education spelled out in State Rules 46 and 47.
  2. the professional education sequence total 19 credit hours, with M201 being exclusively offered for 1 credit.
  3. student teaching be offered for 10 semester hours for all secondary education students.
  4. students be allowed elective credits, ranging from 14 to 19 credits.

This would mean that secondary education programs in the School of Education, excluding science, would total 128 semester hours (40 in general education, 33 in professional education courses, from 36 to 41 credits in the major, and 14 to 19 credits of electives).

1. Elementary Education

Currently, the program in elementary education includes a total of 129 required semester hours, with no electives. To reduce this program to 128 semester hours, and to increase student flexibility, in part by adding electives, it is recommended that:

* 1. H340, Education and American Culture (3 semester hours), offered by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the School of Education, currently required in the professional education component, be added to the requirements in general education/social studies; that category of requirements would then total 12 semester hours. This would in turn decrease the "pre-admission" requirements in professional education to 13 semester hours, compared with the current total of 16 hours.
  2. the "required electives" (currently totaling 4 semester hours) in general education be eliminated.
  3. that M333 (2 semester hours) and M323 (2 semester hours) be counted as fine arts credits in general education, raising that requirement to 9 semester hours.
  4. that E328 (3 semester hours) be counted as meeting the science general education requirement, raising that total to 15 semester hours.
  5. that the area of concentration requirement in general education be changed from 18 to 15 semester hours.

The net effect of these recommendations would be to increase the general education requirement from 70 to 73 semester hours; to reduce the professional education requirement from 59 to 49 semester hours, and to increase electives from 0 to 6 semester hours. The new program would, then, total 128 semester hours.