

AURORA UNIVERSITY

Aurora, Illinois

2003-2004 Title II Report

Mission:

Aurora University is an independent, comprehensive university offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and specialized courses, with more than 40 undergraduate majors and 9 graduate programs. Reorganized from a school to a college in 1996 to prepare competent and qualified teachers and administrators for the state and the nation, the College of Education offers undergraduate and master's degrees leading to elementary and secondary initial certification, master's degrees in teaching and educational leadership, and a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction, and educational administration. Aurora University is "An Inclusive Community Dedicated to the Transformative Power of Learning."

Teacher Preparation Programs:

Aurora University offers initial teacher certification through either a bachelor's degree program or a Master of Arts in Teaching with certification in both elementary and secondary education. The secondary majors are biology, English, mathematics, social studies/history, health education (6-12 certification), and physical education (6-12 and K-12 certification.) In addition to its initial teacher certification preparation programs, Aurora University offers graduate level preparation for certification in Educational Administration (principal and superintendent) and School Social Work. The University also offers a program to prepare teachers for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification.

Student Characteristics:

In the College of Education, 96% of undergraduates are Illinois residents of which 69% are traditional college age, with 90% attending full-time. In the graduate program, approximately 36% of the students attend part-time. Twenty one percent of all students in the teacher preparation programs are minorities. Extensive financial aid packages are available to qualified applicants.

Admission Requirements:

Admission to Teacher Education: For Bachelor's and Master's programs with initial certification, candidates must have passing scores from the Illinois Basic Skills Test, complete a written essay, pass a criminal background check, and have a minimum 2.75 GPA. Master's program also requires 3 letters of recommendation.

Admission to Student Teaching: Candidates must have completed all courses, undergraduates must have a 2.75 and graduates must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA, passed the appropriate Content Area Test(s), completed the application including 4 letters of recommendation, and received approval from the Initial Certification Program Committee.

Accreditation:

Aurora University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to offer baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. All of the University's professional preparation programs are approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Teacher Education Vision:

The Vision Statement for Teacher Preparation: "Achieving excellence in teaching and learning through collaboration in professional education communities." In this vision, the distinctive feature of teacher preparation at Aurora University is collaboration. It is on-going learning, in environments where everyone involved is invested in the process and is accountable to it, and where each brings his/her expertise and knowledge to contribute to the personal, professional, and academic development of everyone in the teacher preparation unit. Collaboration between teacher education and public schools improves teaching and learning for the benefit of all students and ultimately society. Excellent teaching provides an environment that is inclusive of all learners' needs and aims to develop each student personally and academically. Everyone in the school who works with children is considered a teacher in this sense.

Excellence in learning is demonstrated when professional educators utilize a variety of effective instructional strategies to provide positive, safe, and caring environments, to create effective curricula, to work collaboratively with parents, the community and other professionals to ensure all children reach their potential.

Best Practices:

- Close collaborative relationships and formal partnerships with area public schools integrate classroom experiences into teacher preparation and make possible an intense two-three year clinical immersion program for selected candidates.
- A five-year Total Quality Education grant through the Associated Colleges of Illinois funds an initiative to improve math and science teacher instruction and P-12 student achievement in high needs schools. Aurora University is working collaboratively with East Aurora School District 131 to implement best teaching practices in the K-12 setting and to prepare teachers to meet the needs of children in schools classified as "high need."
- On-campus teacher preparation is integrated into the Fearn, Freeman, and Greenman Elementary (public) Partnership Schools in West Aurora School District 129.
- The content of field experiences at Aurora University is a planned and systematic curriculum of practice designed to enhance classroom learning and the growth of the student teacher. Carefully selected and trained cooperating teachers and university supervisors/advisors provide opportunities for systematic feedback on candidate performance with opportunities for candidate reflection and improvement.

Notable Features and Accomplishments:

- An Institute for Collaboration at Aurora University will open in January 2006. A primary goal of the Institute is to house the College of Education, a West Aurora School District 129 Partnership School for 200 elementary school students and several community-based organizations.
- The La Aurora program, a federally funded project, expanded this past year to include Elgin School District U-46. They joined East Aurora School District 131 and West Aurora School District 129 in a partnership with Aurora University designed to train bilingual educators. The grant provides an opportunity for teachers and school employees to acquire Illinois teacher certification and ESL/BE approval. Forty-three teachers in this program will graduate in May 2005 with their Illinois Teacher Certification.

**Program Information for Aurora University
2003-2004**

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| S.1 Total number of students admitted into teacher preparation, all specializations, in academic year 2003-2004 | 709 |
| S.2 Number of students in supervised student teaching in academic year 2003-2004 | 192 |
| S.3 Number of faculty members who supervised student teachers: | |
| S.3A Full-time faculty in professional education | 1 |
| S.3B Part-time faculty in professional education but full-time in the institution | 0 |
| S.3C Part-time faculty in professional education, not otherwise employed by the institution | 17 |
| S.4 Total faculty student teaching supervisors | 18 |
| S.5 Student teacher/faculty ratio | 10.7:1 |
| S.6A The average number of student teaching hours per week | 40 |
| S.6B The total number of weeks of supervised student teaching required | 16 |
| S.7 Average total number of hours required | 640 |