

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT FRANCIS

Joliet, Illinois

2003-2004 Title Report

Mission:

Founded in 1920, the University of St. Francis is a Catholic, Franciscan institution offering undergraduate and graduate programs. The university is a private, comprehensive, coeducational institution, serving approximately 1,300 students at its main campuses in Joliet, Illinois, and more than 3,000 students at off-campus sites throughout the country. St. Francis has a long history and experience in preparing educators, and has gained a reputation for providing an academically strong education programs based on a clear philosophy of education that values the individual.

Teacher Preparation Programs:

The University of St. Francis offers 6 baccalaureate and 6 graduate-level certification programs leading to state certification. The mission of the College of Education at the University of St. Francis is to prepare competent and caring educators who understand students, serve the community and develop professionally to become ethical decision-makers and leaders. A strong liberal arts core integrates sound foundational theory, research-based best practices, and authentic field experiences to meet the challenges of an increasingly diverse student population in a changing world. This professional preparation of teachers emphasizes the Franciscan tradition of peace and tranquility, love for others, worth of the individual and dedication to service. These qualities are embodied in the guiding institutional values of respect, compassion, service and integrity. On November 15, 2000, the College of Education completed the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) accreditation review process. The college met all 21 of the rigorous National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. The team noted particular strengths in the careful articulation from the conceptual framework through assessment and the high quality field experiences provided to students. The team also complimented the unit on a well-developed sense of professional community, scholarship, and intellectual vitality.

Student Characteristics:

The College of Education serves more than 700 students. Approximately one-third of the undergraduate students are age 23 or older. Graduate certification programs attract career-changers from diverse fields including engineering, business, law enforcement and science. Last academic year, the average GPA on a 4.0 scale in the College of Education for undergraduate students was 3.33 and 3.95 for graduate students. Thirty student teachers from the College of Education were nominated for an outstanding student teacher award.

Admission Requirements:

Admission to Teacher Education Program: candidates must demonstrate proficiency in reading, mathematics, grammar, and writing, and pass the state's "Basic Skills Test" prior to admission to the program. *Admission to Student Teaching:* Candidates must demonstrate competence in various major, professional and liberal education areas and successfully complete methods courses with extensive corresponding field experiences with favorable performance evaluations.

Accreditation:

The University of St. Francis is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and all of the College of Education's teacher preparation programs are approved by the State Teacher Certification Board and the Illinois State Board of Education.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Teacher Education Vision:

The College of Education's conceptual framework is defined in terms of the responsibilities to its students, its community, and the teaching profession, and the framework's message communicates the nature of their interconnectedness. Although it serves preservice and inservice teachers from a variety of backgrounds, the College of Education has an expectation that all students will reach beyond the boundaries of their own life experiences in ways that correspond to the Franciscan ideal of service to society or community. The programs nurture a vision of professional development that includes preservice candidates, their K-12 students and the communities which embrace them both. The steps from preservice to inservice teacher share a continuum of learning that focuses on student understanding, professional development, and community service. This emphasis on preparation has led to the development of the unit's theme: **Understanding Students, Serving the Community, and Finding Our Professional Selves.** Scholarship incentive programs such as the Golden Apple and Franciscan Challenge Awards reflect USF's commitment to the teaching profession.

Best Practices:

- Candidates participate in developmental field experiences in local classrooms with close university supervision and support. Candidates complete three to four extensive, structured and supervised field experiences including student teaching.
- Small class size allows for personal attention and assistance and a student-centered approach that fosters a community of learners. Faculty who have extensive K-12 classroom experience integrate leading-edge technology and model best practices so that learning is stimulating, engaging, and applicable to "real-world" classroom.
- All candidates develop a portfolio that documents experiences throughout the teacher-preparation program. The purpose of the portfolio is to display evidence of knowledge and skills gained through coursework and field experience. Entries include but are not limited to samples of student work, lesson plans and material, videotaped teaching sessions, and personal reflections on the teaching profession. The completed portfolio provides candidates with authentic examples of their personal teaching style and is used during the interview process as candidates enter the profession.

Notable Features and Accomplishments:

- The College of Education has an excellent reputation with area schools that leads to USF candidates being highly desirable as evidenced by excellent placement rates.
- The College of Education is intensely involved with the local community schools and teachers in field experience and staff development partnerships. This past academic year USF students participated in field experiences in over 130 different schools. The college has unique partnerships with, among others, Troy District 30C, Plainfield District 202, Lockport District 92, Joliet Township High School District 204, and Joliet District 86. These partnerships provide a means of enhancing the quality of the educational experience for candidates as well as the school districts in which they serve.
- Candidates quickly become immersed in the culture of education through organizations such as the Future Educators of America and the international honor society for education, Kappa Delta Pi.

**Program Information for University of Saint Francis
2003-2004**

S.1 Total number of students admitted into teacher preparation, all specializations, in academic year 2003-2004.	230
S.2 Number of students in supervised student teaching in academic year 2003-2004.	170
S.3 Number of faculty members who supervised student teachers:	
➤ S.3A Full-time faculty in professional education	0
➤ 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	29
S.4 Total faculty student teaching supervisors	29
S.5 Student teacher/faculty ratio	6:1
S.6A The average number of student teaching hours per week	40
S.6B The total number of weeks of supervised student teaching required	15
S.7 Average total number of hours required	600