

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Mission:

Aurora University is an independent, comprehensive university offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and specialized courses, with more than 40 undergraduate majors and ten 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 doctoral degrees 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 Science/History, Health Education (6-12 endorsement). A special teaching certificate K-12 in Physical Education encompasses an endorsement in Health Education and a state required coaching endorsement from the American Sport Education Program. In addition to its initial teacher certification preparation programs, Aurora University offers graduate level preparation for certification as Reading Specialist, Educational Administration (principal and superintendent) and School Social Work. The University supports sponsoring partners who prepare teachers for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification.

Student Characteristics:

In the College of Education, 98% of undergraduates are Illinois residents of which 70% are traditional college age, with 94% attending full-time. In the graduate program, approximately 69% of the students attend part-time. Twenty percent of all students in the teacher preparation programs are minorities. Extensive financial aid packages are available to qualified applicants.

Admissions Requirements:

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

Admission to Student Teaching: Candidates must have completed all courses, undergraduates must have a 2.75, graduates must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA, passed the appropriate content area test, completed the application including three 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.

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:

- A West Aurora (CUSD 129) Partnership School on the University campus provides an authentic school environment for pre-service candidates enrolled in methods courses. Their interaction with 4th and 5th grade children helps these children develop more positive attitudes about college and offers them a higher level of individualized learning and feedback, according to the school principal.
- An E-mentoring project, coordinated through the undergraduate and graduate Initial Teacher Certification, benefits education graduates while they are in their first year of teaching. University Field Experience Supervisors provide a safe opportunity to answer "teacher" questions relating to any area, such as classroom management, instructional strategies and resources.
- Faculty members from Arts and Sciences, Education, and high school teachers from partner school districts jointly planned a review of our secondary education programs in English, Social Science, Math, and Biology. The involvement of high school practitioners allows the project to focus on ways to balance the current trends in teacher education in higher ed with the practical realities of teaching in school districts with varying demographics and high needs. The results of this work will be compiled during the 2006-2007 academic year and will be used to guide curricular revisions at Aurora University.
- The Master of Arts in Reading Instruction prepares certified teachers to become more highly skilled teachers of reading or to become leaders of Reading Programs.

Notable Features and Accomplishments:

- Five recent Ed.D. graduates have begun their appointments as superintendents in Illinois School Districts.
- Planning has begun for a special education Learning Behavior Specialist I Certification Program. Target start date is fall 2007.
- A partnership between Elgin School District U-46 and Aurora University has enrolled 130 Type 29 bilingual teachers in a Masters Certification Program. This joint effort represents the University's continuing commitment to the preparation of qualified teachers who serve the needs of English Language Learners.
- In a partnership between Aurora University and East Aurora High School, 25 of their high school students enrolled in a grant funded course to introduce the students to a career in teaching and to working with English Language Learners.

Program Information for Aurora University 2005-2006	
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S.1 Total number of students admitted into teacher preparation, all specializations, in academic year 2005-2006	760
S.2 Number of candidates in supervised student teaching in academic year 2005-2006	233
S.3 Number of faculty members who supervised student teachers:	
➤ S.3A Full-time faculty in professional education	6
➤ S.3B Part-time faculty in professional education but full-time in the institution	2
➤ S.3C Part-time faculty in professional education, not otherwise employed by the institution	21
S.4 Total faculty student teaching supervisors	29
S.5 Student teacher/faculty ratio (Divide total given in S.2 by the number given in S.4)	11:1
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