

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Mission:

An inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning. Aurora University is an independent, private, comprehensive and co-educational university offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and specialized courses, with 40 undergraduate majors, eight master's degree graduate programs, and a Doctor of Education degree. The university vision is to be known and experienced as an exemplary institution of higher learning, one that draws upon the values of integrity, citizenship, continuous learning and excellence.

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, and Social Studies/History. A special teaching certificate K-12 in Physical Education encompasses a middle school health endorsement and a state required coaching endorsement from the American Sport Education Program. Aurora University also offers graduate level preparation for certification as Reading Specialist, Educational Administration (principal and superintendent), School Social Work, and Special Education LBS I. The University supports sponsoring partners who prepare teachers for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification.

Student Characteristics:

In the College of Education, 95% of undergraduates are Illinois residents of which 74% are traditional college age, with 98% attending full-time. In the graduate program, approximately 73% 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.

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 and graduates must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA, passed the appropriate Content Area Test(s), 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, master's, and doctoral degrees. All of the university's professional preparation programs are approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Teacher Education Vision:

The Shared Vision for Teacher Preparation: "Excellence through collaborative communities of learners." In this vision, the distinctive feature of teacher preparation at Aurora University is the collaborative community of learners. These communities enhance the teaching-learning relationship by providing an environment that is inclusive of all learners' needs and aims to develop each student personally and academically. 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 Studies, 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 were completed during the 2006-2007 academic year and will be used to guide curricular revisions at Aurora University.

Notable Features and Accomplishments:

- Eight Ed.D. graduates have begun their appointments as superintendents in Illinois School Districts.
- Thirty-two graduates of the Educational Leadership Program serve as building principals in local area schools.
- New Special Education Program: Aurora University's College of Education received approval in the spring of 2007 to offer both a bachelor's and a master's program leading to a Type 10, LBS I certification. The new undergraduate program will be offered fall 2007, the master's fall 2008.
- Aurora University applied for and was awarded four Illinois Math & Science Partnership grants: Elementary Education Math and Science; Middle School/High School Mathematics, Middle School/High School Earth and Space Science and Middle School/High School Biological Science. Master's Degree programs in these areas have been developed and will be offered in fall 2008. The goal is to build flexible, highly qualified math and science teacher leaders in Aurora University partner school districts.
- A partnership between Elgin School District U-46 and Aurora University has enrolled 131 Type 29 bilingual teachers in a Masters Certification Program. The university has also enrolled 35 teachers in its ESL/BE Program. These enrollments are evidence of the university's continuing commitment to prepare qualified teachers who serve the needs of English Language Learners.
- Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants have been awarded to Aurora University to recruit, prepare and retain teachers for success in high need schools. Through the grant, Aurora University has sponsored Teacher Induction and Retention Academy classes for in-service teachers in East Aurora and West Aurora school districts and for our unit student teachers.

**Program Information for Aurora University
2006-2007**

S.1 Total number of students admitted into teacher preparation, all specializations, in academic year 2006-2007	790
S.2 Number of candidates in supervised student teaching in academic year 2006-2007	264
S.3 Number of faculty members who supervised student teachers:	
➤ S.3A Full-time faculty in professional education	4
➤ S.3B Part-time faculty in professional education but full-time in the institution	14
➤ S.3C Part-time faculty in professional education, not otherwise employed by the institution	34
S.4 Total faculty student teaching supervisors	52
S.5 Student teacher/faculty ratio (Divide total given in S.2 by the number given in S.4)	5:1
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