

SUNY College at Old Westbury

Proposed MS degree in Childhood Special Education (1-6 Professional  
Certification)

## **External Evaluation Reports and Institutional Response**

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# Institutional Response to External Reviews

On November 19, 2015, Dr. Lawrence Maheady, Professor & Horace Mann Endowed Chair of Exceptional Education, SUNY Buffalo State College and Dr. John Freeman, Professor, Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada visited the campus of SUNY College at Old Westbury to evaluate the proposal for the MS in Childhood Special Education (1-6 professional certification) program. The evaluators met with the Dean of the School of Education, the SOE Department Chairpersons, Faculty of the Exceptional Education Department, Director of Field Placement, the Director of the Library and the Education Librarian, and the Provost. Upon review of the proposal presented and extended discussions with faculty and various campus personnel during the site visit, the external evaluators prepared individual reports highlighting the strengths of the program and outlining recommendations for program development.

In the reports, the reviewers commented on the strengths of the program which included sound curriculum and content design, department chairs collaboration, faculty commitment and expertise, and the program's aim to serve a 'forgotten' population and meet the needs of the current demands/challenges in the field of special education. Dr. Maheady noted that,

"The special education program at Old Westbury is well-poised to meet these educational challenges. A nice blend of new and experienced faculty, well-established and respected special education and related programs, and ongoing partnerships with P-12 schools provide a solid foundation for successful program implementation. The special education faculty brings shared areas of expertise (e.g., foundations, assessment, instruction, and research design) to permit flexibility in program delivery as well as specializations (e.g., development of strategic literacy skills among students with disabilities) that may serve as distinctive programmatic features. The faculty are engaged in relevant scholarly activities (i.e., publications, presentations, and grant writing), seem to get along well, and have some emerging collaborations. Curricular content and applied teaching experiences are coherent,

reasonable, and challenging and appear comparable to other certification programs throughout SUNY and New York State. There is a nice balance of on campus coursework and clinical experiences interspersed throughout the program. Given that implementation will be done incrementally and with modest enrollment increases spread over five years, it appears feasible to implement and sustain. Objectives are relevant and appropriate for graduate preparation in special education.”

Dr. Freeman also commented on the rigor of the program, collaboration among department chairs, and faculty commitment to the program. He stated,

“The program has four major strengths. First, the program is designed to present part-time students with a current and coherent understanding of Special Education emphasizing inclusive classrooms and schools. Second, the faculty members represent an ideal combination of beginning and more advanced researchers from a range of ethnic/racial backgrounds, with the beginning researchers having an opportunity to profit from the more experienced ones. Third, the students the program is designed to serve have been too often ignored in graduate education—part-time, minority, and disadvantaged. Finally, the University and the School of Education are fully supportive of the program and willing to put forward the necessary resources for program success, as most clearly demonstrated by the recent hires”. Further, “The three Department Heads in the School of Education (Amy Hsu [Childhood Education and Literacy], Xavier Marechaux [Adolescence Education], and Diana Sukhram [Exceptional Education and Learning]) have an excellent and collaborative working relationship, while many faculty members in the other two departments have dual certification in general education and special education. These strong cross-departmental bonds indicate that the related programs will provide excellent support”.

Additionally, both reviewers found the MS in Childhood Special Education (1-6 professional certification) program comparable to other certification programs throughout SUNY and New York State as well as capable of meeting the current demands and changes in the field of special education.

In terms of concerns, the reports indicated that there were no major weaknesses to the program; however, each evaluator outlined recommendations for future program development. Minor concerns and recommendations highlighted throughout the reports are addressed below.

Both reviewers commented on our modest enrollment plan and noted the benefits of small instructor/candidate ratio. “The program has set modest student enrollment goals so that a personalized approach can be taken for each student with a willingness to run courses, especially elective courses, with small numbers” (Dr. Freeman). Dr. Freeman further suggested that “some of these well-thought out ideas become first-line strategies, rather than contingency measures”. However, given the history of the population we serve; our campus location and enrollment numbers across the other master’s programs at Old Westbury, we are confident that we will be able to meet the goals of our proposed student enrollment numbers for this program. Thus making these contingencies first-line strategies at this stage of the program is not necessary.

Dr. Freeman also suggested “the possibility of substituting a course on inclusive environments, and listing an alternative to the master’s thesis for those students where a research project might be more appropriate”. He suggested having two possibilities for the final research product for the program.

We have incorporated Dr. Freeman’s suggestions by revising our classroom management course to include diverse settings. The course title is now Classroom Management in Inclusive Settings which will provide candidates with a deeper understanding of not only challenging behaviors but also equip them with strategies and competencies to meet the needs of students with challenging behaviors across multiple as well as inclusive environments. We also incorporated the reviewer’s suggestions for the final research project. Our initial proposed master’s Thesis course is now a Capstone Master’s Project in Childhood Special Education (Master’s Thesis or Research-Based Project). Candidates will be provided with the option of a Thesis or Research-Based project. Please refer to the course syllabi SPED 7008 and SPED 7300 respectively to review the changes incorporated.

Dr. Freeman also stated that “the written materials did not always allow [him] to see its strengths. There seemed to be reluctance in particular for the Department to showcase the tremendous assets it has with respect to this proposed program in terms of faculty and staff. The Department needs to ensure that readers who do not have the possibility for a site visit still get the sense of the great possibilities I saw with my own eyes”. As is expected, in person visits coupled with extensive discussions typically reveal more than what is written in any report. We are humbled that the reviewer was able to comment on strengths of the program and faculty that extend beyond the perimeters of the proposal. Additionally, while the responses provided meet the requirements of the SUNY application guidelines, we encourage readers to review the course syllabi and faculty curriculum vitae to get a comprehensive understanding of the competencies and diverse knowledge-base/expertise of the Special Education faculty.

Lastly Dr. Maheady outlined many insightful suggestions for a stronger program. Among his suggestions he advocates for High Leverage Content and Practices; however, because this framework is in the pilot stages and the implications for special education are not fully known, it is too early to adopt or incorporate this practice in our program.

To conclude, the external reviewers’ visit was informative and their recommendations are noted. We appreciate the reviewers’ comments and we will incorporate those that are beneficial to the future growth and development of our program.

## Reports from External Reviewers

# Report from Dr. Lawrence Maheady, Professor & Horace Mann Endowed Chair of Exceptional Education, SUNY Buffalo State College



## External Evaluation Report Teacher Education EPP Form E

The External Evaluation Report<sup>1</sup> is an important component of a new academic program proposal. The external evaluator's task is to examine the program proposal and related materials, visit the campus to discuss the proposal with faculty and review related instructional resources and facilities, respond to the questions in this report form, and submit to the institution an individual, signed report that speaks to the quality of, and need for, the proposed program. The report should aim for completeness, accuracy and objectivity.

The institution is expected to review each External Evaluation Report it receives, prepare a single institutional response to all reports, and, as appropriate, make changes to its program proposal and plan prior to submitting it for SUNY review. Following SUNY proposal approval, if an external evaluation of the proposed program is required by the State Education Department (SED), SUNY includes External Evaluation Reports and the Institutional Response in the full proposal that it submits to SED for registration.

| Section I. General Information  |  |  |                                 |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Item                            | Response (type in the requested information)   |  |                                 |
| a) Institution                  | Campus(es) where the entire program will be offered and <u>SED Institution Code</u><br>State University of New York College at Old Westbury (234000) |  |                                 |
| b) Evaluator                    | Name (Print)   | Title  | Institution                     |
|                                 | Lawrence J. Maheady  | Professor & Horace Mann Endowed Chair in Exceptional Education | SUNY Buffalo State              |
|                                 | Evaluator Signature: <i>Lawrence J. Maheady</i>  |  | Evaluation Date: <i>12-4-15</i> |
| c) Proposed Program Information | Program Title: <u>Childhood Special Education</u>  |  |                                 |
|                                 | <u>Award(s)</u> (e.g., B.A., M.S.): <u>MS</u>  |  |                                 |

### I. Program Evaluation

- a) Assess the program's purpose, structure, and requirements, as well as formal mechanisms for program administration and evaluation. Address the program's rigor, coherence, and inclusion of current material to prepare candidates for current requirements (e.g., DASA, new certification exams).

Old Westbury's proposed Master of Science in Childhood Special Education program leads to professional certification in Special Education at the childhood level (grades 1-6) and will serve recent graduates (i.e., initial certification undergraduates) and experienced teachers seeking professional certification. The 30-credit degree program includes a 15 credit, required foundational core, 9 credits of specialized coursework in collaboration, research, and a thesis, and 6 credit hours of elective.

<sup>1</sup> An external evaluation is required for all new graduate and undergraduate degree programs and for new advanced certificate programs if the program represents a new certification area.





## External Evaluation Report Teacher Education

**EPP Form E**

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| Section 1. General Information |  |   |                           |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| Item                           | Response ( <i>type in the requested information</i> )  |   |                           |
| <b>a) Institution</b>          | Campus(es) where the <u>entire</u> program will be offered and <a href="#">SED Institution Code</a><br><br><a href="#">State University of New York College at Old Westbury (234000)</a> |   |                           |
| <b>b) Evaluator</b>            | Name (Print)   | Title   | Institution               |
|                                | <b>Lawrence J. Maheady</b>   | <b>Professor &amp; Horace Mann Endowed Chair in Exceptional Education</b> | <b>SUNY Buffalo State</b> |
|                                | Evaluator Signature:   |   | Evaluation Date:          |
| <b>c) Proposed Program</b>     | Program Title:   | <b>Childhood Special Education</b>  |                           |
|                                | <a href="#">Award(s)</a> (e.g., B.A., M.S.):   | MS  |                           |

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Old Westbury's proposed Master of Science in Childhood Special Education program leads to professional certification in Special Education at the childhood level (grades 1-6) and will serve recent graduates (i.e., initial certification undergraduates) and experienced teachers seeking professional certification. The 30-credit degree program includes a 15 credit, required foundational core, 9 credits of specialized coursework in collaboration, research, and a thesis, and 6 credit hours of elective coursework. Program structure meets New York State certification requirements including Common Core Learning Standards, relevant certification workshops and exams, and alignment with SUNY regulations related to clinical experiences. Program goals are consistent with the College and School of Education (SOE) mission and institutional goals to grow enrollment and make the SOE the centerpiece of this expansion. The SOE was developed from a Teacher Education Department by adding new faculty and creating three distinct departments (a) Childhood Education, (b) Exceptional Education, and (c) Adolescence Education.

In addition to preparing high quality special education teachers (SET), the program (a) provides a "new, affordable, and accessible graduate education option to residents of Long Island and of the New York metropolitan region" (p. 3), (b) offers undergraduate students in an existing dual major (i.e., Childhood and Exceptional Education) initial certification program a coherent and seamless path for graduate preparation, and (c) may attract new undergraduates in education and retain more of those presently enrolled.

The proposed program structure and requirements are comparable to other 30-credit, master's degree programs offered throughout SUNY and New York State. Course content reflects important and contemporary topics in special education and there are at least five clinical experiences interspersed throughout the program. Appropriate administrative structures and evaluation procedures appear to be in place. While the proposed program structure is coherent, contemporary, and consistent with preparation standards, there is not a lot that is *distinctive* about it. A more extensive and explicit description of distinctive program features might be useful here (see below & final sections).

- b) Comment on the special focus of this program, if any, as it relates to the discipline.

What specifically makes this program high quality and distinctive? Which program components (i.e., small, collaborative faculty, innovative curriculum, extensive, developmentally

sequenced, clinical experiences, and/or P-12 partnerships) are unique, innovative, and supported by the best available research? What is “state-of-the-art” about the curriculum and how candidates learn to apply it effectively in authentic educational settings? How specifically will candidates improve P-12 student learning outcomes? Answers to these and related questions may expose unique “themes” that can be highlighted in program descriptions.

Some programmatic features that might be emphasized are (a) small, cohesive *faculty* from related programs (e.g., elementary, exceptional, and adolescence education) who share a common vision for high quality preparation of all teachers, (b) a *curriculum* that prepares candidates with extensive knowledge to support students with disabilities in achieving rigorous content standards, well-developed collaboration skills to communicate and work effectively with various service providers, and extensive curricular knowledge and fluency in the use of new technologies to deliver it, (c) a *practice-based framework* for fostering effective teaching and improving P-12 student learning, (d) strong *collaborative partnerships* with select P-12 schools based explicitly on improving student outcomes (i.e., What are your most pressing instructional needs? And How can we help?), and/or (e) a *coherent research line* linked directly to the study of teaching and its improvement.

- c) Comment on the plans and expectations for self-assessment and continuous improvement.

The proposed MS program in Special Education will be assessed for continuous improvement as part of the SOE’s broader accreditation process with CAEP. The next review is scheduled for Fall Term, 2019 and the proposed MS program, if approved, will be evaluated using relevant standards and benchmarks at that time. In addition, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the Specialty Professional Association (SPA) for special education, will review the proposed program for quality as part of the accreditation process. CAEP and CEC both require the collection and analysis of self-assessment data from key assignments interspersed throughout the program. These data, in turn, are used for program improvement. SOE will also monitor program completers for employment status and program satisfaction and survey employers regarding candidate effectiveness. Plans and expectations appear reasonable and doable.

- d) Discuss the relationship of this program to other programs of the institution and collaboration with other institutions, and assess available support from related programs.

The proposed Master of Science in Childhood Special Education program is consistent with recent restructuring (i.e., creation of a School of Education) and the emergence of other master’s degree programs on campus (e.g., Accounting, Taxation, and Mental Health Counseling, M.A.T. and M.S. degrees in Adolescence Education, and M.S. Childhood Special Education Degree leading to initial/professional certification). The most logical collaborative relationships to nurture within the SOE are among Childhood Education, Exceptional Education, and Adolescence Education. Significant changes in roles and responsibilities of *all* teachers (i.e., general and special education) in P-12 settings demand more integrated and collaborative preparation practices and outcomes. Given the relatively small size of the departments and the limited scope of the proposed program, it seems feasible for faculty to work collaboratively to define a common vision for the preparation of all teachers at Old Westbury.

- e) What is the evidence of need and demand for the program locally, in the State, and in the field at large? What is the extent of occupational demand for graduates? What is the evidence that demand will continue?

While national statistics indicate that the demand for special education teachers (SET) has leveled off and even decreased in some states for the first time in the discipline's history (Boe, 2014), there are still high need areas distributed throughout the United States. The United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported, for example, that special education continues to be a shortage area for teachers in New York State. Other data indicate that more students with special needs are served in New York State (16.6%) P-12 schools than the national average (13%) thereby elevating need. Similarly, college-generated surveys found that 75% of local school districts in the Long Island and Metropolitan New York area reported a need for special education teachers and a slightly higher proportion rated SET from Old Westbury quite favorably.

## II. Faculty

- a) Evaluate the faculty, individually and collectively, with regard to training, experience, research and publication, professional service, and recognition in the field in relation to courses to be taught.

The special education faculty at [State University of New York College at Old Westbury](#) is a nice blend of new and experienced teacher educators. One full-time faculty member holds the Professor rank, three are Associate Professors, and two are first-year, Assistant Professors. There is also a new Dean in the School of Education with broad and extensive professional experiences to provide vision and leadership. All faculty members hold doctoral degrees from prestigious universities (e.g., Stanford University, University of Illinois-Champaign, and Penn State University) and represent a broad range of expertise in special education (e.g., neonatal development, applied behavior analysis, educational technology and new literacies, and literacy/numeracy). They have published in selective, peer-reviewed journals (e.g., *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *Behavioral Disorders*, *Teaching Exceptional Children*, & *International Journal of Research in Learning Disabilities* ), presented their work at local state, national, and international conferences, and garnered some grant-related support. Given faculty size it is understandable that most, if not all full-time faculty will contribute to pedagogical core courses, including the Master's Thesis in the proposed Childhood Special Education program. Faculty possess the requisite training and experiences to delivery high quality services.

- b) Assess the faculty in terms of number and plans for future staffing.

As noted, the faculty is rather small in number and as such they have proposed a modest increase in student enrollment in the MS program. The addition of two new Assistant Professors, Drs. Foxworth and Hashey, is particularly promising as they bring new knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to the program. Moreover, they share common interests and professional expertise in the development of literacy competence among students with disabilities; an area identified as "high priority" in emerging and future special education personnel preparation

(e.g., Leko, Brownell, Sindelar, & Kiely, 2015) and one that is shared by other departmental faculty (i.e., Dr. Sukhram).

- c) Evaluate faculty responsibilities for the proposed program, taking into account their other institutional and programmatic commitments.

**Faculty commitments to the proposed program appear to be reasonable and well distributed. All full-time faculty members have sufficient professional knowledge and experiences to teach most, if not, all required coursework in the proposed program. Given the relatively modest enrollment projections and consistency of course requirements with undergraduate special education offerings, faculty should have sufficient full-time personnel to implement the program with consistency.**

- d) Evaluate faculty activity in generating funds for research, training, facilities, equipment, etc.

**Some faculty members have generated grant-related funding for research, training, and/or equipment, at the institutional and state levels. One faculty member has a NYS Education Department grant for a regional autism training center and others have submitted federal and institutional research grants. This is an area for continued growth.**

- e) Evaluate credentials and involvement of adjunct faculty, including field supervisors, and support personnel.

**Did not have an opportunity to review credentials of adjuncts, field supervisors, and/or support personnel.**

- f) Discuss any critical gaps related to faculty and stated campus plans for addressing identified gaps.

**No specific gaps were identified related to faculty and/or stated campus plans.**

### **III. Students**

- a) Comment on the student population the program seeks to serve, and assess plans and projections for student recruitment and enrollment.

**Given the requirement for a master's degree in New York State for professional certification and the rather large number of initial special education certificates awarded by the state, there appears to be a relevant pool of potential applicants. Proposed enrollment plans include modest increases over the first five years of the program. These projects seems reasonable and sustainable given existing faculty resources. Program specialty foci (e.g., strategic literacy development, collaborative decision-making, and practice-based preparation) may further expand projected enrollments. Student retention from undergraduate to graduate may also increase with continuity between initial and professional certifications. Given that Old Westbury students are the most diverse across SUNY, it is reasonable to assume that the "new" student population will be equally diverse.**

- b) Will recruitment efforts and admissions criteria result in a sufficient pool of highly qualified

applicants and enrollees?

**Recruitment plans appear reasonable and fairly comprehensive. Admissions criteria are consistent with New York State mandates and similar degree granting institutions. Appropriate exceptions are provided for suitable candidates.**

- c) Comment on recruitment plans for candidates from underrepresented groups.

**Did not review any specific recruitment plans for candidates from underrepresented groups.**

- d) Does the program give adequate attention to the needs of part-time, minority, and disadvantaged students?

**Given that the program will be completed on a part-time basis (i.e., 6 credits per semester) it should be very doable for part-time students. Moreover, courses are structured to facilitate student movement through the curriculum (i.e., cohorts) in a timely manner. Given the rich cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in the Long Island and Metropolitan New York City area and the existing on campus diversity of the Old Westbury student population, the program should adequately address the needs of a diverse population.**

- e) Assess the system for monitoring students' progress and performance and for advising students regarding academic and career matters.

**The School of Education (SOE) at Old Westbury developed a Candidate Transition Point Assessment System (CTAS) to monitor student progress through existing certification programs. CTAS is a highly structured set of benchmarks that students must meet as they progress through the program and a set of proactive strategies for handling inadequate performance. The progress monitoring system was adapted for graduate programs and should permit continuously tracking of student progress in the proposed program. CTAS also includes mechanisms to provide constructive feedback for students to improve their performance. Student advisement services are individualized at the departmental level and are highlighted among SOE student service offerings.**

#### **IV. Resources**

- a) Comment on the adequacy of physical resources and facilities, e.g., library, computer, and laboratory facilities.

**Old Westbury is a physically attractive campus with an abundance of space and relatively new facilities. The primary instructional facility (i.e., New Academic Building) has many newly renovated classrooms and ample space for small group student interactions and individual student work areas. The School of Education also has a Microcomputer-Based Laboratory Learning and Teaching Resource Center. The SOE proposes to use these facilities to provide candidates with opportunities to learn inquiry-based curricula in math, science, and technology and to engage practicing teachers in laboratory activities to improve understanding of life and physical sciences. Library personnel spoke highly of the educational resources and the**

**institutional commitment to preparing high quality teachers for students with disabilities. Existing facilities are currently under construction with increased space, materials, and activities related to special education. Library resources campus-wide appear to be adequate.**

- b) Comment on the adequacy of *resources* for locating field experience and student teaching/practicum sites and for supporting students while completing these experiences.

**Information regarding field-based instructional resources was somewhat limited. Applied teaching opportunities are scheduled and managed through the SOE's Office of Field Experience and Clinical Services. This office maintains collaborative relationships with 23 school districts in Long Island and 7 in Metropolitan New York. Additional information regarding the nature and function of these clinical experiences, particularly as implemented in the proposed master's program would be beneficial.**

- c) Comment on the *partnerships* in place and their ability to provide an adequate number of sites for field placements and student teaching/practicum in relation to the number of students in the program.

**Additional information on the number and nature of existing partnerships with P-12 schools would be useful. Apparently, clinical placements have been sufficient to date and the proposed program, if implemented on a part-time basis, would not add significantly to this demand. The SOE may consider identifying one or two particularly strong P-12 partners with whom they can design, implement, and evaluate a coherent and comprehensive set of clinical experiences that are weaved strategically and developmentally through five clinical experiences within the program. The capstone experience (i.e., master's thesis or project) might be an action research or applied teaching demonstration that documents candidate impact on important P-12 student outcomes.**

- d) Based on discussions with faculty and administrators about administrative support for the program, what is the degree of institutional commitment to the program as demonstrated by a) the operating budget, b) faculty salaries, c) the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers and d) workload?

**This reviewer had no information regarding operating budget, faculty salaries, and/or workload requirements. However, there appears to be solid commitment and administrative support for education-related programs. The creation of a School of Education, hiring of a new dean and two new, tenure-track faculty, and the expansion of educational programs and resources at the graduate level provide institutional momentum in support of the proposed program. The Provost spoke positively of SOE contributions to campus growth and excellence.**

#### **IV. Summary Comments and Additional Observations**

- a) Summarize the major strengths and weaknesses of the program as proposed with particular attention to feasibility of implementation and appropriateness of objectives for the degree offered, including the need for preparation in the specific certificate title(s).

##### **Context**

The context for P-12 schooling and the preparation of special education teachers has changed dramatically over the past few decades (Leko et al., 2015). Teachers in P-12 schools face increasing student diversity, higher academic standards (e.g., Common Core Learning Standards), the use of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), and policy-driven accountability systems that tie growth in pupil learning to teacher evaluation. To succeed in contemporary P-12 settings, special education teachers must have the knowledge and skills to support students with disabilities in achieving rigorous content standards, well-developed collaboration skills to communicate and work effectively with others, extensive curricular knowledge, and an ability to use new technologies to support its implementation. Teacher educators, in turn, must prepare individuals for these impending challenges while also creating seamless transitions between pre-service and in-service preparation, aligning university coursework with P-12 school needs and accreditation demands, and expanding clinical experiences and partnerships with public schools. This context poses enormous challenges and extraordinary opportunities for teacher education and school partners.

##### **Program Strengths**

The special education program at Old Westbury is well-poised to meet these educational challenges. A nice blend of new and experienced faculty, well-established and respected special education and related programs, and ongoing partnerships with P-12 schools provide a solid foundation for successful program implementation. The special education faculty brings shared areas of expertise (e.g., foundations, assessment, instruction, and research design) to permit flexibility in program delivery as well as specializations (e.g., development of strategic literacy skills among students with disabilities) that may serve as distinctive programmatic features. The faculty are engaged in relevant scholarly activities (i.e., publications, presentations, and grant writing), seem to get along well, and have some emerging collaborations.

Curricular content and applied teaching experiences are coherent, reasonable, and challenging and appear comparable to other certification programs throughout SUNY and New York State. There is a nice balance of on campus coursework and clinical experiences interspersed throughout the program. Given that implementation will be done incrementally and with modest enrollment increases spread over five years, it appears feasible to implement and sustain. Objectives are relevant and appropriate for graduate preparation in special education.



## Areas for Program Improvement

The proposed MS program in Special Education would benefit from a more explicit and detailed description of distinctive program features and a well-articulated and empirically supported rationale for their inclusion. The following are offered as areas for consideration.

*Establish (strengthen) collaborative relationships among faculty across three SOE departments.* Relationships among general and special educators in P-12 schools have changed rapidly and dramatically and teacher education programs have not kept pace. General and special educators now share instructional roles and responsibilities, often in the same classroom via co-teaching, and both are mandated to use practices with empirical support, particularly when working with students with disabilities. The proposed MS program provides an opportunity for interested faculty in all three departments to articulate a common vision for high quality teacher preparation at Old Westbury (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). One possibility might be co-teaching placements (e.g., early clinical experiences) for pairs of general and special education candidates in inclusive settings. Candidate roles and responsibilities can be shared and linked to required coursework with required clinical experiences. This is obviously a multi-year endeavor that might be integrated into faculty's teaching and research roles and responsibilities as well.

*Adopt a Practice-Based Framework for Fostering Effective Practice.* Teacher practice or what teachers do instructionally with children has not been at the heart of teacher preparation efforts for some time (Lignugaris/Kraft & Harris, 2014). A practice-based framework moves preparation efforts away from teaching about practice to creating more opportunities for candidates to practice teaching in structured, carefully sequenced, and closely monitored clinical experiences (Leko et al., 2015). The proposed program has five, clinical experiences interspersed throughout the program. These experiences might be carefully sequenced and highly structured to promote commonly agreed upon educational outcomes for teacher candidates and P-12 students.

*Focus on High Leverage Content and Practices.* Proponents of a practice-based framework suggest that special education teachers must also master critical knowledge sets (e.g., whole number operations and fractions in math), content-specific strategies (e.g., schema activation), and a *core set of teaching practices* that are fundamental to support P-12 student learning and that can be taught, learned, and used by candidates entering the profession (Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012). While there is room for debate about the potential utility of so-called "high leverage" or "core practices" they may provide useful heuristics for building curriculum coherence. It may be possible, for example, to arrange critical knowledge set, content-specific strategies, and core practices around specific clinical experiences and provide carefully crafted opportunities to apply the knowledge and practices, receive feedback, and assess effects of important student outcomes.

*Strengthen partnerships with one or two P-12 schools.* Improvement of candidate practice will require strong collaborative relationships among university and P-12 school partners. These relationships might be structured around common goals (e.g., the improvement of student achievement and preparing best SET possible), use clinical experiences as opportunities to enhance candidate practice and improve student learning, and engage high education and P-12

faculty in common professional development activities. Developing such relationships will require more collaboration among teacher education faculty and P-12 teachers and better coordination among faculty and those involved directly in clinical supervision. Given the modest size of the proposed program, it may be possible to build such relationships with only a few P-12 partners.

*Adopt evidence-based practice (EBP) decision-making process.* EBP supports the use of *best available evidence* in conjunction with *professional wisdom* to make better educational decisions about meeting student needs. There is a clear need to improve educational decision-making in schools, particularly with regard to serving our most fragile learners (i.e., those with disabilities, from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and from poverty, neglect, or abuse environments). As such, pre-service teachers need opportunities to identify best practices for improving student learning, apply them in authentic settings, and make appropriate instructional decisions about how to proceed. Again, five clinical experiences in the proposed program can provide such opportunities. Faculty can also increase pre-service teacher understanding of EBP by assigning relevant readings and activities and providing relevant clinical experiences to apply what they learn in authentic settings. They might also examine the impact of specific preparation activities (e.g., in class assistance with modeling, performance-based feedback, and peer coaching) on candidate practice and pupil learning, thereby connecting these under-studied links in teacher education.

- b) If applicable, particularly for graduate programs, comment on the ways that this program will make a unique contribution to the field, and its likelihood of achieving State, regional, and/or national prominence.

**Special education teacher preparation is clearly in need of exemplars of highly effective, accountable, and replicable models. The proposed program may provide such a model but its core principles, practices, and outcomes must be more clearly articulated and linked directly to best practice. The program must be evaluated systematically and refined to improve candidate practice, student learning, and school-university partnerships.**

- c) Include any further observations important to the evaluation of this program proposal and provide any recommendations for the proposed program.

**Based on observations, interviews, and readings of related documents, the following recommendations are offered. They are not provided in any particular order.**

- **The program should be submitted for review after distinctive program features and outcomes are highlighted.**
- **Design clinical experiences to increase in complexity and decrease in levels of support (i.e., deliberate practice). Maintain coherence and alignment between coursework and clinical experiences by increasing communication among field supervisors and program faculty.**
- **To address issues of general and special education collaboration, interested stakeholders should conduct a program self-assessment that examines (a) degree of faculty collaboration, (b) curriculum coherence, (c) depth of knowledge, (d) alignment of performance-based**

assessments/portfolios, (e) administrative structure, and (f) P-12 partnerships (Blanton & Pugach, 2007).

- Promote faculty engagement in collaborative research agendas to identify and disseminate practices with empirical support in their respective disciplines, create and replicate clinical placements for helping preservice teachers refine their teaching practice, and adopt relevant research methods to address important school-and pupil-driven needs.

## References

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Report from Dr. John Freeman, Professor, Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada



## *External Evaluation Report* **Teacher Education**

### **EPP Form E**

The External Evaluation Report<sup>2</sup> is an important component of a new academic program proposal. The external evaluator's task is to examine the program proposal and related materials, visit the campus to discuss the proposal with faculty and review related instructional resources and facilities, respond to the questions in this report form, and submit to the institution an individual, signed report that speaks to the quality of, and need for, the proposed program. The report should aim for completeness, accuracy and objectivity.

The institution is expected to review each External Evaluation Report it receives, prepare a single institutional response to all reports, and, as appropriate, make changes to its program proposal and plan prior to submitting it for SUNY review. Following SUNY proposal approval, if an external evaluation of the proposed program is required by the State Education Department (SED), SUNY includes External Evaluation Reports and the Institutional Response in the full proposal that it submits to SED for registration.

| Section 1. General Information |  |           |                    |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Item                           | Response (type in the requested information)   |           |                    |
| <b>b) Institution</b>          | Campus(es) where the <u>entire</u> program will be offered and <a href="#">SED Institution Code</a><br><br><a href="#">State University of New York College at Old Westbury (234000)</a> |           |                    |
| <b>b) Evaluator</b>            | Name (Print)   | Title     | Institution        |
|                                | John Freeman   | Professor | Queen's University |
|                                | Evaluator Signature: <i>John B. Freeman</i> Evaluation Date: 11/19/15  |           |                    |

<sup>2</sup> An external evaluation is required for all new graduate and undergraduate degree programs and for new advanced certificate programs if the program represents a new certification area.

|  |  |                             |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>c) Proposed<br/>Program<br/>Information</b> | Program Title:                                       | Childhood Special Education |
|  | <a href="#"><u>Award</u></a> (s) (e.g., B.A., M.S.): | MS                          |

## **I. Program Evaluation**

- a) Assess the program's purpose, structure, and requirements, as well as formal mechanisms for program administration and evaluation. Address the program's rigor, coherence, and inclusion of current material to prepare candidates for current requirements (e.g., DASA, new certification exams).

The program's stated "aim is to serve recent graduates who have completed the requirements for initial teacher certification at the undergraduate level, as well as experienced teachers who seek professional certification in Special Education or an advanced degree" (quotation marks indicate direct quotes from the application materials; as page numbers may shift after revisions, no page numbers are given). This aim is based on an underlying spirit of inclusivity and a desire to prepare diverse teachers for the diverse students in Long Island and New York City. The structure of the program includes five foundational core courses (15 credits), five elective courses (among which students select two; total 6 credits), and nine additional credits (SPED 7200: Collaborative Leaders in Special Education and SPED 7300: Master's Thesis in Childhood Special Education). These courses represent the required 30 credit hours. They are designed in such a way to provide a coherent understanding of Special Education through the core courses and an interest-informed sub-stream through the elective courses and the completion of a master's thesis, meeting the need for adult learners to have choice in their educational pursuits. The program has rigorous standards for each course. Inclusion of current material is facilitated through placing primary sources on Blackboard for students to access. These courses prepare students for certification requirements in Special Education (Grades 1-6). Formal mechanisms for program administration and evaluation are addressed in questions below.

- b) Comment on the special focus of this program, if any, as it relates to the discipline.

The special focus of this program is underscored by the three principles of the Conceptual Framework: "Maintaining a Professional Community of Teachers and Learners," "Supporting Practitioners as promoters of a just world through social justice," and "Context for Successful Practice through an Interdisciplinary Approach to Knowledge and Practice." Each of these principles demonstrates a passionate commitment toward inclusive education encompassing, respectively: an inclusive community, an inclusive world, and an inclusive classroom/school environment. The program is built on these principles, as is each course.

- c) Comment on the plans and expectations for self-assessment and continuous improvement.

Ongoing assessment and continuous improvement will be directed in adherence to CAEP review (most recently in 2013; next in 2018) and the SPA standards from the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC). In this way, the Department is following both expectations for teacher education in general and Special Education in particular. Additionally, the Department intends to measure program success through follow-up surveys with graduates and their employers. These multiple sources of information will help the Department reach the goals it desires for this program. Beyond these written pieces in the application, the Department members showed a great willingness to listen to the

reviewers during our visit. This demonstrated willingness indicates that the Department fully intends to foster a spirit of self-assessment and continuous improvement.

- d) Discuss the relationship of this program to other programs of the institution and collaboration with other institutions, and assess available support from related programs.

“This Master of Science degree is compatible with, and is an essential component of Old Westbury’s central planning goals to grow enrollment, build an image of quality and achieve financial equilibrium.” This program coheres well with the “recently approved M.S. Childhood Special Education Degree leading to initial certification” and the MAT and MS programs that Old Westbury College previously instituted. The program builds upon the extensive knowledge already gained from existing undergraduate programs leading to initial certification in Special Education. The three Department Heads in the School of Education (Amy Hsu [Childhood Education and Literacy], Xavier Marechaux [Adolescence Education], and Diana Sukhram [Exceptional Education and Learning]) have an excellent and collaborative working relationship, while many faculty members in the other two departments have dual certification in general education and special education. These strong cross-departmental bonds indicate that the related programs will provide excellent support. The program has already begun collaborations with other institutions by consulting other SUNY campuses and by inviting Dr. Lawrence Maheady from SUNY Buffalo (one of two other programs in the SUNY system with a similar program) as a reviewer.

- e) What is the evidence of need and demand for the program locally, in the State, and in the field at large? What is the extent of occupational demand for graduates? What is the evidence that demand will continue?

“Reports from the U.S. Department of Education and New York State Bureau of Labor consistently identify Special Education as a critical teacher shortage area; therefore, this degree will bring a new, affordable, and accessible graduate education option to residents of Long Island and of the New York metropolitan region.” The demand for racially diverse teachers is arguable even greater. Given “Old Westbury’s position as the most diverse campus within SUNY,” this program is likely “to attract candidates from diverse ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds,” meeting a critical shortage by allowing more students of different races to experience teachers of similar racial background during their formal education. This demand for special education teachers is likely to grow, rather than abate. These arguments are expanded in the application beyond what I can summarize here.

## II. Faculty

- a) Evaluate the faculty, individually and collectively, with regard to training, experience, research and publication, professional service, and recognition in the field in relation to courses to be taught.

The core and elective courses have been designed to meet the needs of the graduate students in the program and to capitalize on the strengths of the core faculty members. For sake of parsimoniousness, I address only the core courses here with respect to the core faculty members who are listed as the most likely to teach them, understanding that numerous faculty members in each case could do so.

**Dr. González Martínez** (SPED 7005 Historical and Philosophical Perspectives of Exceptional Education) has been involved in Special Education for the past 20 years, showing his pedagogical strength as early as 1996-1997 when he won the Sallie Mae Teaching Award for First Year Teachers. His Special Education certification in three states (New York, Florida, and Massachusetts), his ongoing work in the Hispanic community, and his recently developed model with Dr. Cale on clinically rich practices for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) give Dr. González Martínez the breadth and depth of experience to teach the program’s introductory course. **Dr. Hashey**

(SPED 7008: Classroom Management in Special Education and Inclusive Settings) created and taught the hybrid course on Classroom Management and Behavioral Intervention for the University of Buffalo in Summer 2013 and taught a similar online course in Summer 2015. His 10 years of successful teaching experience in Special Education, combined with his extensive knowledge of assistive and online technology, will no doubt be beneficial in teaching this course. **Dr. Sukhram** (SPED 7100: Research Methods and Design) brings over 10 years' teaching experience in Belize and her publications in peer-reviewed journals such as *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *Journal of International Special Needs Education*, and *Exceptional Children* to bear in teaching a course that will emphasize the practicalities of appropriate research methods and design. Dr. Sukhram's strong international focus will ensure that sensitivity to cultural context will be emphasized, an emphasis that is critical in the area where the research for students' master's theses will take place. Because of the exclusively undergraduate focus of the Special Education Department at Old Westbury to date, Dr. Sukhram has not had the opportunity to teach this course previously. **Dr. Foxworthy** (née Valasa, SPED 7012: Educational Interventions in Reading, Writing, and Literacy) has a recently completed doctorate from Pennsylvania State University on writing for students with disabilities, continuing the work she began at the master's level. Her publication record on teaching students with disabilities to write is already impressive, research she has disseminated at prestigious national conferences (American Educational Research Association, Council for Exceptional Children). Dr. Foxworthy has taught a similar course four times at Pennsylvania State University and supervised special education teachers in their practicum settings. **Dr. Cale** (SPED 7014: Assessment, Evaluation and Instruction of Students with Exceptionalities) is active in her practice of assessing, evaluation, and instructing students in the field through her lead role as Director of the Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders at Old Westbury and her extensive clinical experience. Her publications in *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities* and *Behavior Modification*, as well as her recent manuscript submissions, examine the topics covered in this course. Furthermore, Dr. Cale is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst- Doctoral (BCBA-D) and an NYS Licensed Behavior Analyst. In addition to these core courses, **Dr. Lewittes'** wisdom about educational psychology is being put to fine use by having her teach SPED 7015: Educational Psychology: Psychological Foundations of Learning. We had an extended discussion with faculty members during the visit about the possibility of substituting a course on inclusive environments, rather than the one on classroom management. In the event that such a substitution occurs, Dr. Hashey is more than capable of teaching such a course. We also talked at length about listing an alternative to the master's thesis for those students where a research project might be more appropriate. I would support this idea of having two possibilities for the final research product for the program.

b) Assess the faculty in terms of number and plans for future staffing.

A year ago, this Department did not have sufficient faculty resources to conduct this program, given faculty members' other commitments. The School of Education has addressed this issue in 2015 by hiring two dynamic and promising new scholars (Drs. Foxworth and Hashey) to complement the strengths of the existing faculty members (Drs. Cale, González Martínez, and Sukhram). As well, the School of Education has recently appointed a new Dean, Dr. Brown, whose background in Special Education and Teacher Education affords an opportunity for specific mentorship in the field. An additional position is envisioned for the future, once the program has taken shape.

c) Evaluate faculty responsibilities for the proposed program, taking into account their other institutional and programmatic commitments.

In large measure, the success of this program rests on the shoulders of Dr. Diana Sukhram, the Department Head. Without a dynamic and committed advocate and leader, such a program cannot flourish, regardless of the other sources of support. In this respect, the program is exemplary. Dr. Sukhram is a dedicated faculty member who has spent countless hours to move this application



forward. She will be shifting her faculty responsibilities largely into this program. Examining her CV in conjunction with the other faculty members' CVs brings to strong focus exactly how this program will excel.

d) Evaluate faculty activity in generating funds for research, training, facilities, equipment, etc. As a Department that has previously had only undergraduate students, faculty activity in generating funds has been relatively light. However, it is not clear, with a graduate program exclusively for part-time students, whether or not funding is at all important. Dr. Cale has received a \$75,000 grant from New York State Education to continue her front-line work with children with ASD and an additional \$20,000 from the SUNY Teacher and Leader Education Network to fund similar work. Dr. Hashey has co-authored two recent grants and worked as Principal/Co-Investigator on other funded projects, providing him with the skill set to be successful in future funding applications. In her role as Assessment and Curriculum Consultant, Dr. Lewittes has been involved in work funded by the Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

e) Evaluate credentials and involvement of adjunct faculty, including field supervisors, and support personnel.

No adjunct faculty will be teaching in the program. "In field experiences, students will be supervised by qualified, experienced professionals." These professionals will be specifically selected based on holding the appropriate teaching license and teaching experience. The support personnel at Old Westbury School of Education are excellent. During our visit, we had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Kristin Roemer and Ms. Donna Rank, who hold secretarial positions at the School of Education (Ms. Roemer made the arrangements for our visit). Their welcoming personalities would increase students' feelings of belonging in the program.

f) Discuss any critical gaps related to faculty and stated campus plans for addressing identified gaps. I do not see any critical gaps to faculty.

### **III. Students**

a) Comment on the student population the program seeks to serve, and assess plans and projections for student recruitment and enrollment.

"Old Westbury's diverse campus community, its 50-year history of fostering racial and intercultural understanding, and the School of Education's commitment to this mission, put the college and SOE in an excellent position to prepare teachers for urban and metropolitan schools and for the mixed cultural communities of Long Island." The program seeks to serve in-service teachers with an excellent program at an affordable price. The program has set modest student enrollment goals so that a personalized approach can be taken for each student with a willingness to run courses, especially elective courses, with small numbers.

b) Will recruitment efforts and admissions criteria result in a sufficient pool of highly qualified applicants and enrollees?

Yes. The required GPA is similar to that with which I am accustomed in Canada. The admission essay and letters of reference are also standard Canadian practices. The holistic use of the GRE is applauded, as no one standardized test can adequately assess the potentialities of a student. The flexibility in making decisions about future graduate students is congruent with the School of Education's inclusive philosophy. If initial recruitment efforts prove inadequate to obtain a suitable pool of students, contingency measures have been put in place. Overall, these practices should result in Old Westbury having a cohort of highly qualified students in its program.

c) Comment on recruitment plans for candidates from underrepresented groups.

The program has established a number of contingency measures to encourage enrollment that would be beneficial to increase representation from underrepresented groups: “strengthening our marketing strategies, conducting community/college outreach, updating brochures, retooling promotional messages, and using images of diverse groups to appeal directly to underrepresented groups; boost recruitment strategies and target our alumni; strengthen our partnerships and create more collaborative agreements with the local public school system to link the university’s faculty, graduates, and students within these institutions who are interested in a special education career.” I would suggest that some of these well-thought out ideas become first-line strategies, rather than contingency measures.

d) Does the program give adequate attention to the needs of part-time, minority, and disadvantaged students?

Absolutely. Part-time, minority, and disadvantaged students are the focus of this program,

e) Assess the system for monitoring students’ progress and performance and for advising students regarding academic and career matters.

The School of Education has already developed a “Candidate Transition Point Assessment System (CTAS) for the undergraduate education program.” This tested program will be refined to serve the needs of the graduate program. Using a pre-existing, context-specific tool takes into consideration the unique circumstances of the college and the students with whom faculty and staff work. With respect to academic advising, the program has designed a system that builds once again upon the inclusive environment the Department has created and is continuing to create. “Academic advising is an essential component of the program. Each candidate will have an advisor, who will serve as a primary source of information and support during the student’s tenure in the program, acting as a mentor for career planning, future study, academic progress and other issues that impact students’ performance in the program. Meetings with advisors will provide opportunities for in-depth discussion of personal experiences, including the application of theory to practice and the implications of research, and the exploration of technique and professional identity development.”

#### **IV. Resources**

a) Comment on the adequacy of physical resources and facilities, e.g., library, computer, and laboratory facilities.

The School of Education boasts a “Microcomputer-Based Laboratory Learning and Teaching Resource Center” and newly enhanced classrooms. Although the library was under renovation when we visited, its outdoor lighting made it a place where students would want to study. We met the library director (Mr. Stephen Kirkpatrick) and education librarian (Ms. Joanne Spadaro) in the temporarily reduced-space Curriculum Materials Center, which has been specifically designed for the needs of students in Education. Coming from a university with a top-notch Teacher Resource Centre, I was impressed by the education collection at Old Westbury and Ms. Spadaro’s vast knowledge about educational materials and her obvious preparation for our meeting. Mr. Kirkpatrick and Ms. Spadaro work in a spirit of consultation with the School of Education; both willing to allocate resources to ensure this program’s success with ideas for the additional resources outlined in the application already unleashing their creative juices. Additionally, these physical resources and facilities are located within one of the most beautiful campuses I have ever experienced.

- b) Comment on the adequacy of *resources* for locating field experience and student teaching/practicum sites and for supporting students while completing these experiences.

Mr. Vincent Juba, Director of Field Experience and Certification, has worked tirelessly to ensure that Old Westbury students are placed in supportive environments for their undergraduate student teaching placements. He will certainly be able to secure similar placements for the cohort of graduate students for this program. He provides ongoing support for students in the field. Dean Nancy Brown's background rests in the intersection between teacher education and special education. Her leadership will allow her faculty members to continue their current levels of support for students as placement offerings are extended to this new group of students.

- c) Comment on the *partnerships* in place and their ability to provide an adequate number of sites for field placements and student teaching/practicum in relation to the number of students in the program.

"The Office of Field Experience and Clinical Services within the SOE has ongoing arrangements for facilitating observation and student teaching in 23 districts on Long Island and in 7 districts of New York City. Office staff work closely with staff at the SUNY Urban Teaching Center (SUTEC) for New York City placements." Section 5 in the application lists partnerships in place with five external instruction placement sites offering more than sufficient placements to offer students selections matching their chosen career specializations. Furthermore, the demand from local school districts where 75% indicate a need for Special Education and 78% report being "very satisfied" with the Old Westbury students they have hired reflects a high likelihood of success in securing placements.

- d) Based on discussions with faculty and administrators about administrative support for the program, what is the degree of institutional commitment to the program as demonstrated by a) the operating budget, b) faculty salaries, c) the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers and d) workload?

"This Master of Science degree is compatible with, and is an essential component of Old Westbury's central planning goals to grow enrollment, build an image of quality and achieve financial equilibrium." The word "essential," while not used directly, was emphasized by faculty members, librarians, and the Dean throughout the day. Provost Patrick O'Sullivan strongly reiterated the University's commitment to this program with the recent hires proof of this commitment. These discussions left no doubt in my mind about the institutional commitment to this program with respect to a) the operating budget, b) faculty salaries, c) the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers, and d) workload.

#### **IV. Summary Comments and Additional Observations**

- a) Summarize the major strengths and weaknesses of the program as proposed with particular attention to feasibility of implementation and appropriateness of objectives for the degree offered, including the need for preparation in the specific certificate title(s).

The program has four major strengths. First, the program is designed to present part-time students with a current and coherent understanding of Special Education emphasizing inclusive classrooms and schools. Second, the faculty members represent an ideal combination of beginning and more advanced researchers from a range of ethnic/racial backgrounds, with the beginning researchers having an opportunity to profit from the more experienced ones. Third, the students the program is designed to serve have been too often ignored in graduate education—part-time, minority, and disadvantaged. Finally, the University and the School of Education are fully supportive of the

program and willing to put forward the necessary resources for program success, as most clearly demonstrated by the recent hires.

There are no major weaknesses to the program. However, the written materials did not always allow me to see its strengths. There seemed to be reluctance in particular for the Department to showcase the tremendous assets it has with respect to this proposed program in terms of faculty and staff. The Department needs to ensure that readers who do not have the possibility for a site visit still get the sense of the great possibilities I saw with my own eyes.

- b) If applicable, particularly for graduate programs, comment on the ways that this program will make a unique contribution to the field, and its likelihood of achieving State, regional, and/or national prominence.

The unique contribution of this program rests in its ability to offer an affordable and high-quality graduate program in Special Education to largely minority part-time graduate students, taught by racially diverse faculty members. Because too often education programs tend to replicate the current teacher population (mostly White, mostly female, mostly middle class), a population that increasingly does not match the US student population, Old Westbury can demonstrate to the region, the State, and the nation how graduate education can be changed for our current realities.

- c) Include any further observations important to the evaluation of this program proposal and provide any recommendations for the proposed program.

Our first meeting of the day was conducted with the Dean of the School of Education and the three Department Heads: Dr. Amy Hsu (Childhood Education and Literacy), Dr. Xavier Marechaux (Adolescence Education), and Dr. Diana Sukhram (Exceptional Education and Learning). My co-reviewer, Dr. Lawrence Maheady (SUNY Buffalo), commented on the commitment and shared vision of the Department Heads. This commitment and shared vision continued throughout the day, as we met with faculty members, the Provost, and librarians. The synergy demonstrated is strongly predictive that this program should fulfill and exceed its mandate.

Long Island/New York City teachers and the students with whom they work deserve the master's graduate program that SUNY Old Westbury is hoping to offer. SUNY Old Westbury has the curriculum, the faculty, and the resources to provide this program. In my opinion, SUNY and the New York State Department of Education should endeavor to get this program started as soon as possible.