

Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at United States University

Division of Standards, Accreditation, and Workforce Investment

January 2026

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **United States University**. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is made for the institution.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions
For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution**

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Met With Concerns
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	Met
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Met With Concerns
4) Continuous Improvement	Met With Concerns
5) Program Impact	Met

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Preliminary Multiple/Single Subject	7	6	1	0
Bilingual Authorization	5	5	0	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Accreditation Team Report**

Institution: **United States University**

Dates of Visit: **November 16-19, 2025**

Accreditation Team Recommendation: **Accreditation With Stipulations**

Previous History of Accreditation Status

Accreditation Reports	Accreditation Status
Date: September 2017 <u>Accreditation Re-Visit Report</u>	<u>Accreditation</u>
Date: March 7, 2017 <u>Accreditation Re-Visit Report</u>	<u>Accreditation With Major Stipulations</u>
Date: April 10, 2016 <u>Accreditation Site Visit Report</u>	<u>Accreditation With Stipulations</u>

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation With Stipulations** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, completers, and local school personnel. The team obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All Preconditions have been determined to be met.

Program Standards

Program Standards for the Preliminary Multiple/Single Subjects Credential Program were found to be Met with the exception of Program Standard 3, which was met with Concerns.

Program Standards for the Bilingual Authorization - Spanish program were found to be Met.

Common Standards

Common Standards 2 and 5 were Met, while Common Standards 1, 3, and 4 were Met with Concerns.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found that all standards were Met for the Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject credential programs, with the exception of Program Standard 3 which was Met with Concerns; all program standards for the Bilingual Authorization - Spanish were Met and that Common Standards 2 and 5 were met while Common Standards 1, 3, and 4 were Met With Concerns, the team recommends **Accreditation With Stipulations**.

The team recommends the following stipulations. Within one-year United States University will:

1. Provide evidence that the institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program admission, advisement, field-based supervision and clinical experiences. (Common Standard 1.4)
2. Provide evidence that the Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution. (Common Standard 1.5)
3. Provide evidence that the unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to the program. (Common Standard 3.3)
4. Provide evidence that site-based supervisors selected are certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. (Common Standard 3.5, 3.6 and MS/SS Program Standard 3.D)
5. Provide evidence that site-based supervisors are receiving the required 10 hours of training, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner. (Common Standard 3.7 and MS/SS Program Standard 3.D)
6. Provide evidence that the program ensures that district employed supervisors remain current in the knowledge and skills for candidate supervision and program expectations. (MS/SS Program Standard 3.D)
7. Provide evidence that the required 600 hours of clinical practice are completed and verified as appropriate activities by the program. (MS/SS Program Standard 3.A)
8. Provide evidence that the education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at the unit level that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings. (Common Standard 4.1)

9. Provide evidence that the unit regularly and systematically collects, analyzes, and uses candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services. (Common Standard 4.3)
10. Provide a seventh-year report and host a focused revisit.
11. Not be permitted to propose new programs until all stipulations are removed.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- United States University continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements:

Preliminary Multiple-Single Subject with Traditional Student Teaching, Undergraduate
Integrated, and Intern Pathways

Bilingual Added Authorization - Spanish

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Programs Reviewers:

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Common Standards:

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Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Program Review Addendum
Course Syllabi and Course of Study
Candidate Advisement Materials
Accreditation Website
Assessment Materials
Candidate Handbooks
Survey Results
Performance Expectation Materials
Precondition Responses

Performance Assessment Results and
Examination Results
Accreditation Data Dashboard
Supervisor Training Materials
Clinical Practice Logs
Supervisor Logs
SB488 Certification Documents
Assessment Time Lin
Sibme (demonstration)
Teachers' Lounge (resource website)
Candidate Tracking Log/Worksheet

Interviews Conducted

Constituencies	TOTAL
Candidates	16
Completers	10
Employers	6
Institutional Administration	9
Program Coordinators	3
Faculty	11
TPA Coordinator	1
Support Providers	2
Field Supervisors – Program	8
Field Supervisors – District	4
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Subject Matter Mentors	7
Advisory Board Members	3
Community Partners	9
KDP Honor Society Sponsors and Members	2
Faculty Senate	3
TOTAL	95

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed more than once due to multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background Information

United States University (USU) is a small, private institution serving approximately 2000 students, the majority of whom are enrolled in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Founded in 1997 as Inter American College to serve underserved communities—particularly Hispanic and Latino populations in Southern California—USU became United States University in 2010 and is accredited by WASC and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). The university emphasizes affordability, accessibility, and student-centered learning, offering online instruction.

In 2025, the university relocated to Sandy Springs, Georgia, but maintains Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation and offices in San Diego. The move was due to the need for expanded space and a desire to be part of National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC SARA), the future opportunity to add pre-licensure programs in the College of Nursing and Health Science, and to further develop in the International Business programs in a more central location.

Education Unit

The College of Education (COE) at United States University offers educator preparation programs accredited by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission), along with an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership and a master's in education that are not associated with credentials. The Office of Educational Partnerships and Placements (OEPP) supports the credential programs by ensuring that each candidate is placed in an approved setting and meets all credential requirements. Weekly COE and OEPP team meetings are held to monitor candidate progress, placement requests, MOUs approved, and the credentialing process. The fully online COE has between 75-80 active candidates across all programs, attracting candidates from across the state of California. The faculty team includes a full-time Program Director, 20 adjunct faculty members, 14 actively engaged instructors and eight supervising adjuncts specializing in candidate support with both intern and student teacher supervision provided.

Table 1: Enrollment and Completion Data

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2024-25)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2025-26)
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSEE): Integrated Educator Preparation Program (ITEP)	0	2
Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) - Multiple Subject/Single Subject Traditional	28	29
MAT - Multiple Subject/Single Subject Intern	22	17
Teacher Credential Preparation Program (TCPP) Multiple Subject/Single Subject Traditional	29	20

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2024-25)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2025-26)
TCPP Multiple Subject/Single Subject Intern	24	12
Bilingual Language Authorization Program (BILA)		1(enrolled in TCPP)
Total	103	70

The Visit

This site visit was conducted virtually. Institutional and program constituencies were interviewed via technology.

The visit proceeded in accordance with all normal accreditation protocols.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

After review of all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be met.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Preliminary Multiple/Single Subject with Traditional, Integrated, and Intern Pathways

Program Design

USU offers multiple and single subject preparation programs via traditional and intern pathways at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Programs are offered in a hybrid format on a non-traditional schedule, with six eight-week terms per year (two course terms are considered a semester). Student teaching and intern courses are not offered in the Summer 2 term to align with K-12 school systems. Flexible start times facilitate candidates' ability to complete the program expeditiously, with all courses offered every eight weeks. Intern candidates are able to start the term following the completion of their pre-service courses, allowing the flexibility of starting mid-year.

From 2021 to 2023, the programs saw steady increase in enrollment but have since experienced a slight decrease in the traditional student teaching pathway and a slight increase in the intern pathway. In 2025, there were 20 multiple subject student teachers, seven multiple subject interns, 21 single subject student teachers, and eight single subject interns. Current enrollment stands at 81 across all undergraduate and graduate programs.

The COE has a dean who reports to the provost along with a full-time program director and the Office of Educational Partnerships and Placements (OEPP), which consists of a manager of educational placements. OEPP supports the COE by ensuring all candidates are placed in appropriate classrooms, meet credential requirements, and are successful in the program. The college employs 20 adjunct faculty members, 14 instructors, four student teaching supervisors, and four intern supervisors.

The COE leadership and OEPP meet weekly to monitor the program specifics of MOUs, candidate progress, placement details, and credentialing requirements. Leadership meets quarterly with faculty to share program information. The COE is under the department of Academic Affairs, and the dean of the COE reports directly to the provost and is a part of the President's cabinet. The provost meets weekly with the leadership team and one-on-one with the COE dean. The COE holds an annual retreat with faculty where they review data and discuss continuous program improvement. Additionally, the program disseminates a quarterly newsletter and meets bi-monthly with the curriculum committee for program improvements. To gather input from its constituencies and partners, USU's COE holds quarterly meetings with its Program Advisory Committee (PAC). This committee comprises former and current educators, administrators, district personnel, and community members, yielding qualitative data.

After the completion of student teaching/internship, feedback regarding candidates, the program, and the university supervisor is collected through a survey from site-based supervisors and employers/principals. University supervisors give feedback on candidates, site-based supervisors, employers/principals, the program, and placements. Candidates evaluate their placement, and both site-based and university supervisors. Finally, candidates and faculty provide feedback through an end-of-course evaluation, and candidates complete an additional program survey at the end of the program. This data is reviewed during the yearly faculty retreat and is used for program improvement.

Over the past two years, all programs have been revised to incorporate the TPE 7 requirements. Signature assignments, embedded into courses, align with the new literacy standards. In addition, an internship program was launched for both multiple-subject and single-subject candidates. The single-subject program was expanded to include art, dance, theater, and health sciences.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The teaching credential programs are offered in a hybrid format, combining online coursework and fieldwork with in-person student teaching and internship hours. The multiple subjects program is offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The single-subject program is offered at the graduate level only. The intern pathway is offered at the graduate level. Graduate-level credential programs also offer a Master's in Teaching.

Both the multiple and single subject pathways require eight courses prior to student teaching seminar and clinical practice. Candidates reported that the candidate portal was well-organized and easy to navigate, which enabled them to be successful in their coursework. Ample resources are offered to support candidates beyond the classroom. Courses are differentiated according to credential pathway, specific pedagogy, and practices.

Candidates interviewed shared how content builds around each course, along with assignments, strategies, and practices, is applicable and prepares them for the classroom. They said the discussion board assignment provides them with great insight into education, thanks to the diverse group of candidates represented in the courses. There is depth of conversation, and the instructors give authentic feedback that fosters growth and critical thinking. Individuals also shared that the course load is consistent and manageable, making the program accessible to those of all ages and life circumstances. Candidates stated that instructors are personable, available, and supportive.

Teaching candidates complete a minimum of 600 supervised clinical practice hours over the course of the program. Candidates log clinical practice hours through the Sibme platform. The program director stated that supervisors are responsible for verifying logged hours; however, interviews revealed a lack of clarity over what activities qualified as clinical practice. Interviews revealed inconsistent information about how single-subject candidates are meeting their 600-hour requirement, as some interviewees claimed that candidates are only required to take over one class period in their content area, while others stated that two periods are required.

Additionally, candidates reported that they log hours for lesson planning and grading that are done outside of the classroom.

Content in coursework is scaffolded throughout the program. A total of 40 hours of virtual early fieldwork aligned with critical areas of teaching including English learners, special education, and specific pedagogy is spread across eight courses. Candidates observe and reflect on skills specific to the course as they review the lesson video. Fieldwork videos are chosen from candidate lessons recorded through Sibme, as well as other sources. Candidates expressed that the fieldwork component helped to prepare them for the classroom. They observed a variety of grade levels, content areas, supports, and best practices.

Candidates are offered a diverse range of placements through a variety of virtual fieldwork observations and a 16-week clinical practice placement. OEPP places candidates with partnering districts holding a current Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). If there is no MOU, a request for partnership is made and completed prior to placement. At the beginning of the program, candidates are given the opportunity to request their top three districts for student teaching. Interns submit an intern application. Fieldwork is monitored by the course instructor.

A university supervisor oversees a candidate during their clinical practice placement, serves as the instructor for the accompanying seminar course, and ensures program requirements are met. For the past year, university supervisors completed only four formal observations per semester but have now increased this to meet the required six formal observations per “semester” (16 weeks). Site-based supervisors are assigned candidates based on MOU criteria and are required to complete 10 hours of training, which includes orientation and university coaching modules. The university supervisor meets with the candidate and the site-based supervisor to review the requirements during clinical practice orientation. The site-based supervisor oversees the candidate in the classroom and along with the university supervisor gives feedback, via Sibme, on each formal observation.

The only required meeting between the university supervisor and site-based supervisor is the orientation with no additional regularly scheduled meetings, but emails may be exchanged to address questions throughout the placement. Site-based supervisors expressed the need for more consistent communication and guidance such as a pacing guide. The university supervisor meets with the candidate on a weekly basis to discuss progress and program requirements. Both the university supervisor and site-based supervisors formally evaluate the candidate on the TPEs twice per semester, however, this has been updated to the required number as of this report’s writing. Site-based supervisors described the candidates as well-prepared, engaged, and eager to learn.

Interns are assigned a university supervisor and a district-employed site-based supervisor. The site-based supervisor is chosen based on district position and/or credential area. Candidates shared a need for a supervisor with experience in their credential area. Some content areas are

not addressed in courses, and both the university supervisor and site-based supervisor do not always have specific content area experience (specifically music, art, theater, and dance).

Candidates shared that the site-based supervisor formally evaluates them twice throughout the semester and felt very supported by both the site-based supervisor and the university.

University supervisors meet bi-weekly with interns to discuss progress and program requirements.

Candidates are required to pass signature assignments within each course and may be allowed to redo the assignment if they need more support. Per the Student Teaching Handbook, during student teaching, the university and site-based supervisor discuss any candidate(s) failing to meet TPEs. The university supervisor will determine the next steps of support for remediation. Candidates continuing to fail to meet expectations may be removed from the classroom placement and program.

Candidates interviewed frequently shared how personable and communicative their instructors and supervisors were. They felt the university was attentive to their needs. A candidate with special accommodations stated she felt well cared for and that the university modeled the type of care and support she would want to offer her own students.

Candidates who had difficulties in their clinical practice placement stated that the university supervisor and university were quick to offer support. Each candidate shared that the university immediately found an appropriate placement where they could succeed in meeting requirements.

Surveys are completed by candidates, university supervisors, and site-based supervisors. Candidates are evaluated on the TPEs once per term. Additionally, candidates must complete and pass the edTPA to be recommended for their preliminary credential. Feedback received through this process is analyzed during the yearly faculty retreat with data used for continuous program improvement. One change addressed the challenge candidates faced in being evaluated on every observation. The university took that feedback and separated formal observations from the TPE evaluations. This reduced anxiety and allowed supervisors to give authentic feedback and better support for candidate progress.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates are assessed through signature assignments in program courses. Rubrics are used to assess the learning outcomes aligned to the TPEs. In clinical practice, candidates are monitored and evaluated by both the university supervisor and site-based supervisor on six formal observations and twice through the TPE evaluation. Additionally, candidates are required to complete and pass the edTPA.

Upon successful completion of coursework, clinical practice, and required assessments, the program director/dean confirms candidates have met all required elements and the credential analyst recommends candidates for their preliminary teaching credential.

The student teaching and intern handbooks outline program requirements, including assessments and evaluations. Prior to beginning the program, OEPP provides all candidates with an in-service training to review expectations. TPA requirements are embedded into coursework. Candidates review TPA information to ensure they have a clear understanding of the necessary details. The TPA coordinator is available for guidance through office hours and individual meetings. The university supervisor gives additional guidance on student teaching and TPA expectations.

Candidates requiring additional support connect with both their university supervisor and their edTPA coordinator. The coordinator holds weekly office hours and bi-monthly webinars on the edTPA. Candidates who fail all or a portion of the assessment are required to meet with the edTPA coordinator prior to resubmission. The coordinator only receives scores if shared by the administration or individual candidates. Having access to this information, in its entirety, could help inform further support and program improvement.

Candidates are able to provide feedback on their support through the end-of-course and program surveys.

Assessment data on edTPA and the CSET are collected and reviewed during the yearly faculty retreat. This data is used for program improvements. One example of this was the result of TPA scores. After reviewing the feedback and scores, the program decided to hire a TPA coordinator for additional support. This has resulted in an increase in pass rates.

The edTPA assessment model is used to confirm that candidates demonstrate competencies in the TPEs. The edTPA Coordinator is responsible for the oversight of the assessment.

Candidates receive information about the program, assessment requirements, the appropriate use of materials, and program policies upon enrollment through their advisor and the student teaching handbook. This information is continually communicated through the Pearson website, through the Teacher's Lounge, which is housed on the university learning platform, and through the edTPA coordinator.

USU embeds edTPA elements throughout coursework. Student teaching seminars provide support and guidance to complete the assessment. Candidates are provided opportunities to attend office hours, bi-monthly informational meetings, and scheduled one-on-one support sessions with the edTPA coordinator. Attendance is cross-referenced with assessment scores to help identify candidates needing additional assistance.

Candidates interviewed shared that edTPA prep courses often did not align with the stage they were at in their program. They reported that some of the prep courses were taken after they had passed the TPA, and some assignments did not align with the specific credential pathway (SS/MS/Intern).

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, intern teachers, faculty employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are met for the Preliminary Multiple/Single Subject Programs except for the following:

Standard 3: Clinical Practice— Met with Concerns

Currently, the only required meeting between the university supervisor and district-employed supervisors is orientation. District-employed supervisors expressed a need for regular and consistent communication, as well as additional clarity regarding program requirements. Program verification of district-employed supervisor credentials or completion of the required 10 hours of orientation and training was not evident. (3D)

Reviewers were unable to confirm how the program verifies that candidates are completing the required 600 hours of clinical practice with appropriate activities. (3A)

Additionally, reviewers were unable to verify that the program selects site supervisors that hold a clear credential in the content area. (3D)

Bilingual Authorization - Spanish

Program Design

The Bilingual Authorization (BILA) program at USU is integrated into the Multiple/Single Subject programs and is only available to candidates enrolled in one of these programs. Prior to the site visit, the program required candidates demonstrate language proficiency via the CSET III, IV, and V. (When it was pointed out that only CSET III is necessary for the language proficiency requirement, the program revised this requirement.) Candidates complete their clinical practice in a bilingual classroom. These candidates complete three additional courses, beyond the Multiple/Single Subject program, that have been aligned to the Bilingual Teaching Performance Expectations (BTPEs). Currently, the program has only one candidate. Currently, no resources are allocated for recruitment to this program.

The BILA program is overseen by the College of Education Program Director and supported by two adjunct, bilingual authorized faculty members who have been part of the COE and the bilingual program for more than 10 years.

Since the BILA is woven into the Multiple/Single subject preparation programs, communication, program evaluation, and all other structures regarding it are the same as for these programs. The BILA program seeks input from its constituencies through surveys completed by candidates, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, site supervisors, and faculty.

The three required BILA courses were revised and aligned to meet the updated standards of the Bilingual Authorization program in 2022.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

Candidates complete three courses that have been aligned to address the Bilingual TPEs (BTPEs):

- EDU 522 First and Second Language Acquisition
- EDU 580 Bilingualism, Biliteracy, and Immersion
- EDU 581 Spanish Language Methods

Candidates are required to complete their clinical practice in a bilingual classroom. This is also how they meet the required 20 hours of fieldwork in a bilingual setting.

BILA-specific coursework is designed to support candidates in developing competence in strategies and methodologies to foster Spanish language development, and to provide an understanding of social issues affecting bilingual programs, including program models and instructional approaches that support bilingualism and biliteracy. Courses are taught by faculty who hold a bilingual authorization or equivalent and have adequate experience in and with the bilingual classroom. The first two courses are taught in English, with the option of submitting assignments in either English or Spanish. The third class is taught in Spanish to help strengthen candidates' language.

Coursework for the BILA is designed to support candidates in learning strategies and methodologies that promote Spanish language development, understanding social issues affecting bilingual programs, and exploring program models and instructional approaches to support bilingualism and literacy. Candidates examine the cognitive and metacognitive effects of bilingualism, biliteracy, and translanguaging. Bilingual candidates learn to design learning experiences based on research-based practices that meet the needs of their learners. Additionally, an emphasis is placed on understanding how to create and maintain a welcoming, supportive, and intercultural classroom climate.

BILA candidates complete 16 weeks of full-time clinical practice in a bilingual classroom. They are assigned a cooperating teacher or site supervisor who either holds a BILA or equivalent. University supervisors in this program also serve as seminar instructors and hold a BILA or equivalent certification, with experience teaching in bilingual classrooms. The university supervisor meets weekly with student teachers and bi-weekly with intern candidates. The credential analyst assigns and monitors clinical practice placements. Candidates reported receiving significant support from the university and their supervisor to ensure that an appropriate placement and support system was in place.

Assessment of Candidates

The additional courses required of the bilingual authorization introduce, provide practice in, and assess candidates on the BTPEs. Students enrolled in the bilingual program complete signature assignments that assess their mastery of the BTPEs in addition to the TPEs for their preliminary program. Candidates are also assessed on their competencies in the BTPEs during

their 16-week student teaching or internship in a bilingual classroom where they are supported by a bilingual credentialed supervisor.

The BILA program is fully integrated into the preliminary Multiple/Single Subject credential programs. Once the program director has verified that candidates have successfully completed all program requirements, candidates are recommended for the BILA at the same time that they are recommended for their preliminary credential.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, and the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, intern teachers, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Bilingual Authorization - Spanish Program.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

The origin of United States University is central to understanding the College of Education's (COE) impact on diversifying California's P-12 educator pipeline. Established to expand professional opportunities for individuals whose socioeconomic, migratory, educational, or racial/ethnic backgrounds limited access to higher education, the teacher education program intentionally elevated candidates' existing professional experience and bilingualism. Despite institutional changes over time, the COE remains a clear expression of the university's mission to provide postsecondary professional access for historically excluded populations.

Since its 2020 relaunch as a fully online program, the COE has experienced steady enrollment growth. Though small in size, the program delivers an exceptionally high-quality experience across its constituencies. Interviews consistently highlighted the leadership's responsiveness and genuine care, underscoring the COE's intentional, relationship-centered culture. The dedication of faculty, staff, and field personnel creates a uniquely personal experience that counters common assumptions about online and asynchronous learning. Candidates and recent completers frequently note feeling "seen and known" by the program.

As the institution's foundational academic unit, the USU COE is well positioned to expand its geographic and demographic reach by addressing the discrete findings of this review- none of which impede its ability to prepare diverse educators who reflect California's demographics and are equipped to serve all students with culturally responsive, mission-driven practice.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	<i>No response needed</i>
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among, and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California's adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant constituencies in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Consistently
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	Consistently
The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/instruction, field based supervision and clinical experiences.	Inconsistently
The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.	Inconsistently
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	Consistently
The institution employs, assigns and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	Consistently
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The USU College of Education's vision statement reflects its commitment to preparing critically reflective educators who are responsive to California's diverse public school communities and who embody civic responsibility, intellectual curiosity, and scholarly excellence.

The mission statements of USU and the COE serve as the foundation for the vision statement, which was finalized after multiple rounds of revision informed by discussions with stakeholder groups. This process reflects what program faculty describe as the "intentionally collaborative nature" of program development led by the Dean and Program Director.

The COE's adjunct faculty model ensures that instructional personnel are consistently engaged with P-12 colleagues, as they are active professionals in school and district communities themselves. Its strong emphasis on personalized outreach and relationship-building allows the unit to engage the broader educational community as well, as evidenced by interviews with school principals, district personnel, and members of the Program Advisory Committee. The Committee highlighted "ongoing dialogue, a genuine interest in diverse perspectives, and an open invitation for continual feedback" as hallmarks of the Dean's approach to program development.

Although the COE has not recently needed to recruit new faculty, its application, interview, onboarding, and development materials demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity, support, and faculty excellence. The retention of current faculty—many of whom have served the program and institution for two to more than 15 years—illustrates the unit's success in cultivating a stable, qualified instructional team. The credential recommendation process, developed and monitored by the COE, employs dedicated full-time staff to ensure multiple reviews of the requirements checklist used to track candidate readiness.

One of the most notable features of the COE's innovative approach to educator preparation is its monthly tuition payment plan, which allows candidates to "pay as they go." This significantly reduces, and often eliminates, program-related debt as candidates enter the teaching profession, thereby increasing financial accessibility for the diverse student body the COE serves. Additionally, despite the absence of formal recruitment resources such as advertising or marketing, the COE maintains consistent enrollment through "organic, boots-on-the-ground, word-of-mouth promotion" credited to the Dean's "personalized relationship-building approach", as described by university leadership.

According to institutional leaders, the COE is fiscally self-sustaining and contributes positively to the financial health of the university by maintaining steady enrollment and viable budgetary parameters. The COE is valued at USU—both philosophically, as a meaningful contributor to the university's mission, and fiscally, as a unit that supports institutional sustainability. However, the exponential growth the institution has effectively supported in other units, most notably the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, highlights the differentiation in institutional

resource allocation. The unit's ability to effectively monitor, identify, and resolve the multiple compliance discrepancies identified throughout this review is contingent upon resources to ensure that California educator preparation standards for each individual program are being consistently met. These discrepancies do not impede the unit's ability to effectively deliver their programs, nor do they negatively impact the quality of the programs offered. They do, however, punctuate the COE's need for additional resources. The COE's continued success is contingent on having dedicated infrastructure, systems, staffing and resources that can effectively support a growth (rather than maintenance) model.

Rationale for the Finding

While it is clear that the institution is responsive to the COE's fiscal needs for standard operational resources, unplanned requests for specific assets, and leverages existing University systems to support the unit's work, it is not evident that the COE has the dedicated resources to address the unique needs of each of its individual programs or across the unit. The operational effectiveness of the COE programs is dependent upon institutional systems and processes that cannot all be tailored or customized to ensure the unit is consistently effective in monitoring its specific California education preparation compliance needs. Interviews with program faculty and staff verified the program is "nimble" and can "quickly respond" to any candidate concern or curriculum adjustment that is needed. The ongoing responses to these discrete issues as they arise, while positively contributing to student centeredness and program experience, place the unit in a reactive, rather than proactive program development position.

Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	Team Finding
Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.	<i>No response needed</i>
The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.	Consistently
The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.	Consistently
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of program requirements.	Consistently
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

As evidenced by the Accreditation Data Systems (ADS) enrollment data, the COE has experienced a consistent and upward trend in recruiting, enrolling, and supporting their program candidates towards completion since the inception of its programs. Their program completion rates reflect the positive effect of their candidate-facing support processes. The COE provides access to educator preparation (and the teaching profession) for candidate populations that have historically experienced multiple barriers to entry and reflect the diversity of California's public school populations. This is a notable and explicit strength to highlight and is an example of the COE's vision enacted.

Interviews with academic advisors and advising administrators confirm that while the program delivery model is fully online and asynchronous, candidates receive dedicated and individualized support via personalized outreach. Beginning with orientation and continuing throughout the program, enrolled candidates receive check-in communication via email and phone calls to ensure they understand program requirements. Interviews with program candidates and completers confirmed that candidates have access to multiple resources of advising materials, made available to them "24/7", and clarity on who to contact for support when needed. One example of this is the "Teacher's Lounge" learning management system webpage, which program candidates, faculty, and staff highlight as a wealth of information that is "extremely helpful". Program completers also stated that they felt "the program really knew" them even as they did not meet many of the support team in person until graduation. The COE's ability to foster a sense of belonging and community amongst their fully online and remote candidates is a testament to their commitment to candidate support and success.

Candidates and program staff alike confirmed in interviews that candidate progression is tracked via benchmarks for credential, clinical practice, and course requirements. Candidate support outreach is prompted by candidate shortfalls in these areas. Due to the sample size of candidate and program completer interviews, it was unclear how proactive competency and performance expectations are used for candidate advisement and support. Interviews with program completers revealed a broad range of experiences with their academic advisors and program support staff. The university-wide system used to "trigger" academic advisement outreach, coupled with the intervention support plan designed by the COE, ensures that struggling candidates can quickly be identified and receive individualized support. It is clear that the COE designs its candidate support processes to be candidate-centered and personalized.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs offer a high-quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators and grounded in current research on effective practice. Coursework is integrated closely with field experiences to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows candidates to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required of the credential they seek.	Consistently
The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to the program.	Inconsistently
Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	Inconsistently
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	Inconsistently
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	Inconsistently
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently
For each <i>program</i> the <i>unit</i> offers, candidates have significant experience in <i>California public schools</i> with diverse <i>student</i> populations and the opportunity to work with the range of <i>students</i> identified in the <i>program</i> standards.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Based on document review and verified by interviews with campus leadership, faculty, compliance staff, and assessment and accreditation staff, it was evident that the unit is candidate centered with a focus on diversity. All faculty, staff, and key constituents spoke of the unit's care and compassion given to candidates. From interviews with candidates, faculty and employers, it was evident that the programs have a research-based vision that is well-

articulated in coursework. The unit's Program Advisory Committee engages in conversations with the dean and program director to ensure the programs continue to address the diverse needs of California students.

The team's ability to verify COE documents and fieldwork processes was limited as only a few SS site-based supervisors (interns only) were interviewed. No interviews were conducted with the MS site-based supervisors (student teaching or intern) or SS site-based supervisors (student teaching).

It is unclear how the unit collaborates with placement sites to select site-based supervisors.

Inconsistent evidence was found for ensuring site-based supervisors were certified and experienced in their candidate's specified content area, with one interviewed site-based supervisor stating they did not hold a credential in the area of the candidate they are currently supervising.

The unit ensures that fieldwork placements provide opportunities for experiences of diversity and school climate. Upon a student teaching or intern placement, the unit confirms that placement site and district are diverse via a Diversity Request Form and school websites. If a placement does not meet program standard diversity requirements, another placement is sought. Recently, the Affirming and Valuing Diversity in the Classroom (EDUC 501) syllabus was updated to more directly address issues of diversity which affect school climate. University supervisors described working with placements sites to ensure candidates had opportunities to experience the diverse needs as required by the EdTPA.

Inconsistent evidence was found for site-based supervisors training in supervision, orientation to the supervisory roles, and evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner. The unit provides supervisor training and orientation at the start of each term; however, not all interviewed supervisors attended the training or orientation. Interviewed site-based supervisors were not aware that they would be evaluated by candidates or the unit. At the end of each course, the institution's Curricular Team surveys candidates and faculty.

Site-based supervisors receive a USU tuition discount and library access. They are notified of these resources during their training. During the current year, the unit is planning to introduce award nominations for outstanding site-based supervisor (intern and student teacher pathways). Awards are already in place for outstanding faculty and outstanding candidate.

Interviewed site-based supervisors described a lack of or inconsistent communication with the unit and program. They stated that they learned about the placement requirements from the candidates. The COE lead supervisor provides regular meetings and office hours for site-based supervisors to reach out. Fieldwork materials are posted online in the COE Teacher's Lounge; however, site-based supervisors were either unaware of these resources or did not have time to access.

The unit has been using Sibme for five years to evaluate fieldwork. Candidates upload lesson plans, teaching videos, and reflections. Site supervisors access Sibme to review and provide feedback. Candidate submitted evidence and university and site-based supervisor feedback are aligned to TPEs. Candidates and supervisors have access to their materials. Supervisors have access to candidate dashboards which indicate task completion, action items, etc. Interviewed site-based supervisors indicated they were not aware of the Sibme platform and planned to follow their school district's evaluation procedures.

Rationale for the Finding

The team's ability to verify the COE's submitted documentation and processes was limited as interviews with only a few Single Subject site-based supervisors (interns only) were conducted. There was inconsistent evidence to ensure the unit collaborates with placement sites to select site-based supervisors and site-based supervisors were not always certified in the area in which a candidate was seeking a credential. Based on interviews, participation in training and orientation appears to be voluntary, there is a lack of or poor communication with the unit, and site-based supervisors were not aware of available online resources. They reported relying on candidates to inform them of placement needs. Recognition of site-based supervisors is in an implementation phase.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Inconsistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Consistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Inconsistently
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key constituencies such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Based on document review and verified by interviews with campus leadership, faculty, compliance staff, assessment and accreditation staff it was evident the unit has available multiple forms of assessment. The unit collaborates with the institution for most of its data

collection. Evidence was found for data use by the dean and program director at a macro level (e.g., pass rates). Inconsistent evidence was found for systematic data use by all faculty, supervisors, and key stakeholders.

The unit has been using Sibme for five years to evaluate fieldwork. Candidates upload lesson plans, teaching videos, and reflections. University and site-based supervisors access Sibme to review and provide feedback. Candidate-submitted evidence and supervisor feedback are aligned to TPEs. Candidates and supervisors have access to their materials. Supervisors have access to candidate dashboards which indicate task completion, action items, etc. The COE lead supervisor, dean, and program director have access to all materials. Available aggregated data includes frequency of TPE observations (including using AI to indicate where in the evidence the TPE was observed), average TPE ratings, and feedback comments aligned to TPEs. This data is reviewed at program meetings and the COE's Annual Data Summit.

The unit uses a Google Form to collect employer feedback twice per year, which is distributed and collected by the dean's office and is reviewed at the COE's Annual Data Summit. EdTPA results are provided to the program director. Pass rates are shared with the EdTPA coordinator along with names of candidates who need a retake. The EdTPA coordinator does not have direct access to the data. EdTPA pass rates, most recently 85%, are reviewed at the COE's Annual Data Summit.

Other evaluations are done at the institution level. The unit is supported by the institution's Curricular Team, Office of Accreditation and Assessment, and the Office of Alumni and Career Services. Working with faculty course leads, the Curricular Team designs course shells in Desire to Learn (D2L) learning management system, aligning each course with TPEs and student learning outcomes. Course shells include Signature Assignment Rubrics (SARS). Each signature assignment is assessed as Introduced, Reinforced, Mastered, with the curricular team looking for candidate progression. The curricular team uses LMS to survey candidates and faculty at the end of each course, and surveys candidates at program end. Data from the LMS is extracted annually by the institution's Office of Institutional Research and reviewed at the COE's Annual Data Summit.

Approximately two years ago, in response to WASC feedback, the institution created an Office of Accreditation and Assessment. Approximately two months ago, the institution started to transition to use WATERMARK EVALKIT for strategic planning and program review and evaluation. While the institution previously used WATERMARK with the LMS, the strategic planning and program review and evaluation functions were not active. Interviews with institutional leadership revealed that these data are currently housed "all over the place" on a variety of individuals' computers and it is difficult to discern and analyze accurate data. The institution plans to review each program on a five-year cycle and integrate the end of course and end of program surveys from the LMS. The WATERMARK EVALKIT is not yet active for the COE. It is anticipated this will happen in the next 8 to 12 months, with the decision made to start design following the Commission Site Visit. A stated goal is to move from anecdotal

evidence to a systemic process, to create action plans, and close the loop. Data from WATERMARK EVALKIT will be provided for the COE Annual Data Summit.

The institution's office of Alumni and Career Services provides career services for candidates and conducts a Gainful Employment Post Graduation Survey of program completers. Based on this survey, the office provides current employer contact information to the dean which is used to distribute the COE Employer Survey.

Site-based supervisors and key stakeholders (community partners) described informal feedback mechanisms (e.g., make a phone call) and said the unit was always responsive.

COE faculty and staff from the institution's offices that provide institution level collected data are invited to the COE's Annual Data Summit. Evidence of program and support services responses to data provided were candidate specific (e.g., based on candidate feedback: changing a placement setting, ensuring placement site met EdTPA diversity needs, changing times of fieldwork evaluation) and did not focus on unit or program improvement. The unit quickly responds and works with the institution to correct rubric needs, survey items, etc. Some faculty questioned why look at specific data if EdTPA pass rates and hiring rates indicate candidates are successful. Evidence was inconsistent that the Data Summit was used to reflect on the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and services.

Rationale for the Finding

In collaboration with the institution, the COE has multiple sources of data (e.g., EdTPA pass rates, fieldwork evaluations, candidate and faculty course feedback, candidate end of program feedback, job placement, and employer feedback) which highlight candidate preparedness. However, there is no formal mechanism for the unit to evaluate the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services. Use of the Sibme platform for fieldwork evaluations was inconsistent. The EdTPA coordinator does not have access to candidate and aggregate institutional data. Data is reviewed at the COE Annual Data Summit, however interviews revealed review and actions focused on individual candidate specific needs rather than unit-wide effectiveness. As the institution's Office of Accreditation is only two years old and the current COE programs are only a few years old, interviews revealed that the unit is in the early stages of learning to use data for program improvement and evaluating trends over time. The implementation of the WATERMARK EVALKIT tool for program review and evaluation is estimated to be eight to 12 months out. Feedback from key constituents, other than employers, was informal and not systematic.

Common Standard 5: Program Impact	Team Finding
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California's students.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard.

Through documentation provided on the accreditation website and interviews with the COE dean and program director, reviewers determined that the COE has a process in place to track and ensure candidates successfully complete Commission adopted competency requirements prior to credential recommendation. The Commission Accreditation Data Dashboard for 2024-25 indicated that 100% percent of multiple subject and 83% of single subject completers responded that their program was effective or very effective at “developing the skills or tools you needed to become a teacher/education specialist/school leader.” EdTPA competency evaluations reveal teacher candidates successfully impacting teaching and learning for all students in schools.

Documentation review and interviews with COE dean, program director, faculty, site-based supervisors, district employers, and program advisory board members about the impact candidates and program completers have on the educational community verified positive impact in schools and communities. Alumni are sought as adjunct faculty and district-employed supervisors as they are committed to program values. EdTPA pass rate results, most recently 85%, and SIMBE fieldwork evaluation results reveal that candidates are well prepared and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students.

All programs encourage candidates to engage in their school community during fieldwork/clinical placement. Candidates participate in parent nights, facilitate parent workshops, implement student low attendance interventions, attend school sport and fund-raising events, and assist district-employed supervisors with learning and adopting technology.

Data reviewed indicated that recent program completers continue employment in their credentialed area, and in some cases have gone on to roles in administration both at the school and school district levels. Faculty and the Gainful Employment Post-Graduation Survey, facilitated by the institution’s Alumni and Career Services office, reported that completers report job promotions, awards, or other accomplishments since program completion. A small

number of program completers return to USU for a master's degree. Employers stated that they frequently hired candidates from their student teaching or intern placements.