

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

**Professional Services Division**

**June 2016**

**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 reading the Institutional Self-Study Reports, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, the recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is made for the institution.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions  
For all Programs offered by the Institution**

	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met with Concerns</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
1) Educational Leadership	<b>X</b>		
2) Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation			<b>X</b>
3) Resources	<b>X</b>		
4) Faculty and Instructional Personnel	<b>X</b>		
5) Admission	<b>X</b>		
6) Advice and Assistance	<b>X</b>		
7) Field Experience and Clinical Practice	<b>X</b>		
8) District Employed Supervisors		<b>X</b>	
9) Assessment of Candidate Competence	<b>X</b>		

**Program Standards**

	<b>Total Program Standards</b>	<b>Program Standards</b>		
		<b>Met</b>	<b>Met with Concerns</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
Multiple Subject	19	<b>19</b>		
Single Subject	19	<b>19</b>		
Bilingual Authorization	6	<b>6</b>		

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 Self-Study Report

- 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:** April 10-12, 2016

**Accreditation Team  
Recommendation:** Accreditation with Stipulations

**Rationale:**

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** was based on a thorough review of the institutional self-study; additional supporting documents available during the visit; interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel; along with additional information requested from program leadership before and during the site visit. The team felt that it obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgements about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Common Standards

The decision of the team regarding the nine common standards is that Common Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are **Met**, Common Standard 2, Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation, is **Not Met**, and Common Standard 8, District-employed Supervisors, is **Met with Concerns**.

Program Standards

The team reviewed three programs and found that all program standards are **Met**.

Overall Recommendation

The team completed a thorough review of program documentation, evidence provided at the site, additional information provided by program administration and faculty, and interviews with candidates, program completers, faculty, administrators, employers and student services staff. Due to the finding that seven Common Standards were met, one met with concerns, and one not met; and that for three Commission-approved programs all program standards were met; the team unanimously recommends a decision of **Accreditation with Stipulations**.

The following stipulations are to be addressed in a focused revisit to take place within one year:

- The University must provide evidence that a comprehensive and unit-wide assessment and evaluation system that addresses all credential programs is implemented and guides program improvement.

- The University must provide evidence that district-employed supervisors are trained in supervision, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to recommend candidates for the following credentials:

**Initial/Teaching Credentials**

Multiple Subject  
Single Subject

**Advanced/Service Credentials**

Bilingual Authorization

Staff recommends that:

- The institution’s response to the preconditions be accepted.
- United States University be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- 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.

**Accreditation Team**

**Team Leader:**

**Edmundo Litton**  
Loyola Marymount University

**Common Standards Cluster:**

**Steve Turley**  
CSU, Long Beach (Retired)

**Mahmoud Suleiman**  
CSU, Bakersfield

**Programs Cluster:**

**Chris Boosalis**  
CSU, Sacramento

**Staff to the Visit**

**Paula Jacobs**  
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

**Documents Reviewed**

University Catalog  
Common Standards Report  
Course Syllabi

Biennial Reports and CTC Feedback  
Samples of Candidate work  
Schedule of Classes

**Documents Reviewed**

Candidate Portfolios	Advisement Documents
Fieldwork Handbooks	Faculty Vitae
Advising Plans	Faculty Meeting Agenda and Minutes
Program Documents	Faculty Communication
Program Assessment Feedback	TPA Data
Assignment Directions	Department Website
Assignment Rubrics	Demographic distribution of Faculty
Coordinator Meeting Agendas and Notes	Faculty Retreat Agendas and Minutes
Exit Surveys	Advisory Meeting Minutes
Faculty communication	Assessment of TPEs Binder

**Interviews Conducted**

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Candidates	21
Completers	36
Employers	3
Institutional Administration	5
Program Coordinators	8
Faculty	2
Adjunct Faculty	34
TPA Coordinator	1
Advisors	3
Field Supervisors – Program	4
Field Supervisors – District	1
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Advisory Board Members	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121</b>

## **Background Information**

United States University (USU) is a private, for-profit university located in Chula Vista, San Diego County. It currently serves approximately 290 students in four colleges with graduate and undergraduate degrees in health sciences, business, and nursing as well as teaching credentials and a Master of Arts in Education. The student population includes approximately 42% non-resident (international) students, 16% Hispanic, 11% Asian, 9% White, 8% Black, or African-American, 2% Pacific Islander and the remaining non-specified.

USU was initially founded in 1997 as InterAmerican College (IAC), a non-profit college geared to help immigrants transfer degrees. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing granted the institution initial accreditation and approved the multiple and single subject credential programs, including the bilingual emphasis credentials. Since its beginning, IAC was dedicated to educating future bilingual teachers. According to the 2008 Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) report on IAC, the area in which the college was previously located (National City) was once considered the 13th most impoverished city in the nation. In 2009, IAC received initial accreditation from WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). At that time, WASC also approved a structural change from nonprofit status to for-profit status. This change took place in April 2010, and the school was renamed United States University (USU). The USU vision is for students to achieve their fullest potential to live, work, and lead within the global community; the university seeks to provide opportunities with a special outreach to underserved groups.

## **Education Unit**

The USU College of Education offers a Master of Arts degree in Education in five areas of focus; STEM, Administration and Leadership (K-12), Early Childhood Education, Higher Education Administration, and Special Education as well as three Commission-approved programs; the Multiple Subject and Single Subject (English, World Languages (Spanish), Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies) preliminary teaching credentials and the Bilingual Authorization.

The College of Education enrollment is extremely small, with current enrollment of 11 individuals in Commission-approved programs and 6 in the Master of Arts, a total enrollment of 17 for the College. The College of Education is led by a Dean who serves in many capacities and oversees both credential programs and the Master of Arts in Education. The Dean, a Coordinator of Clinical Placement and nine adjunct faculty members comprise the credential program faculty.

**Table 1  
Program Review Status**

Program Name	Program Level (Initial or Advanced)	Number of Program Completers (2014-15)	Number of Candidates Enrolled or admitted 15-16
Multiple Subject	Initial	0	2
Single Subject	Initial	3	10
Bilingual Authorization	Initial	0	1

*Source: USU Matrix of Enrollment and Completers; January 2016*

**The Visit**

The Accreditation Site Visit took place Sunday through Tuesday, April 10-12, 2016. Due to the small size of the programs this visit was 3 days, typical for Commission accreditation site visits of this size. Four accreditation team members convened at noon Sunday April 10, 2016 for lunch and a team meeting prior to attending a Sunday afternoon orientation and interviews at the university campus in Chula Vista. The team was greeted by the Dean of the College of Education and the US University President who provided a warm welcome and orientation to the history of the University and its credential programs, candidates, and faculty.

Prior to the visit, the team reviewed the USU response to the Common Standards, and the Preliminary Report of Findings from Program Assessment. The response to the Common Standards from USU did not provide a full picture of the institutional practices for meeting the standards. The team completed a pre-visit report and informed the institution of areas needing information or clarification. The institutional administration prepared a response that was made available to the team prior to the visit. Interviews and additional evidence at the site visit provided a more accurate depiction of institutional practices and procedures that was not captured in the response to the Common Standards document.

A Mid-Visit Report was shared with the Dean mid-day Monday. Interviews and data collection continued through Monday afternoon with team members conferring with one another frequently. The pre-planning, response to information requested by team members prior to and at the site visit and schedule modifications provided opportunities to gather information on the organization and implementation of Commission-approved programs. Team meetings were held during lunch as well as each evening. On Monday evening, consensus was reached on all standard findings and on an accreditation recommendation. The exit report was held at the United States University campus at 11:30 am Tuesday, April 12, 2016.

## Common Standards

### Standard 1: Educational Leadership

Met

The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision for educator preparation that is responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks. The vision provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance and experiences, scholarship, service, collaboration, and unit accountability. The faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and governance of all professional preparation programs. Unit leadership has the authority and institutional support needed to create effective strategies to achieve the needs of all programs and represents the interests of each program within the institution. The education unit implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.

### Findings

The programs at United States University (USU) are meant to provide a meaningful, affordable, and accessible teacher preparation program to traditionally underserved communities. The core values of United States University are: Affordability, Quality, Integrity, Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Life-Long Learning. These core values are translated into a vision, which states, "Our students will achieve their fullest potential to live, work, and lead, in a global society." Graduates of the program are reflective and critical educators who are leaders, practice civic responsibility, and conduct scholarship to advance knowledge and practice. Furthermore, graduates of the program are expected to collaborate with local and global partners to create a just and caring society.

The major scholars that serve as a foundation for the research-based vision include S. Krashen whose work on language learning influences the program emphasis on working with linguistically diverse students. The work of M.S. Knowles backs a vision that supports adult learners. Candidates stated that the program was tailored to adult learners because of the flexibility of the online classes. Furthermore, the program is informed by the work of Nieto, Piaget, Froebel, Gardner, and Vygotsky.

The program follows a sequence of coursework where candidates start with foundational and theoretical knowledge. Candidates then participate in additional coursework focusing on teaching strategies that are effective for English Learners (ELs) and the promotion of inclusive classrooms. During clinical practice, candidates are asked to demonstrate that they can effectively teach the California content standards.

The various scholars who support the vision of the teacher preparation program are infused in various courses. For example, Piaget and Vygotsy are prominently discussed in *Educational Psychology*. In the course *Affirming and Valuing Diversity in the Classroom*, candidates are



exposed to Nieto and Bode for a theoretical understanding on meeting the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Interviews confirmed that faculty collaborate regularly to ensure that their curriculum is not repetitive and consistently ties to the mission of the teacher preparation program.

The faculty are involved in the organization, coordination, and governance of the teacher preparation program by participating in faculty meetings, program reviews, and the development of the biennial report. For example, when addressing a perceived weakness in the candidate preparation for addressing the needs of ELs or students with special needs, faculty and staff made a decision to address this need through threaded discussions. Interviews with members of the advisory board revealed the administration of the institution consults on matters such as the integration of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) in coursework or the development of an Education Specialist Intern program.

Since the inception of the credential program at USU, starting when the institution was known as IAC, there have been numerous leadership changes of the President, Chief Academic Officer, and Dean. Despite these changes, the institution has the institutional support to provide effective programs. In an interview with the Interim President, who also serves as the Provost, he expressed his commitment to the College of Education despite the small number of enrolled students. The Dean confirmed the institutional support. USU has provided the College of Education with an outreach coordinator and there is a target to increase enrollment (up to 35 candidates) by January 2017. The administrators recognize the need to create systematic procedures for assessment with the increased enrollment.

The Dean serves as the credential analyst for USU. Candidates confirmed they received information on the credential application process when they started the credential program and they receive reminders throughout the program from a student advisor so they know what requirements may still be missing. An examination of program documents show that candidates are required to pass the Basic Skills requirement (CBEST) prior to admission and that they are not allowed to participate in Student Teaching without demonstrating subject matter competency (passing the CSET). After Student Teaching, the candidate participates in an exit interview with the Dean and the Coordinator of Clinical Placement and the credential recommendation is completed. Student files were examined at the site visit. It was evident through completed checklists that the Institution monitors the credential recommendation process, including meeting various requirements such as passing the CBEST, CSET and completing coursework.

**Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation****Not Met**

The education unit implements an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement. The system collects, analyzes, and utilizes data on candidate and program completer performance and unit operations. Assessment in all programs includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes.

**Findings**

A review of the self-study, the evidence provided prior to and during the site visit, and site visit interviews lead to the conclusion that there is neither a description of, nor evidence that the unit practices systematic assessment and evaluation that informs ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement. The Dean functions as assessment coordinator. There is no formal assessment committee. Assessment matters are periodically addressed in faculty meetings.

The self-study makes no mention of aggregated program or unit data for candidate performance, other than data reported in the most recent Biennial Report. Reviewers of the Biennial Report indicated that only “minimal data” were reported for the Multiple Subject and Single Subject programs and analysis was “not present.” While these observations are accurate, they are due in part to the extremely small size of USU programs. When there is one student in a cohort, data will be minimal and analysis difficult. There is, however, no structure in place that suggests unit and program assessment occurs with larger cohorts.

The self-study makes no mention of data or systematic processes used for improvement of unit operations. Again, smallness of size partially explains this fact. However, USU has not created an infrastructure that assesses, evaluates and utilizes data on unit operations on even a small scale.

At the time of application to a program, candidates are evaluated on a list of admission qualifications (as listed on the *Teacher Credentialing Preparation Program Checklist*). However, there is no evidence of how data from this assessment of program applicants are recorded, displayed, analyzed, and used in program improvement activities. Similarly, at the conclusion of their program, candidates are assessed on a variety of qualifications for credential recommendation. Again, there is no evidence in the self-study or during the site visit of how data from these assessments are used systematically to monitor or modify program delivery.

There are individual assessments that could serve as the building blocks of an assessment system. USU lists five such key assessments: *End-of-Course TPE Assessment, CalTPA, Cooperating Teacher Student Teaching Evaluation, University Supervisor Student Teaching Evaluation, and Professional Teaching Portfolio*. However, there is no explanation of how these assessments are administered, scored, aggregated, analyzed or utilized at the program and unit

levels. There is no explanation of how these parts coalesce as a system, or substantive evidence that these elements are used systematically – individually and in concert – to inform program improvement efforts. There is no evidence of an assessment operational structure/architecture.

### **Rationale**

While the team found that candidate competency data are collected, no evidence of an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement was found. While some elements of systematic assessment are in place such as individual candidate competency assessment, a systematic approach that aggregates candidate performance at the program and unit levels is missing. Assessment of unit operations is not discussed in the program documentation. There is no description of systematic assessment processes or products for program evaluation or unit level assessment of candidate performance.

### **Standard 3: Resources**

**Met**

The institution provides the unit with the necessary budget, qualified personnel, adequate facilities and other resources to prepare candidates effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation. Sufficient resources are consistently allocated for effective operation of each credential or certificate program for coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management. Sufficient information resources and related personnel are available to meet program and candidate needs. A process that is inclusive of all programs is in place to determine resources needs.
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### **Findings**

Even though the program at USU has limited enrollment, the Institution provides the College of Education with the necessary funds to hire a Dean (full time position) and a Coordinator of Clinical Practice (half time position). Personnel at USU serve multiple roles in the teacher preparation program. For example, the Dean is also the Credential Analyst and the TPA Coordinator. The Coordinator of Clinical Placement is also the University Supervisor and the Program Coordinator for the Bilingual Authorization. All faculty in the program are active or retired practitioners in the PK-12 school system. Institutional administrators did say that additional personnel will be needed if student enrollment increases.

The faculty and candidates have adequate resources for their classes. All courses, with the exception of courses tied to student teaching, are taught online. The programs utilize Blackboard for their learning management system. Faculty stated they are provided with a video tutorial on how to use Blackboard. The physical classrooms at USU have the technology for teaching and learning (computers, projectors and internet access).

USU has allocated personnel for the effective operation of the credential program; the Dean coordinates the efforts of all personnel involved. USU has an admissions team, including the Dean, who interviews applicants. Candidates stated that an academic advisor calls candidates on a regular basis to ensure they are on track for completing their program. A Coordinator of Clinical Placement ensures that all candidates meet the requirements for student teaching, including making sure that candidates have a master teacher. The Associate Provost for Assessment and an institutional researcher assist with assessment management.

USU has a library that is staffed by a librarian. The library provides candidates with access to databases that are used for research. The librarian also helps faculty secure the necessary materials, such as textbooks, to teach the classes effectively. Candidates and faculty confirmed that the librarian provides excellent support.

In addition to the library resources, candidates indicated that they have access to a writing support system, *Brainfuse*. Candidates submit their papers on-line to *Brainfuse* and they receive editorial feedback within 24 hours. Candidates confirmed that *Brainfuse* has been very helpful especially when English is not their first language.

Faculty who teach the online classes confirmed that the current learning management system, *Blackboard*, is sufficient for teaching classes online. They have access to a video tutorial in addition to support from Blackboard. In interviews, candidates stated they appreciated the flexibility that the online courses allow

The President and the Dean work closely to determine resource needs for the teacher preparation program. The Dean submits a written request to the President for additional resources and these requests are discussed with the Chief Financial Officer. This is the same process used for the other colleges in the University. As a result of a need to increase enrollment, a request was made and a staff member employed to reach out to the neighboring school districts, publicize and recruit candidates for the teacher preparation programs at USU.

**Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel****Met**

Qualified persons are employed and assigned to teach all courses, to provide professional development, and to supervise field-based and/or clinical experiences in each credential and certificate program. Instructional personnel and faculty have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. They are reflective of a diverse society and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity. They have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools. They collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-12 settings/college/university units and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. The institution provides support for faculty development. The unit regularly evaluates the performance of course instructors and field supervisors, recognizes excellence, and retains only those who are consistently effective.

**Findings**

A full-time Dean and half-time Coordinator of Clinical Placement are the only core faculty, thus making the program heavily dependent on adjunct faculty. All are credentialed or retired teachers. Seventy-five percent of adjunct faculty have MA degrees, 25% have terminal degrees. Adjunct faculty are current and retired K-12 practitioners who understand the context of schooling and model best professional practices. As a group, they have special expertise in such areas as English language development, Reading, Dual Immersion, Structured English Immersion, Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design, working with difficult and defiant students, strategies for instruction of ELs, CFASST, AVID, Project GLAD, and differentiating curriculum. Site visit interviews attest to the expertise and enthusiasm of these instructors, who bring rich and immediate K-12 experience to their work with candidates. In interviews candidates expressed their respect for and appreciation of the faculty, particularly the faculty's caring, nurturing approach to preservice teachers. Candidates particularly appreciate the rapid feedback to online course assignments

Adjunct faculty are a diverse group. Approximately 58% are Hispanic and 42% are Caucasian. By virtue of their current or former employment in local schools, adjunct faculty are very familiar with the challenges of Title I schools in the area and the needs of ELs and special needs students. Interviews revealed that faculty are sensitive to and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity.

A review of vitas reveals that adjunct faculty have many years of individual and cumulative experience in PK-12 public schools, during which they have worked with a variety of academic standards, curriculum frameworks, and approaches to accountability. They bring these rich experiences to their instruction at USU. The *Faculty Participation in PK-12 Schools Form* documents that adjunct faculty have from one to three years of recent experience in school

settings. Faculty participate regularly in staff development offered by their district employers, thus maintaining currency in such areas as Common Core.

The USU Academic Senate professional development program is open to all faculty. Several adjunct faculty confirmed in interviews that they have taken advantage of one or more opportunities. Interviews also revealed that small scale faculty development activities occur periodically in faculty meetings.

USU uses an *Online Faculty Evaluation Protocol* to evaluate adjunct faculty. The protocol is given to new instructors as a guide, then used as an evaluation and feedback tool. The Dean uses information taken from the protocol in feedback conversations with teaching faculty. The Dean also regularly reviews faculty responses to online course threaded discussions. One faculty has recently been let go for poor performance with this strategy.

The evaluation process for university supervisors is more informal. There is one person in this role due to the small number of candidates currently in student teaching. This person is also the Coordinator of Clinical Placement. The Dean has one-to-one conversations with this person informed, in part, by candidate feedback on the *Exit Survey*.

**Standard 5: Admission**

**Met**

In each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures, including all Commission-adopted requirements. Multiple measures are used in an admission process that encourages and supports applicants from diverse populations. The unit determines that admitted candidates have appropriate pre-professional experiences and personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse populations, effective communications skills, basic academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness.
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**Findings**

In examining the materials and artifacts (e.g. checklists, handbooks, website, flowcharts), reviewers confirmed that USU has clearly defined admission criteria and guidelines aligned with Commission-adopted requirements. Based on each respective program's requirements, certain criteria are outlined and disseminated for prospective candidates to guide their credentialing pathways. These criteria are used by program personnel to interview candidates and assess their entrance eligibility.

In Interviews, the Dean, the Coordinator of Clinical Placement, candidates, and program completers reflect that candidates are advised clearly from admission throughout the program phases (semesters) until they finish all requirements.

Documents and interviews with the Dean and staff revealed that USU has recently launched a major recruitment effort to reach out to north and east San Diego County by hiring a recruiter

who contacts the district human relations representatives, disseminates information about USU programs to all schools in the district, and invites aspiring teachers to informational sessions.

Despite the very small cohorts, 45% of program candidates are Hispanic. Staff, program personnel, and candidates confirm that the unit relies on the interview process conducted by the program personnel to screen candidates and determines whether to admit them. There are two advisors (Admission and Academic Advisor) at USU who respond to inquiries about the programs and provide pertinent information. Interviews with both advisors confirm the process of admission based on the established guidelines and criteria. Candidates are interviewed using an *Entrance Interview Guide* that identifies criteria such as dispositions, pre-professional experience, sensitivity to California's diverse population, and professional fitness. Interviews confirmed that admission to the program is affirmed through the interview with the Dean and advisors who collaborate to ensure that the admission criteria are met.

**Standard 6: Advice and Assistance**

**Met**

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each candidate's professional placement. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retains candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.
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**Findings**

Based on the lines of evidence examined, along with interviews with the Dean, staff, and candidates, reviewers confirmed that qualified unit members at USU are assigned for advising candidates regarding various aspects of the program requirements. The Dean, admission staff and advisors are available to guide each candidate at USU. Advising materials are available online via *Blackboard*. Candidates, faculty, and advisors confirmed that program personnel and admission staff provide advice and assistance based on the credentialing and programmatic needs of candidates. For example, a curriculum map is used as a blueprint to assist and guide candidates throughout their program of study and to monitor the pace and progress of candidates from entry to exit.

Interviews with advisors, program leaders, personnel, and candidates indicate that pertinent materials are accessible and are provided. They also suggest that in many instances, advising is individualized and tailored to the specific needs of each candidate regarding their respective program. Interviews with the Coordinator of Clinical Placement also confirm that candidates are consistently informed about their program requirements and support is provided as needed. Candidates and program completers reflected that they are well-informed about the program requirements and receive information from their instructors, the Dean, and advisors. They also

confirmed that when they need information, they can contact the Dean, faculty, or staff to receive appropriate advice and guidance.

Support and assistance are provided by the program faculty in collaboration with the Dean and program coordinators. Evidence examined (program documents, reports, advising plans, candidate files) along with interviews of faculty, unit advisors, and program candidates verified that support and assistance are provided by both the USU and the unit. They also verify that resources are provided for candidates to access necessary information and details regarding their specific program.

Candidates confirmed that they receive consistent advice throughout the program. They are also informed about their pace and progress as program personnel guide them in the process. Academic and admission advisors confirmed that candidates are monitored and efforts are made to provide adequate advice and assistance when needed.

**Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice**

**Met**

The unit and its partners design, implement, and regularly evaluate a planned sequence of field-based and clinical experiences in order for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students effectively so that P-12 students meet state-adopted academic standards. For each credential and certificate program, the unit collaborates with its partners regarding the criteria for selection of school sites, effective clinical personnel, and site-based supervising personnel. Field-based work and/or clinical experiences provide candidates opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching, and learning, and to help candidates develop research-based strategies for improving student learning.

**Findings**

Documents, artifacts and interviews with program participants, the Dean, and the Coordinator of Clinical Placement and Field Supervisor all describe how USU works collaboratively with districts and their partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating the scope and sequence of fieldwork and clinical experiences. Candidates reported that both cooperating teachers and university supervisors conduct formal observations and provide feedback to candidates about their pace and progress based on established criteria. Candidates are assessed and evaluated at multiple points in their program; according to the interviews with the field supervisors and program candidates, a minimum of four formal evaluations are completed each semester. In addition to the syllabi and course materials, observation forms reflect an alignment with the CSTPs and their pertinent domains along with the state-adopted academic standards.

The unit works closely with local districts to ensure that candidates have access to diverse school sites to complete their field experiences and student teaching; this was confirmed by the Dean and Coordinator of Clinical Placement, as well as by the review of pertinent forms (e.g.



rubrics, handbooks, program materials). Evidence also confirms that USU collaborates with its partners regarding the appropriate placement of student teachers. The unit works with the site administrators to select and assign supervising teachers. Program documents, artifacts, and interviews with the Coordinator of Clinical Placement and field supervisors verify the criteria and mechanisms for selection of clinical personnel and supervisors.

Candidates indicated that they are provided with opportunities to examine their roles in relation to demographic realities and the diverse nature of the schools; program faculty confirmed providing such opportunities. Documentation and interviews with candidates confirmed that seminars are provided for candidates to explore school's realities and examine ways to reach out to all students including ELs and students in special education. In addition, candidates learn strategies to integrate pedagogical treatments to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom. Interviews with program faculty, supervisors and candidates describe opportunities for candidates to examine the diversity of California schools. Candidates learn about demographic realities such as cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity and how that diversity impacts learning and teaching including curriculum planning, instruction, and assessment. USU programs address diversity in the scope and sequence of their courses and field experiences preparing teachers with various strategies to deliver instruction and improve learning outcomes.

**Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors**

**Met with Concerns**

District-employed supervisors are certified and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. A process for selecting supervisors who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria. Supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.
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**Findings**

Program documents, artifacts (checklists, forms, student teaching handbooks, orientation materials) and interviews with program personnel clarified how the unit hires certified and experienced supervisors. For example, a *Cooperating Teacher Information Form* is used and verified to determine supervisors' eligibility and experience prior to their being assigned to work with student teachers. The form identifies categories that are checked and verified to ensure field supervisors have proper credentials and qualifications. The principal also is involved in verifying the appropriateness of the credentials and pertinent criteria as s/he signs and approves the *Approval of the Cooperating Teacher Form*.

Based on interviews conducted and evidence examined, the districts are involved with the unit in the selection of the supervisors and school sites in which candidates are placed. The districts rely on the judgment of principals to select supervisors based on established criteria which are outlined in the unit's *Student Teaching Handbook*. These include: a minimum of three (3) years

of successful teaching experience, holding the appropriate credential required to mentor a teacher credential candidate, and accepting willingly the responsibilities of working with a teacher credential candidate.

There is no clear evidence that there is a mechanism in place to train supervisors. The education unit relies on interactions between the program personnel and the site supervisors to provide information about their roles and responsibilities when working with student teachers in the field. The Coordinator of Clinical Placement confirmed the process by which districts and site administrators collaborate to identify the qualified supervisors; then the Coordinator meets with them individually, provides an orientation and furnishes pertinent materials such as the *Student Teaching Handbook* and *Observation Forms*. Interviews with the Coordinator confirm that district-employed supervisors (master teachers) are oriented to work with student teachers, but there is no evidence that formal training exists. Similarly, there is no process in place to evaluate supervisors in a systematic manner.

**Rationale:**

While there is an informal mechanism to provide orientation for the field supervisors, no formal training opportunities are provided in a systematic manner to prepare district-employed supervisors to carry out their responsibility to supervise student teachers. In addition, there is no systematic manner in which district-employed supervisors are evaluated or recognized.

**Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence**

**Met**

Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.
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**Findings**

Throughout the program candidates are assessed on five high-stakes evaluation tools through which they demonstrate their professional knowledge and skills. They are assessed in their courses on a weekly basis through Threaded Discussions, which are scored using a rubric. At the end of each course candidates receive an *End-of-Course TPE Assessment* on the TPEs addressed by the course. Candidates are assessed using the *CalTPA*. Tasks one and two are administered prior to student teaching; Tasks three and four are assessed during student teaching. Candidates are assessed in student teaching by their cooperating teacher, utilizing the *Cooperating Teacher Observation Protocol*, and by their university supervisor, utilizing the *Clinical Supervisor Observation Protocol*. Candidates also submit a *Professional Teaching Portfolio*, which contains artifacts such as work samples which demonstrate candidate performance on TPEs.

Program applicants meet entry requirements mandated by the state as well as those specific to USU. Through assessment measures described in the self-study (and identified above), USU ensures that candidates meet state competency standards.

Data show that recently two candidates have not been recommended for the credential because they do not meet subject matter competence, and one has been unable to pass the *CalTPA*. USU as an institution is unable to provide remediation for candidates who cannot pass the CSET. However, it does offer remediation for candidates who need to re-take one or more parts of the *CalTPA*.

### **Preliminary Teaching Credential Programs Multiple Subject (MS) and Single Subject (SS) Credential Programs**

#### ***Program Design***

The United States University (USD) College of Education offers cohorted, single-pathway Multiple Subject (MS) and Single Subject (SS) credential programs in a four semester/16-month format. Candidate cohorts are admitted twice per year. The 42-unit program offers one pathway that leads to either the MS or the SS Preliminary Teaching Credential. Both MS and SS candidates complete 30 units of online core requirements consisting of ten, three-unit courses and twelve units of “on the ground” clinical practice requirements. The single pathway splits into nine units (three courses) of program-specific MS core courses or SS core courses. While both MS and SS candidates complete the common core classes, interstitial workshops occur during the sequence to cover TPEs and information literacy. The program includes 32 hours of classroom observation prior to student teaching.

The Dean of the College of Education, who is also the credential analyst provides leadership for the credential programs along with coordinators for the multiple subject, single subject, and bilingual authorization programs and a Coordinator of Clinical Practice. Faculty report that the Dean is supportive and actively involved in monitoring and maintaining the quality of the program; she frequently monitors online courses and ensures that faculty are responding to the threaded discussions and applying the rubrics

Communication within the credential program and with the institution is primarily conducted through the Dean. Faculty meetings occur at least once every two months via distance technology and face to face. The Dean and other faculty indicated that communication can also be spontaneous. Instructors can email regarding a student of concern and then there are discussions about how to proceed; they plan interventions. Coordinators report that they have frequent informal meetings with faculty about the progress of candidates. The Dean plans the agenda for meetings, but leaves time open in the agenda for additional items. There are meetings before each cohort starts, so that faculty can learn about their incoming candidates, as well as regularly-scheduled face-to-face and online faculty meetings.

Coordinators, who are also practitioners in area school districts, hold regular meetings among themselves to ensure that the program curriculum meets current K-12 curricular content requirements. Periodic meetings also discuss the TPEs to ensure that there is ample evidence to support the adequate coverage of the standards. Coordinators discuss TPA results with the Dean and faculty, and trace back to the assessments and assignments that were meant to prepare candidates in the program.

The most substantive program modification over the recent two years has been the change to an online program for the core courses and methods courses. The program also moved to a cohort model and now admits candidates twice per year: March and September. Other program changes include updates to rubrics to include the TPEs. Specific rubrics for threaded discussions, signature assignments, and the portfolio were developed and implemented. Some courses were also revised so that syllabi included student assignments and experiences that correspond to the TPEs. TPE workshops were developed and implemented throughout the program of study for courses in which the TPEs were embedded.

The means for stakeholder input is primarily through stakeholder meetings that include the Dean, Coordinator of Clinical Practice, and school administrators. Interviews with the Dean and faculty as well as minutes of meetings that occurred in 2014-15 with individual districts, including San Ysidro, Chula Vista, National, Sweetwater, and Point Loma show that USU has discussed and established “well-defined roles, responsibilities, and relationships” with partners. In addition, the Dean reports reviewing cooperating teacher comments and comments from partnership districts. She shares programmatic and curricular materials with the partners, so that they also can review and comment. In this way, the Dean solicits feedback regarding whether the curriculum satisfies stakeholder expectations. Candidates and completers also provide feedback; at the end of each course candidates write a self-reflection on the relevance of course materials, TPEs preparation, and utility. Candidates anonymously evaluate courses.

### ***Course of Study***

Current candidates and completers shared that they chose the program because of its flexibility, good reputation, practitioner-based faculty, and online instructional model; they like the sequence and the intense focus of the eight week courses. For example, both MS and SS candidates have in common a course addressing the needs of ELs and special needs students; candidates appreciate that they could focus intently on specific areas in this manner. The core courses followed a similar format. Candidates said that they responded to prompts and then they were required to respond to two or three other class participants. There were also projects, lesson plans, and term papers. No participants could recall a traditional test and said that the discussions and narrative responses were sufficient.

Candidates and completers indicated that the small nature of the program allowed for high levels of individual attention, customer service, and timely support through email, phone, or

online interactions via *Skype* or *Zoom*. Multiple and Single Subject candidates share a common set of online courses. Candidates who are currently in the program said that they appreciated working with candidates from other programs and content areas. They also indicated that they appreciated the time their instructors took to respond to their lesson plans, assignments, and threaded discussions. Graduates from the program also felt that the course of study was effective and said they enjoyed learning from other candidates.

Candidates and completers agreed that the TPE workshops were quite helpful to them. Candidates said that they had deeper discussions about the TPEs and the workshops also provided the opportunity to ask questions and get clarifications about the program and what to expect during fieldwork.

The effectiveness of coursework and field experiences was evident in the praise from current candidates and completers. Survey results also supported the statements. Both faculty and the Coordinator of Clinical Placement stressed their ongoing communication during coursework and in the Directed Teaching Seminars. Fieldwork begins after candidates have completed the core series of courses and the core MS or SS specializations. Both MS and SS candidates are given two, eight-week placements. While in their placements, they also attend weekly Directed Teaching Seminars with the Coordinator of Clinical Placement. Both completers of the program and current candidates praised the Coordinator of Clinical Placement for his help and attention during the seminars and observations.

Because the program is small, students receive much individual attention and support during student teaching. One candidate who is in the Los Angeles area said that the program worked hard to find him a placement in LAUSD and to meet with him via *Skype* to maintain contact during his placement. In all, candidates and completers expressed their satisfaction with field supervision, their advisement, and frequency of contacts. They felt that their cooperating teachers were well versed in the expectations for hosting a student teacher and that the evaluations, particularly the narrative ones, were most effective.

### ***Candidate Competence***

Because the courses are taught online and the program is small, candidate competence is largely assessed through narrative comments on their reports, projects, and threaded discussions. Both graduates and current candidates said that they appreciated the amount of feedback they received from the faculty; they felt it helped to guide their development and was more meaningful to them than a mere course grade. Both former and current candidates reported that they were assessed via rubrics that followed the TPEs. They shared that they valued the narrative feedback more than numerical values or grades because they felt the contact was more personal and that they could actually “do something” with it.

Program faculty of common core courses and the MS/SS specialization courses also said that they relied heavily on narrative feedback to candidates to both assess candidate competence

and guide their development. Program faculty reported using rubrics to evaluate threaded discussions, assignments, and the exit portfolio. Completers and candidates said that the rubrics used in the courses were helpful to ensure that they were learning to address the embedded TPEs; they claimed that the most meaningful activities were those that produced narrative, online discussions with candidates. Because the program is so small, faculty said that they were able to provide a great deal of guidance to candidates in this manner.

The Dean indicated that course instructors are free to select their own key assignments that align with the standards. Program faculty included key assessments relevant to the content of the course; for example, threaded discussions may include key assessment questions about teaching English Learners, candidates respond to them and discuss their colleagues' posts. All faculty indicated that they included assignments that asked candidates to think about how to differentiate instruction for ELs. Through threaded discussions, participants could see how differentiation was handled in different content areas.

Candidates and completers felt that the TPE workshops provided support and clarification about their progress on the TPEs. The Dean reported organizing the workshops specifically to address the TPEs covered in the courses and to support candidate competence in these critical areas. The Directed Teaching Seminars, too, include discussions and assessments about the TPEs relative to candidate field experience. Candidates and completers said that they received rich feedback and rubric scores to guide their progress and to assess their competence. In all cases, candidates and completers agreed that narrative feedback was always the most beneficial assessment of their competence.

The Dean shared that prior to recommending candidates, she conducts an exit interview based on the student's portfolio; documents available in the resource room provided evidence of these exit interviews. The Dean and Coordinator of Clinical Placement said that they ask the candidates open-ended questions. The exit interview also asks what courses were most helpful and which were not. The Dean expects that the student will pass, because they have made it through student teaching. Candidates also complete a written self-assessment and provide feedback about their program. The completers indicated that these discussions were very worthwhile.

### **Findings on Standards**

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are fully **Met** for the Multiple Subject and the Single Subject Teaching Credential Programs.

## **Advanced/ Service Credential Programs Bilingual Authorization**

### ***Program Design***

The USU College of Education offers a bilingual authorization program that may be completed concurrently with the teaching credential by adding an additional semester of bilingual-specific coursework. As with the teaching credential program, candidates are admitted twice per year; however admittance must occur upon acceptance to either the MS or SS credential program. Admittance to the bilingual authorization program requires that candidates demonstrate language competence in Spanish through passing CSET LOTE III, write a statement of purpose in Spanish, and pass a Spanish-language interview with the Dean. While the sequence of teaching credential courses and clinical practice courses are the same, the clinical practice differs in that the candidate must teach in Spanish. Candidates are evaluated on the basis of language use and instruction.

Bilingual authorization candidates complete an additional semester of coursework (nine units/three courses): *Latinos in the US*, *Desarrollo del Lenguaje y Lectura*, and *First and Second Language Acquisition*. In the last biennium, no candidates have completed these courses and currently there is only one enrolled student who is at the beginning of her teaching credential program.

The leadership consists of the Dean of the College of Education, who is bilingual and also serves as the credential analyst; and the program coordinator who is also bilingual and the Coordinator of Clinical Placement. At least eighty percent of USU faculty are bilingual; they meet informally to discuss how to strengthen English language development support and to infuse courses with bilingual content. Faculty meetings occur every two months. Communication is consistent with that described in the teaching credential programs. There are nine adjunct professors who provide the bilingual authorization program. Bilingual faculty also meet informally to discuss issues related to course content, and there are discussions to formalize these meetings.

Program modifications over the recent two years include updates to the syllabi and the course content. Program documents indicate that the research basis for the courses has been updated to include additional bilingual content, scaffolding for academic language, learning principles for ELs, the importance of oral language development and working with parents from multilingual communities.

Meetings with the Dean and the Bilingual Coordinator revealed that the means for stakeholder input is primarily through stakeholder meetings that include the Dean, Coordinator of Clinical Placement (who is also the Bilingual Coordinator), and school administrators. There is reference to an advisory board that meets several times per year. There are also minutes of meetings that occurred in 2014/15 with individual districts, including San Ysidro, Chula Vista, National,

Sweetwater, and Point Loma. An additional partnership meeting with San Diego Unified School District was found in the bilingual authorization document.

### ***Course of Study***

Program documents and conversations with the Bilingual Coordinator confirmed that the three online courses leading to bilingual authorization include the following: *First and Second Language Acquisition*, which looks at bilingual education program models, language acquisition, and federal and state laws; *Latinos in the US*, where candidates learn about major Latino groups in the US, cultural conflicts, demographics, migration, and immigration patterns; and *Desarrollo del Lenguaje y Lectura*, where candidates learn strategies for the development of language and reading in Spanish, how to evaluate language levels and stages in the classroom setting and how best to use language in the bilingual classroom.

Both the Dean and the Bilingual Coordinator report that in addition to the three courses, the fundamental difference between non-bilingual and bilingual authorization teaching credential candidates is that for clinical practice bilingual authorization candidates must be placed in classrooms where they can be evaluated while delivering instruction in Spanish; this was reflected in program documents available in the resource room. Furthermore, their supervisor must also be bilingual and evaluate the candidate's target language use during instruction. USU has relationships with bilingual programs and places candidates in these settings.

Fieldwork for bilingual authorization teaching credential candidates is also 20 weeks long; divided into two, ten-week Directed Student Teaching Seminars. Weekly meetings occur concurrently with clinical practice. During clinical practice/student teaching, University Supervisors report that they complete a total of four observations (two of which are formal) for each semester. Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors complete CSTP-based observation forms and a separate final evaluation form regarding the candidate's ability to plan lessons, manage a classroom, incorporate diversity, and recognize/utilize cognitive, linguistic, and emotional differences. Bilingual content and methodology is also infused within the course content.

Districts play a role in student teaching placements. A student survey at the end of program asks candidates to rate their experience in each course (3-point scale), along with the opportunity to comment.

### ***Candidate Competence***

There have been no teacher candidates who have been in a bilingual placement nor completed the bilingual coursework in the last biennium.

According to documents and discussions with the Dean, the threaded discussions, responses to readings, and modules are used to assess candidate competence in the bilingual courses.



Candidates are expected to know different bilingual program models and to respond in writing regarding the models. They learn about language acquisition and describe the process; legal matters relative to bilingual programs are also discussed. The courses are often conducted in Spanish and lesson plans are written in Spanish. TPAs three and four would be assessed in the target language, Spanish.

### **Findings on Standards**

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, program coordinators, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are fully **Met** for the Bilingual Authorization Program.