DAKOTA STATE
dsu
UNIVERSITY

College of Education

Institutional Program Review

Report to Board of Regents

M.S. Education in Educational Technology

Date of onsite visit: June 1-2, 2009

Reviewer: Michael Simonson, Ph.D.

Describe the strengths and weaknesses as identified by the reviewer.

The reviewer identified the following areas of strength in the MSET program:
- A strong and committed faculty.
- Intelligent and energetic students.
- A supportive administration.
- A contribution to the local educational community by alumni.

The reviewer identified the following areas of weaknesses in the program:
- Curriculum currency – may not reflect the most current trends in the field of Educational Technology.
- The professional responsibilities of faculty (teaching, scholarship and service) may not be directly aligned with the developmental needs of the program.
- Faculty numbers -- the number of faculty with direct roles/responsibilities in development and delivery of the MSET program may not be sufficient.
- Resource availability -- the educational technology resources needed by students and faculty may not be readily available.

Briefly summarize the reviewer recommendations.

On August 26, 2009 the MSET program committee met to review the contents of the program review. Generally, the program committee finds justification in all of the reviewers' recommendations. The major recommendations, along with a brief response from the MSET faculty, are included below.

Marketing and visibility. Dr. Simonson's first recommendation is to "develop a marketing plan that includes an improved web presence and promotional materials – both electronic and printed – that can be used to advertise the program." The review reads:

> *'Word-of-mouth' is the primary method that new students are recruited. This has worked satisfactorily in the past, but is most likely to be ineffective in the future as the variety of educational options for students increases—especially from on-line institutions.*

The program committee heartily agrees that a more intensive marketing strategy is due and could yield valuable fruit. While we value our work with South Dakota educators who are our students, it is time we diversify our student base to include more students from outside of the state.

Related to program marketing, a similar recommendation is made to "identify and conduct one significant event or activity that spotlights the MSET program, students, and faculty – an innovative and important contribution of the program to the field and to South Dakota." Clearly, this calls for the program committee to be more aggressive in spotlighting the accomplishments of faculty and students.

Course Review and Delivery. The reviewer suggests that MSET "develop a curriculum review process involving all MSET faculty and critically examine the MSET academic vision, mission, courses, course content/learning objects, and learning outcomes. The reviewer also recommends that the faculty use this analysis to develop a plan for continuous improvement of the MSET curriculum, including the revision, addition, and deletion of courses in the curriculum." A related but separate recommendation is made to "identify three peer institutions that offer educational programs similar to MSET and conduct an in-depth analysis of these programs."

The program committee annually reviews courses, their enrollment, trends in field, and students' preferences for instruction. While we agree that there may be new course opportunities in areas such as social networking, virtual schooling, digital media or instructional technology management, we approach course addition slowly and cautiously and feel the addition of these courses might do well to be more episodic than routine given the changing nature of the field. Nonetheless, a comparative program analysis is a good idea, and the program is due for a very intensive look at its core, required and elective contents. This process is all the more relevant as we look to align our program with the suite of endorsements the SDDOE is about to introduce.

Faculty Contributions. The report recommends that DSU examine "the individual roles of each faculty person involved in the MSET program and develop a comprehensive plan that identifies teaching, research/scholarship, and service for the MSET program, and for individual professors." We recognize that DSU is expanding its research expectations for faculty and we, as program professors, would gain from revisiting the traditional roles of faculty; teaching, research/scholarship, and service. However, we also believe that the institution is helping us make that transition so we are not sure that an additional study is warranted.

The reviewer also suggests that we "Use the analysis of faculty activities to develop a proposal to add at least one additional professor who possesses the background and potential to complement and supplement the teaching, research/scholarship, and service activities of other MSET professors." Finally, the reviewer points out, "The professors who remain are sufficient in number to maintain and deliver the program, if not to move the reputation and quality of the program to a higher level."

In the last four years, the College of Education has lost several faculty members who were primarily involved with the MSET program (1 death, 2 retirements and 1 resignation). In the same period, we have gained two faculty who make significant contributions to the program. In every faculty search within the college, the dean and the faculty on the search and screen committees have been very sensitive to the needs of the MSET program and efforts have been made to hire faculty who can contribute to both the graduate program and the undergraduate teacher education program. Filling open positions with faculty who are able to teach at both levels is difficult, since undergraduate teacher education faculty must have K12 teaching experience and that doesn't necessarily translate into an appropriate background for teaching graduate-level educational technology courses. With the current budget constraints, hiring additional faculty will be difficult.

Technological Acuity. The reviewer recommends that we "Plan and propose the acquisition of hardware, software, materials, and facilities that directly relate to the teaching, research/scholarship,

and service responsibilities of MSET faculty and students." We feel that the reviewer may not have understood the process used by DSU to purchase hardware, software, etc. Software and hardware acquisitions are handled through a campus-wide funding process: faculty recommend acquisitions to the dean who advocates for college-specific purchases at a joint meeting of the deans, the vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for administration and finance and the chief information officer/director of Computing Services. Proposed purchases are balanced against the requests from other colleges and for the university as a whole. Beyond that, we feel that graduate faculty in the College of Education are sufficiently skilled with and knowledgeable about traditional, current, and emerging technologies.

Continuous Planning. The reviewer recommended that we "Plan and conduct faculty retreats where the continuous improvement of the MSET program is the primary activity. The outcomes of the MSET retreat should be made available to students and administrators."

While not specifically retreat-like in nature, faculty who teach in the MSET program do follow a continuous improvement process by regularly reviewing feedback and outcome data and then proposing program changes based on that data. However, the advice is well-taken and the faculty have agreed to make the review and improve process more systematic, systemic and transparent to stakeholders in the MSET program.

Indicate the present and continuing action to be taken by the college or department to address the issues raised by the reviewer.

Focus of 2009-10 academic year:
1) Improve participation of graduate students in professional conferences and research in related disciplines
2) Review course rotation schedule, reduce low enrollment courses
3) Conduct program comparison as a validity study in course currency and relevance
4) Improve the participation of faculty in the evaluation of program outcomes, etc. and encourage higher performance levels in professional responsibilities: teaching, scholarship, service