



The Standard of Excellence
in Teacher Preparation

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

**Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, IN
October 7-9, 2012**

Type of Visit:
Standard 2 Focused Visit

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

1.1 What is the institution's historical context?

In 1843, University of Notre Dame founder, Father Edward Sorin wrote to his superior, Father Basil Anthony Moreau, to request that he send sisters to a new mission in the wilderness of northern Indiana “to look after the laundry and the infirmary...and also to conduct a school, perhaps even a boarding school.” Four Holy Cross sisters answered the call and, after a 40-day voyage from Le Mans, France, arrived on May 30, 1843. They established the first school and novitiate in 1844, just north of South Bend, Indiana in Bertrand, Michigan. Saint Mary's College has embraced the mission envisioned by Father Moreau and has continued to animate the following core values in the lives of students and alumnae: learning, community, faith and spirituality, and justice.

Answering the needs of the community, the sisters taught orphan girls and ministered to the poor and sick. In 1855, under Mother Angela Gillespie, the first American to head Saint Mary's Academy, the school moved to its present site in Notre Dame, an unincorporated community northeast of the city of South Bend, in St. Joseph County, Indiana, United States.

In 1908, the charter for Saint Mary's Academy was amended to authorize the legal existence of a college, and Mother Pauline O'Neill, the director, became the College's first president. Known as the “builder for God,” because of the unprecedented growth during her tenure, Mother Pauline's most notable accomplishment—Le Mans Hall—still stands as the most recognizable symbol of Saint Mary's. Through more than 165 years, eleven presidents took the school from a small school ministering to orphans, to an institution of higher learning offering five bachelor's degrees and approximately 18,000 living alumnae.

1.2 What is the institution's mission?

Saint Mary's College is a Catholic, residential women's college in the liberal arts tradition. A pioneer in the education of women, the College is an academic community where women develop their talents and prepare to make a difference in the world. Founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1844, Saint Mary's promotes a life of intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, religious sensibility, and social responsibility. All members of the College remain faithful to this mission and continually assess their response to the complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world.

1.3 What are the institution's characteristics?

Saint Mary's College is a Catholic, residential, undergraduate women's college in the liberal arts tradition. Saint Mary's College ranks among the top 100 “Best National Liberal Arts Colleges” in the *U. S. News & World Report* 2012 College Guide.

The Students

There are more than 1,500 students who come from nearly all-50 states and eight other countries. Approximately 82 percent of students (1,172) live on campus and are guaranteed housing all four years. Four hundred one degrees were conferred in 2011.

The Education

Saint Mary's has six nationally accredited programs and more than 30 majors to help students pursue a meaningful career and make a difference in the world, with an average class size of 16. Students have access to an expansive library, including 243,986 volumes.

The Faculty

In fall 2011, there were 130 full-time instructional faculty. The faculty consists of top scholars who are recognized for excellence in their fields of study. Faculty, not teaching assistants, teach all classes. Students enjoy close working relationships with a student/faculty ratio of 10:1. Eighty-seven percent of its faculty have doctorates or terminal degrees in their field.

Hands-on Learning

Approximately 52 percent of 2010 graduates studied abroad in Australia, Austria, China, France, Ireland, Italy, Morocco, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, and other countries. Our focus on hands-on learning takes students into the field for course work and professional internships, available through numerous sources. Our commitment to service is demonstrated by an academic experiential learning requirement of all students and by student involvement. Roughly two-thirds of Saint Mary's seniors volunteer annually.

Financial Aid

Tuition for 2011-12 was \$31,300. More than 90 percent of Saint Mary's students receive some form of financial aid, totaling more than \$20 million dollars annually in institutional grants and scholarships.

Graduates

Fifty percent of Saint Mary's recent alumnae have careers in business and industry, education, and health/medical services. Thirty percent attend graduate or professional school immediately upon graduation. Fifty percent report being enrolled in or completing graduate or professional school within five years of graduation. More than 95 percent of seniors report being satisfied with their educational experience at Saint Mary's College.

Other Pertinent Information:

- Total unrestricted expenditures (ending May 31, 2011) were \$52,699,000.
- There are 514--full and part-time employees.
- Market value of the Endowment as of May 31, 2011 was \$134,760,292.

1.4 What is the professional education unit at your institution, what is its relationship to other units at the institution that are involved in the preparation of professional educators, and what are the significant changes since the last NCATE review?

The Professional Education Unit

The professional education unit at Saint Mary's College is the Education Department established in 1912 and continuously accredited by NCATE since 1969.

**Table One
Professional Education Faculty**

Semester	Full-time Faculty in the Unit	Full-time in the College, but Part-time in the Unit	Part-Time at the College & the Unit (e.g. adjunct faculty)	Clinical Supervisors (Student Teaching)	Total # of Professional Education Faculty
Spring 11	5	0	9	9	23
Fall 11	4*	3	12	0	19
Spring 12	5	2	3	7	17

*One faculty member was on sabbatical in fall 2011.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

The Director of the Learning Tree (Educational Resource Room) and the Director of Student Teaching and Field Study, who also serves as the Licensing Advisor, support the work of the unit.

Unit Relationship to Other Units that are Involved in the Preparation of Candidates

The BOE report of the last visit stated “neither arts and sciences faculty nor the unit’s school partners participate in the design, delivery, and evaluation of field experiences and field practice.” The unit has sought to improve involvement with both groups. It has also established new collaborations with other relevant College units and committees. These improvements are described below.

Teacher Education Council

The unit responded by reviving regularly scheduled meetings with the Teacher Education Council, made up of representatives from College departments that provide content in candidates’ disciplines. This council was advised that the unit would have an NCATE focused visit regarding Standard 2 in fall 2012 and that visit would determine whether the unit would continue to be accredited. The unit provided updates on changes in licensing and sought feedback regarding the courses our candidates take. It also shared Praxis II information with the council.

Cooperative Council

The Cooperative Council, made up of school partners, has met each semester. It, too, was told that there would be a focused visit by NCATE in fall 2012 regarding Standard 2 and that the results of the visit would determine our continued accreditation. The unit has sought their input regarding how to better ensure that our students have exposure to new language learners. The Council suggested that the unit track ELL exposure through our Field Evaluation forms that are turned in at the end of each semester during the 2011-2012 school year. The unit will provide that information at the Council’s fall 2012 meeting.

College Collaboration

- The unit has established ongoing collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IR & A). The unit has worked diligently with IR & A to build its systematic assessment process, including a dynamic database that stores the unit’s assessment data, facilitating the analyses that become useful reports. These reports provide the basis for twice-yearly assessment retreats.
- The unit collaborates with the College via its permanent seat on the Curriculum Committee, where new courses are reviewed. It has been a long-held belief at the College that a member of the Professional Education unit can provide counsel on matters of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- The unit had a voice in creating the new General Education Program at Saint Mary’s. From 2006 through 2010, a member of the unit was a member of the committee charged with designing the new Sophia Program, the new outcomes-based general education program adopted by the Board of Trustees in spring 2010 that will be fully implemented in fall 2013. It was through this involvement that the unit had the opportunity to submit a course for inclusion in the Sophia Program. Education 201 “Foundations to Teaching in a Multicultural Society” will be an option for Saint Mary’s students to choose in order to satisfy the new College-wide Professional Arts requirement.

Significant changes since the last NCATE review?

Since the last NCATE visit in December 2010 many changes have occurred:

- Dr. Dale Banks, Chair of the unit, retired in December 2010 and unit leadership was restructured—Dr. MaryAnn Traxler became Chair.
- Mrs. Karen VanMeter, Director of Student Teaching and Field Study, became Licensing Advisor.
- Dr. Kitty Green retired May 31, 2011, to become part-time faculty for 2011-12, in addition to her consultant role as NCATE Coordinator. She attended the June 2011 NCATE Regional Conference in St. Louis and has kept in close contact with NCATE.
- A unit Assessment Committee was formed that includes: Dr. Nancy Turner, Dr. MaryAnn Traxler, Dr. Insook Chung, and Dr. Kitty Green, NCATE Coordinator.
- Searches were held to replace Dr. Banks and Dr. Green. Both were successful, with Dr. Amy Gillan from Purdue University joining the unit in fall 2011, with expertise in instructional technology and many years of experience in middle school science education. Dr. Terri Suico, from Boston University, was hired to begin in fall 2012, when she will teach EDUC 345 “Curriculum and Assessment in Middle/High School” and 346 “Literacy Strategies and Classroom Management in Middle/High School” as well as the special methods in teaching English, EDUC 447 “Teaching English in Middle/High School.” The unit is especially delighted that Dr. Terri Suico will bring additional diversity to the unit.
- Dr. Natalie Domelle, a tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, has left the College to join her spouse in Pennsylvania. She taught math education courses for the unit's candidates, including EDU 451 “Teaching Math in Middle and High School,” and Math 302 “Math for Elementary School Teachers.” A search for her replacement will begin soon. In the meantime, an adjunct faculty member will teach EDUC 451 and a current member of the mathematics faculty will teach Math 302.

1.5 Summarize basic tenets of the Conceptual Framework, institutional standards and candidate proficiencies related to expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions as well as significant changes made to the Conceptual Framework since the last NCATE review.

College and Unit Vision and Mission

The basic tenets of the Conceptual Framework are rooted in the vision and mission of the unit, which is firmly grounded in the mission of the College. Saint Mary's College is an academic community where women develop their talents and prepare to make a difference in the world. The unit's vision and mission flow naturally from the College mission. It is the mission of the Saint Mary's Education Department “to develop reflective decision-makers who are passionate, ethical school leaders, well prepared in the scholarship, methodology, and professionalism of teaching to successfully cultivate the diverse gifts of each student.” While the Education Department last revised its mission in 1999, the unit believes it still captures those qualities needed to be an effective teacher in 2012.

Conceptual Framework Tenets

Reflective Decision-Making

The reflective decision-maker has the ability to make decisions as a critical element in optimizing learning for all students in the classroom. Gathering, examining, organizing, analyzing, and evaluating information in order to define and clarify classroom situations and dilemmas is an important aspect of the teacher decision-making process. Reflecting on past experiences and bringing that knowledge to bear on the classroom situation enhances the learning of new information, creating alternative solutions

and courses of action. Reflective decision-making also encourages the candidate to examine the possible consequences of choices made.

The unit continues to believe that even with increased focus on accountability, the reflective decision-maker is precisely the kind of teacher that is needed. It also recognizes the role of measurable ways to assess those qualities that make a reflective decision-maker. To that end, embedded within its mission statement is a vision and a commitment to preparing teachers who see themselves as critical players in the goals of student learning.

Constructivism

Constructivism and constructivist teaching have guided the development of education courses and how we model teaching to our candidates. Initially explained by Goode & Brophy (1994), Cooperstein & Kocivar-Weidinger (2004) described constructivist learning as:

- Learners construct their own meaning. Students are not passive receptacles.
- New learning builds on prior knowledge.
- Learning occurs as students attempt to resolve conflicting ideas.
- Meaningful learning develops through “authentic” tasks.

Candidate Proficiencies Related to Expected Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Guiding the three Steps of the unit's program structure (Step 1, College General Education Requirements and Introduction to the Profession, Step 2, Professional Studies and Content Preparation, and Step 3, Integrated Studies) are **Scholarship**, **Mission**, and **Competence**, themes that define what makes a Saint Mary's College teacher candidate unique. Education program graduates will have extensive professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to deliver effective instruction by using a wide variety of methodologies in a manner that is student-centered and focused on individual needs. They will demonstrate compassion for the students and families they serve. Education program graduates will be reflective practitioners and decision-makers who are able to analyze and grow from their teaching experiences throughout their professional careers. These themes, rooted in our mission and Conceptual Framework, provide the foundation for our candidate learning outcomes, standards, and dispositions (see the Conceptual Framework and Aligned Assessments).

The first theme, **Scholarship**, outlines the knowledge base needed for effective reflective practice. The unit so values strong discipline knowledge that it added a content learning outcome to the learning outcomes that guide its programs.

All education graduates are grounded in the fifty-two credit Sophia Program in Liberal Learning (general education). Content knowledge is fundamental to both Elementary Education majors and Secondary Education minors. Elementary Education majors complete specialized coursework appropriate to their fields of licensure. Beginning with the class of 2014, all Elementary Education majors must have a minor that will further support their development of content knowledge. Secondary Education minors at Saint Mary's, complete a major in their chosen field, in addition to completion of the General Education Program and the thirty-three credit hours of education coursework.

Likewise, the theme of **Mission** informs our candidate's expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions as she progresses through the three Steps of her program. Teaching is about relationships (Starko, Sparks-Langer, Pasch, Frankes, Gardner, & Moody, 2003). Effective teachers must be able to relate to students and help them explore new ideas. Only in a caring relationship can students find the

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

courage to trust the teacher, risk failure, and learn to grow. Developing these relationships is the heart of teaching.

Effective teaching depends on teachers having the affective and personal characteristics to reach out to students, families, and communities to make a difference in lives. The unit believes that its teacher candidates must develop a serious commitment to teaching and education, have a passion for the work they are doing, compassion for the students and families they serve, and an understanding of the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching. These traits and abilities, associated with intercultural competence, are captured by the unit's learning outcomes.

It is because of this belief that our students go into the field from the first course they take in the unit. Schools in the South Bend area are diverse and offer great opportunity to work with students from a variety of backgrounds. Candidates are in the field thirty hours over the course of Education 201, five-hours per week during all of Step 2 and the first-half of Step 3, followed by fifteen weeks of student teaching.

It is **Competence** that integrates **Scholarship** and **Mission**. When knowledge (Scholarship) is effectively acted upon by the drive to attain goals (Mission), it is then that knowledge and skill come together so that all students are served and served well.

Using constructivist thinking as a foundation, candidates learn instructional strategies grounded in current research (Marzano, 2007). From questioning techniques, to group learning strategies, candidates experience classroom exploration that is subsequently put into practice in the field. These methods inform the decisions the candidates make to create a constructivist classroom to support the learning of all students

Scholarship, Mission, and Competence are the three elements that help us organize and make our teacher preparation program a coherent whole. While each is discussed separately in the Conceptual Framework, our vision suggests that all three elements must be interwoven if the unit is to reach its goal of developing teachers as reflective decision-makers, teachers who can make a difference in the lives of the young people they teach and in the world in which they live. To that end, these elements are assessed at all three Steps of both the Elementary and Secondary Programs.

Commitment to Diversity

Central to building relationship is respect for diversity. Diversity is integrated into all three Steps of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs, from the book circles of Education 201 "Foundations to Teaching in a Multicultural Society," to consideration in lesson planning, and extensive field experience. All students have at least one field placement in a South Bend School Corporation, with its nearly 60 percent race/ethnicity minority population and more than 25 percent special needs population. This year we have tracked the special needs and new language learner populations in order to be able to ensure each candidate has exposure to EL students. Further, a new faculty member is Filipino-American, providing the unit's candidates the additional opportunities to work with diverse faculty. Furthermore, all candidates take two educational psychology courses, preparing them to work with diverse student populations, including students with special needs.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

Saint Mary's College is becoming more diverse. Using the HERI Faculty Survey (65 percent of faculty responding) nearly 1 in 10 full-time faculty members are not native English speakers (8.6 percent) while 14 percent indicate being a member of a diverse racial/ethnic group. Half of the full-time faculty abstained from providing information on their religious affiliation to the College; however, of those who did, two-thirds are Catholic. An additional third reported a variety of other religious affiliations including Quaker, Muslim, and other Christian denominations.

Finally, Saint Mary's College offered a voluntary retirement incentive program in 2011 and 2012, resulting in sixteen retirements. New tenure-track faculty members with diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds have replaced more than half of these faculty members. Another 50 percent of our new full-time visiting faculty for academic year 2012-13 also indicate coming from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Our unit's candidates will have greater opportunity to interact with diverse College faculty as they complete their general education requirements in the new Sophia Program.

Commitment to Technology

The commitment to the use of technology by both faculty and candidates continues to grow. The unit now has a classroom with a Smart Board. Each classroom in our recently renovated building is equipped with Internet capability and projection equipment. The required Education 220 course "Applied Media and Instructional Technology" has been revamped to better match the technology needs of its 21st century candidates. Oral presentations in both Step 2 and 3 include technology requirements. Unit candidates may experience EDUC 213 "American Mosaic: Integrative Approaches to the Arts in Elementary/Middle School," in an online format during the summer. Additionally, the College underwent significant external review by Moran Technologies Consultants, Inc. As a result of this review, the College hired a new Chief Information Officer in April 2012 and has created a prioritization plan of IT needs to enhance IT capabilities for students and faculty on campus. Years zero and one of the IT plan are currently being implemented through capital funding. The unit's candidates will experience new technologies directly and indirectly through improved faculty development in technology via a new Director of Instructional Technology.

Changes to the Conceptual Framework

Since the last visit, the unit revisited the framework to see if it still reflected our beliefs. The literature we reviewed reaffirmed the value of our framework (see our updated scholarly references.) We created, reviewed, and aligned assessments of the elements of the framework to address the BOE report that stated, "The unit's assessments do not reflect the candidate proficiencies identified in the unit's Conceptual Framework." Teacher characteristics outlined in the Conceptual Framework are aligned to Indiana's P-12 Developmental Standards and the content standard from INTASC, as well as the Saint Mary's College Liberal Learning Outcomes (Knowledge Acquisition & Integration of Learning, Cognitive and Communicative Skills, and Intercultural Competence and Social Responsibility), and unit learning outcomes. Decision points on candidate performance occur at the end of Step 1, acceptance to the department; the end of Step 2, the Critical Reflection on Teacher Standards; the end of the first semester of Step 3, oral presentation reflecting on Standard 3 (Planning and Delivery), and the end of Step 3, presentation of the Education Portfolio and passing Praxis II. The accompanying table, "Conceptual Framework and Aligned Assessment," visually shows the elements of the Conceptual Framework aligned to the multiple assessments that occur throughout the three Steps of the both Elementary and Secondary Education Programs.

2. Standard 2. The unit has an assessment system that collects data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

2.1 How does the unit use its assessment system to improve candidate performance, program quality and unit operation?

The BOE report following the unit's last accreditation vision stated, "The unit does not have an assessment system in place to assess candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations." Efforts to address this began with an examination of the unit's Conceptual Framework and led to the creation of a systematic approach to assessment that became our assessment system. The processes by which the unit reviewed and developed its system are described in more depth in response to question 2.2a.

In collaboration with its Professional Community, the unit regularly gathers assessment data regarding candidate performance, program quality, and unit operation. It uses multiple assessment tools administered by unit, higher education, and P-12 faculty that are grounded in its Conceptual Framework, at key transition points in both the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs. (See the Assessment System Schematic and the Conceptual Framework Alignment).

Candidate Performance

The unit's assessment system provides information on candidates' content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions, which are measured at each of the three transition points (Steps), as well as after graduation, for both the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs. The unit utilizes multiple assessment measures that align to the unit learning outcomes and Standards, including course-embedded assessments, field evaluations, standardized testing, a portfolio, and rubrics that score oral and written performance. Once each assessment has been administered, the faculty member, advisor, or unit reviews assessment results to provide feedback to the candidate and to identify strategies for improving her performance as a candidate. This is described in more depth in the following sections which are organized around the core areas of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions. Additional information on how various assessments are utilized to review and improve program quality is detailed in section "Program Quality."

- **Content Knowledge** is assessed at the transition points (Steps) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs as well as within individual courses and field experiences throughout the program. These assessments allow the unit, in collaboration with its Professional Community, to thoroughly understand and to help improve a candidate's content knowledge. This begins with the assessment of a candidate's content knowledge upon acceptance to the program. Students entering the programs are required, as prescribed by the State of Indiana, to successfully pass the Praxis I examination or to have achieved an ACT composite score of at least 24 or an SAT Critical Reading and Mathematics combined score of at least 1100. Additionally, at this stage, students are required to have achieved a minimum Saint Mary's cumulative GPA of 2.50 and to have completed the Basic Writing Proficiency requirement that is part of the College's Sophia Program. At Step 2, before student teaching, candidate content knowledge is also assessed in multiple ways. Candidates are required to maintain a 2.50 cumulative GPA and to have completed all education courses with a grade of C or better. Additionally, students are required

to complete successfully an Advanced Writing Proficiency requirement and to complete their Critical Reflection on Teacher Standards at the "Developing" level, based on a scoring rubric at the end of Step 2. At Step 3, cumulative content knowledge is assessed through both internally and externally designed assessments. Students are again required to maintain a 2.50 cumulative GPA and to have earned at least a grade of C in all education courses. The candidates are also required to have completed their Education Portfolio at the "Proficient" level (based on a scoring rubric) and to have passed Praxis II testing.

Candidates' performance related to content knowledge is reviewed as the candidates' progress through the programs and the assessment system is used to improve candidate performance. Prior to admission to the program, potential candidates are provided with a list of the requirements for admission. The criteria for admission are clearly articulated in the department application. Applicants are provided with written feedback regarding admission status. If the student is not admitted, the letter specifies deficiencies. Additionally, if other concerns arise, the unit head will address the concerns and will identify areas for improvement for the student in a meeting. Upon admission to the program, the candidate and her advisor create a plan that guides her path through the Steps. It is revisited at each advising meeting to ensure smooth transitions from one Step to the next. If a candidate is in danger of not achieving the requirements needed to move to the next Step, she meets with her advisor to receive suggestions for improvement and is notified in writing of these concerns. Additionally, all candidates meet with an advisor at least bi-annually to discuss their performance as they progress through the program.

Content knowledge is most directly assessed at the candidate level within individual courses and in field experiences. It is within these courses that candidates learn and are assessed on their knowledge of the subject matter and their professional field of study. Faculty utilize a variety of course-embedded assessments to help understand and improve candidate performance related to content knowledge, including content tests, oral and written assignments assessed with standardized rubrics, and a cumulative portfolio. These assessments are identified in the assessment system and the corresponding Assessment Schematic, either generally as course-embedded assessments or by specific assignment or rubric.

These types of assessments can often be the most critical in improving candidate performance related to content knowledge, as many are formative in nature. Students receive feedback from unit faculty on performance related to content knowledge on tests and assignments, which aim to improve their knowledge and subsequent performance on other tests, assignments, and in future courses. Rubrics can serve as feedback mechanisms for candidates but are also utilized as a form of formative assessment. For example, the summative Cooperating Teacher Survey (Step 3) includes a question that asks the cooperating teacher to assess the candidate regarding content knowledge through observation in a field setting. This information can help a candidate to improve upon her demonstration of content knowledge prior to her first teaching position. Overall, in 2012, ninety-two percent of cooperating teachers rated the candidate as prepared or well-prepared related to content knowledge. Using this assessment, we have only been able to collect data on the 2012 candidates. This information can be connected to responses on a similar question in the Exit Survey and the Principal Survey. Another assessment measure of candidate content knowledge is the work that the candidate completes in her coursework. Individual faculty members work directly with candidates in each course to improve content knowledge that is reflected in semester and cumulative GPA. Elementary Education candidates are required to

maintain a minimum GPA of 2.50. Average aggregate GPA's of the graduates have ranged from a 3.33 for the class of 2010 to 3.41 for the class of 2012. Secondary Education minors were equally high achieving with regard to GPA. Average aggregate GPAs of graduates for the last five years have ranged from 3.17 for the class of 2011 to 3.50 for the class of 2012. While we acknowledge the limitations of GPAs as an assessment tool, when used in conjunction with other assessment measures, they can provide a helpful barometer of candidate content knowledge.

- **Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills** are also assessed at the transition points (Steps) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs, as well as within individual courses and through field experiences. The assessment system was designed by the unit to assess pedagogical knowledge and skills by using feedback from unit faculty and other members of the Professional Community, as well as by requiring candidates to be self-reflective on their own learning in this area. Because the unit's Conceptual Framework is based upon the importance of the teacher as a reflective decision-maker, the assessment system was developed also to assess the candidate's ability to reflect on her performance within the framework of the standards.

Candidates are required to complete education courses that focus on knowledge related to effective teaching regardless of the intended candidate's content area. Candidate performance is assessed in this area in multiple ways, including content tests, scoring rubrics applied to class assignments, and, most significantly, through observation in the educational setting. Course-embedded assessments are often first reviewed by the instructor. The candidates are provided with suggestions for improvement. As with content knowledge, overall candidate performance as related to pedagogical knowledge and skills is reviewed with the candidate's faculty advisor at least once per semester. The advisor provides students with suggestions for improvement, as well as notes any areas where the candidate is not achieving the standards. Additionally, both unit faculty and school faculty utilize the assessment system to improve candidate performance related to pedagogical knowledge and skills through the use of rubrics. For example, student teachers (Step 3) are formally observed four times each by the cooperating teacher and clinical faculty as formative assessment. The feedback that candidates receive on the first assessment provides them with suggestions to improve their lesson plans as they move forward in the program. Overall, in all rubric areas, both Elementary and Secondary Education candidates achieved significant growth between the first and fourth assessments, suggesting that the feedback on the earlier rubric may have helped candidates improve performance.

Additionally, throughout the programs, the assessment system is designed to facilitate the assessment of a candidate's ability to self-reflect within the theoretical model of being a reflective decision-maker. This is assessed at Step 1 by students demonstrating openness to learning the standards. At Step 2, the candidate demonstrates an understanding of the standards. At Step 3, the candidate demonstrates not only understanding, but also the ability to implement the standards consistently. Overtime, candidates are required to move through the levels of the rubric, improving their performance. This performance is connected to reflection upon their achievement of the standards that support effective teaching. For example, the assessment system requires that candidates reflect both orally and in writing on all standards through an assignment, "Critical Reflection on the Teacher Standards" at the end of Step 2 and at the mid-point of Step 3, when candidates orally present their reflection on Standard 3, "Planning and Delivery." Reports summarizing candidate oral presentations at these key transition points show that candidates' ability to self-reflect on the standards increases between Steps 2 and 3.

- **Professional Dispositions** are also measured at each step during the candidate's program in order to provide her with opportunities to grow and develop her professional dispositions. The NCATE glossary specifically notes an expectation that "institutions assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings." Therefore, the assessment system was structured to facilitate this assessment of both Elementary Education and Secondary Education candidates in educational settings upon admission to the department and through the field evaluations completed by the P-12 School Faculty. These evaluations assess dispositional qualities that are valued, such as being a reflective decision-maker who is passionate about teaching, is ethical in her work, and someone who seeks to cultivate the diverse gifts of each student. Specifically, the P-12 School Faculty assess the ethical behavior of the candidate, her professionalism, her understanding of how student development and diversity can impact how students achieve, and how the candidate engages with students to understand them as individuals. This structure provides the candidates with three or more opportunities to receive this evaluative information in order to improve performance related to the achievement of the professional dispositions.

Because the unit's Conceptual Framework stresses the importance of the reflective decision-maker, the unit also asks candidates to self-assess their achievement of dispositions at each step using a 2008 instrument developed by Schulte at the University of Nebraska - Omaha. This process is also included in the unit's systematic approach to assessment. Overall, this information is used to help the candidate self-reflect on her own performance in conjunction with the feedback that is provided by the P-12 School Faculty in order to improve her performance as it is related to the dispositions. Interestingly, the unit has found that students initially self-assess themselves very high on the scale although their experience is less in-depth than it is later in the program. This creates a ceiling effect and makes significant improvement difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, candidates self-report that they have improved in performance on many disposition items.

Program Quality

In addition to utilizing the assessment system to improve candidate performance, the unit also planned its assessment system to improve program quality. This was done by creating an assessment system that is able both to aggregate individual candidate assessment data and also to disaggregate assessment information by program and candidate demographic variables. The assessment system also allows the unit to review assessment information in aggregate as candidates move through the programs to identify places of candidate growth or areas for improvement to ensure program quality. The use of the assessment system in this way is facilitated by the organization of the curriculum around the three Steps and post-graduate follow-up.

Because the assessment system was implemented within the last two years, the unit is not yet able to use it to track a cohort of candidates throughout the three Steps and following graduation to improve program quality using this method. In the interim, the unit is focusing on understanding and improving program quality through bi-annual assessment retreats, meetings of the Assessment Committee, and unit meetings, all which focus on aggregated assessment information related to a particular Step, course, Standard, or component of the program. These conversations have been particularly beneficial to the unit, as they have spurred additional collaborative discussions around quality.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

Additionally, the Cooperative Council and the Teacher Education Council have been involved in the use of the assessment system to improve program quality. Aggregated assessment results focus on areas of the programs that impact each group respectively. Again, while this has been helpful in considering various ways to improve the quality of components of the program, it will be a few years before program quality can be assessed longitudinally and comprehensively for a cohort of candidates from the beginning of the program through first employment.

An example of how the assessment system has been used to understand program quality is related to the first course of the program, Education 201. This course is a critical gateway course where students are first exposed to the programs. During this course, the unit gathers preliminary assessment data on important student attributes such as entering content knowledge and disposition. Students are given the first self-reflection survey related to their achievement of the dispositions at the beginning of the course and at the end in a pre-/post- fashion. This assessment has suggested that candidates show significant change in disposition related to the three Standards addressed in the course (Standard 1, Student Development and Diversity, Standard 5, Classroom Climate, and Standard 6, the Professional Environment). The unit was pleased that the candidates experienced this growth and believes that it validates the content and structure of the course.

Unit Operations

The unit assessment system helps to inform the planning, procedures, and governance of the unit, in addition to informing decisions regarding resources in the unit. Results from the unit's assessment are regularly reviewed to inform curricular planning and help to inform policies and procedures set by the unit to ensure student success. For example, changes in State P-12 Developmental Standards provoked a change in unit learning outcomes. In that alignment, a gap was evident in the Secondary Education Program because literacy was not addressed in the course sequence. Education 346 was redesigned and renamed to better reflect attention to literacy. While this change was accomplished using current resources and staffing, the unit anticipates that changes related to State and Professional Standards that impact the assessment system or its results could require changes in budget, staffing, services, or facilities in the future.

As the assessment system produces additional assessment information, this will be more intentionally integrated into planning, budgeting, and in resource allocations at the unit and College levels. At the College level, all academic departments are required to submit information annually on their assessment results to the Dean of Faculty. Results from unit assessments are shared with the Dean of Faculty in meetings with the unit head and during the department annual review process. It is often during these meetings that the unit head and the Dean discuss the resource needs of the unit. This is a key opportunity for the Unit to utilize its assessment system to improve unit operations. Additionally, the College's Curriculum Committee has adopted a procedure that requires an assessment plan or assessment results to be submitted to the committee with any curriculum change request. This positions the unit well when submitting any new request to the committee. The assessment system will allow the unit to provide necessary assessment information to the Curriculum Committee to improve curricular planning and revision.

While the aforementioned activities are larger systematic ways that the assessment system improves unit operations, there are smaller, more concrete examples of how unit operation is improved from information gathered through the assessment system. An example of this occurred in a course-embedded assessment wherein Elementary Education majors were asked to respond to the prompt, "If I

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

were in charge of the Education Department...” as a part of their language arts course. Their responses were cataloged and a number of their suggestions were taken, including increasing hours of operation of The Learning Tree, a resource room.

Although not directly an improvement based on the use of the assessment system, the unit has responded to feedback provided at the last NCATE visit that indicated a need to improve the unit assessment system by restructuring the unit's leadership. The unit leadership was reconfigured with the addition of an NCATE Coordinator, the appointment of a new unit head and relocation of licensing duties to the Director of Student Teaching and Field Study. These changes have provided the unit head the opportunity to focus on other responsibilities. Additionally, an Assessment Committee was formed to better focus on accomplishing Standard Two.

2.2.a Standard on which the unit is moving to target level

Describe areas of the standard that the unit is currently performing at target level

Element 1: The Assessment System:

Capacity and Effectiveness of the Assessment System

The development of the assessment system began with a review of the Conceptual Framework as described in Section 1 (Overall and Conceptual Framework) of this report. The Conceptual Framework was aligned with the State P-12 Developmental Standards, the College's four year liberal learning outcomes, and the unit learning outcomes. The unit's Assessment Committee then reviewed and aligned the learning outcomes with the assessment measures used by the unit. Through this process, the Professional Community determined that modifications needed to be made to various assessment measures in order to ensure that they adequately addressed the learning outcomes and Standards. The Professional Community included all stakeholders, i.e. higher education faculty, school faculty and administrators, and candidates. The unit identified areas within the assessment system that needed to be strengthened. Four new assessments were added to the assessment system. First, the unit decided to add a summative standards-based assessment to be completed by the college supervisor for student teachers. This assessment mirrored the assessment that is completed by the cooperating teacher who supervises the candidate. Next, the unit developed a standards-aligned assessment to be completed by the cooperating teacher to evaluate the candidate's quality of preparation. This provided the unit with additional educational-setting feedback regarding the preparation of teacher candidates. The third assessment that was added was a standards-based Exit Survey that allowed candidates to self-assess their own preparation. Finally, the unit collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to embed an alumnae survey specific to the unit within the College's One and Five-Years-Out Alumnae Surveys. Additionally, the unit observed that the response rate for the Principal Survey was lower than anticipated, and therefore has modified the survey and decided to use email in order to improve the response rate.

Once the unit drafted the assessment system, it was vetted by members of the Professional Community including the Cooperative Council comprised of P-12 faculty and administrators, the Teacher Education Council comprised of higher education faculty, School Faculty who work with candidates in the field, and candidates themselves. These members of the Professional Community will review the assessment system at regular intervals and will provide feedback to the unit regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the system.

Validity, Utility, and Review of Assessment System

Since the unit has recently reviewed and developed its assessment system, the unit and Professional Community are just beginning to evaluate the validity and utility of the data being produced by the assessment system. As the data is collected, analyzed and reported, the unit's Assessment Committee considers the validity of the data being produced. For some instruments, data has only been collected once. The unit will continue to review the validity and utility of the data being produced in upcoming semesters.

In the future, the unit will review the assessment system at regular intervals to ensure that it continues to incorporate and accurately assess any changes in professional and/or unit outcomes. The unit's Assessment Committee will also regularly review, with the guidance of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the appropriateness of the assessment technology used related to the assessment system. Beginning in fall 2012, the College will begin to review assessment technology intended for use in assessing the new general education curriculum. The unit NCATE Coordinator will actively participate in the review of this technology to evaluate potential uses within the unit. It is the goal of the College to consider an assessment system (including rubric functions, an electronic portfolio, and data analysis) that will meet the needs of both general education curriculum assessment and assessment of the College's programs of study.

Decisions About Candidate Performance: Multiple Decision Points and Multiple Measures

The Assessment Schematic document available electronically creates a clear visualization of the multiple measures used to assess candidate performance at each of the unit's decision points, Step 1, 2, and 3, and following graduation.

Generally speaking, assessment measures designed to monitor candidate performance are focused on assessing content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions. Beginning at Step 1 with admission to the program, candidates are required to successfully complete Education 201, maintain a GPA of 2.50, be successfully evaluated in the field, have appropriate dispositions toward teaching based on the recommendation of two Higher Education Faculty members, and the successful attainment of her Basic Writing Proficiency. In accordance with Indiana State guidelines, the applicant must also either pass Praxis I or have earned a composite score of 24 on the ACT or combined Critical Reading and Mathematics score of 1100 on the SAT.

To progress in Step 2, the candidate must pass her education courses with a grade of at least a C. She must maintain a 2.50 GPA and complete two papers to earn her Advanced Writing Proficiency. Additionally, she must complete an oral presentation of her Critical Reflection on Teacher Standards at the Developing level or above (in accordance with a unit scoring rubric) and achieve successful field evaluations. Growth in professional dispositions is also measured at the end of Step 2. These criteria must be met for the candidate to successfully advance to Step 3.

In the first semester of Step 3, the candidate must maintain a GPA of 2.50 or above, have a C or better in her Education classes, earn satisfactory evaluations in her field placement, and earn at least the "Developing" level of performance on the oral presentation of Standard 3, "Planning and Delivery". Success in meeting each of these criteria allows the candidate to begin her student teaching experience. In order to complete Step 3, the candidate must successfully meet the requirements of Student Teaching. This includes weekly attendance at student teaching meetings, successful evaluations from Clinical Faculty and School Faculty, and passing the Praxis II test. The candidate must achieve an evaluation of

at least "Proficient" on her written Education Portfolio, as well as on the oral presentation of the portfolio.

At the end of her program, the candidate is asked to complete an exit survey that allows her to self-reflect upon her preparation. Upon the completion of her first year of teaching, the unit contacts her building principal for assessment of her performance and preparedness. Additionally, for the first time this academic year, graduates one and five years past graduation have been asked to complete an alumnae survey that asks them to reflect upon their preparation and to provide suggestions for program improvement.

Assessments as Predictors of Candidate Success

Due to the recent revision of the assessment system, the unit was not able to move to the target level on this element of the assessment system. This is due to the fact that the assessment system has been recently revised and therefore does not yet contain enough assessment data to track student success throughout the program. The technology utilized in support of the assessment system, (Banner, Access, and SPSS) will allow the unit to maintain this data and to analyze how well the assessments are predictive of candidates' future success in upcoming academic years. A more complete discussion and plan to attain target level on this element component are discussed in more depth in the concluding section of this report.

Fairness, Accuracy, Consistency, and the Determination of Bias

Following the 2010 NCATE visit, the BOE indicated that "The unit has not taken effective steps to eliminate bias in assessment and is not working to establish the fairness, accuracy and consistency of its assessment procedures." In response to this critique, the unit aimed to specifically address each of these critical aspects of good assessment.

To ensure accuracy in assessment, once the unit's learning outcomes were reviewed, revised, and appropriately aligned, the unit reviewed each assessment tool to determine if the assessment measure was still an accurate measure of the student content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and dispositions. This is visually presented in the Assessment Schematic. During this process, the unit made revisions to several assessment tools and identified additional areas where assessment measures were not sufficiently appropriate to assess the learning outcome. This led to the creation of four new instruments, the Summative Standards-Based Assessment completed by college supervisors, a quality of preparation measure completed by cooperating teachers, an exit survey, and an alumnae survey for graduates who are one and five years past graduation.

In order to address the BOE's concern regarding the fairness of the assessment system, all learning outcomes were reviewed and aligned to the appropriate assessment tool. These assessments were also organized around the Steps to ensure that each assessment was appropriate to the curricular level of the courses and to the candidates' field experiences. The Assessment Schematic that visualizes the assessment system has been made available to students online through the unit's website, in addition to the various assessment measures and results.

Additionally, the unit has focused significant effort to promote consistency and eliminate bias in its assessment system. Many assessment measures utilize two evaluators to help ensure consistency in assessment. Additionally, the unit held a workshop with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment that focused on the "norming" of a rubric used to score a student writing paper (AWP) that

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

had previously shown variability in scoring. The unit found it very helpful to learn how to conduct a “norming” session to use with other assessments and to have these types of conversations around how they score student work. Additionally, all data reports from assessments, when possible, include inter-rater reliability statistics.

To help eliminate bias in the assessment system, both the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment and the unit review all assessments for face validity and the potential of bias at both the question and instrument level. In the use of the assessment system, all efforts are made to reduce bias by using multiple assessment measures and multiple reviewers. In many cases, it is not possible to eliminate all bias, since on some measures the unit does not use a blind-assessment process, and some national standard measures such as aptitude tests have documented some test bias. In these cases, the unit strives to both be aware of this potential for bias and to minimize it however possible.

Element 2: Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation

Data from the measures described in Element 1 has been regularly gathered, summarized, and analyzed.

Regular and Comprehensive Information

The assessment system provides regular and comprehensive data on candidate performance at each transition point, on program quality, and on unit operations. As previously mentioned, the Assessment Schematic document visually outlines the multiple measures utilized at each step to assess candidate performance and program quality. The information is reviewed regularly with candidates as they progress through the program to provide information for improvement. The data is compiled and aggregated using assessment and statistical technology and reports are generated following the completion of each assessment. These reports are reviewed by the unit's Assessment Committee and appropriate members of the Professional Community as well as being made available through the department's website. This information also informs the evaluation of and the improvements in unit operations.

Multiple Assessments and Systematic Collection of Data

The use of multiple assessments is visually displayed in the Assessment Schematic document and is previously described in this report. The assessment technology allows integration of data from the various assessments including those from candidates, graduates, unit faculty, higher education faculty, and P-12 teachers; data is compiled, stored, and analyzed using the technology. Data is collected immediately following the administration of the assessment and is added to the database that maintains this information. This allows the unit to have access to this information and to utilize it to improve candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations as the candidate progresses through the program. In this way, the assessment system serves both a formative and summative function.

Disaggregation of Assessment Data

The unit does not have alternate routes, off-campus locations, off-campus programs, or distance education programs. The assessment data is disaggregated in the analysis for the Elementary Education and Secondary Education Programs as well as by content area minors when appropriate.

Data Compilation, Analysis and Reporting

All data collected through the assessment system processes are regularly compiled, summarized, analyzed, and reported. Following the administration of each assessment measure in the assessment system, the data are initially reviewed by the unit's NCATE Coordinator, who is also the Chair of the

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

unit's Assessment Committee. The data is then added to the database that stores the unit's assessment information. From this database, summary reports are then generated and the assessment data is analyzed. When appropriate, inter-rater reliability is computed and reported within these reports. When possible, generated reports include notations of significant take-away points. Reports are reviewed by the NCATE Coordinator and the unit's Assessment Committee. These reports are discussed at Assessment Committee meetings, unit meetings, and in meetings with the Professional Community including the Cooperative Council and the Teacher Education Council, as well as during unit assessment meetings. All reports are then posted on the publicly available unit webpage. In order to comply with FERPA, data in these reports are redacted in cases where the number of students in a particular group is less than three. Copies of full reports without redacted data are stored and available in the unit files for review.

Record of Complaints

The Teacher Candidate Assistance Team (TCAT) handles any candidate complaints or faculty concerns about candidates. TCAT Policies and Procedures and Candidate Complaint Process documents are available on the unit's public webpage. When a candidate is admitted to the unit, she receives an admittance letter and a copy of the Candidate Complaint Process. Records of complaints and their resolutions are on file in the unit head's office.

Additionally, Saint Mary's College publishes appeal procedures for academic honesty violations, contested grades, and waivers of academic policies in the *Bulletin*. All students, regardless of their major, may utilize the grade appeal procedure. The procedures are fully outlined for students. A sexual harassment policy is in place and a newly approved discriminatory harassment policy is also available to all students, which utilizes an anonymous system, Maxient. The unit adheres to the formal complaint process established by the College, implemented by the Office of Academic Affairs and First Year Studies, and published in the *Bulletin* (Appeal Process, p 56).

The unit consistently applies the criteria for entrance into the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs, as well as progression within the programs. Faculty members agree that candidates are respected and best served by adhering to policies and standards. The unit supports a fair process of discernment that demonstrates respect for the individual candidate,

The Use of Information Technology

The unit's assessment data is stored and analyzed using Microsoft Access and SPSS 19. These databases were developed through collaboration between the unit and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The goal for the design of these databases was to allow the unit's assessment data to be analyzed in aggregate as well as longitudinally. Additionally, these databases interface easily with the College's student information system, Banner. This allows the seamless integration of student demographic variables and pertinent academic information, such as admissions test scores and GPA. A significant benefit of utilizing SPSS 19 is that it facilitates statistical analysis of the data including analyzing the data for significant student growth over time and monitoring inter-rater reliability. Additionally, the College continues to improve its ability to collect assessment information. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment currently utilizes a web-based survey software system and has recently expanded that system to allow all paper assessments to be automatically scanned, thereby creating electronic data files. This technology is currently being implemented and will be available to use with the unit's assessment data beginning in the fall.

The unit continues to evaluate its needs related to technology to support its assessment system. As mentioned earlier, the College will begin a process to review potential vendor assessment technologies in the fall semester with a goal to potentially purchase a system that will meet the technology needs of both the new general education program and of academic and administrative departments. The unit will provide significant input into this choice and will consider whether the vendor product the College chooses better meets their needs than the current information technology that supports the assessment system. Additionally, in spring 2012, a new Chief Information Officer (CIO) was hired at the College. Mr. Michael Boehm will provide any necessary support in the purchase and implementation of a vendor-based assessment technology solution.

Element 3: Use of Data for Program Improvement

Evaluation Review

The unit has a wide assortment of reviewed and well-developed assessments, including internally developed assessments, national standardized tests, and an externally developed dispositional survey. The unit will regularly review the assessments in light of the standards and unit learning outcomes, as well as with consideration to the utility of the assessment data each provide. Due to the fact that the assessment system was recently reviewed and developed, the corresponding data systems and analytical techniques have not had to be revised or re-aligned based on changes to the Standards, outcomes or assessment measures. These data systems and analytical techniques will be updated regularly to correspond to the review of the evaluation and assessment tools and methods.

Change and Assessment of Change

The unit regularly reviews the results of the various assessments and identifies areas for improvements and strategies to accomplish these improvements. Due to the recent revision and development of the assessment system, data has only been collected using the current instruments for, at most, three semesters. It has not yet collected enough data to assess and evaluate any impact of a change made to candidate performance, program quality, or unit operations. A more complete discussion and plan to attain target level on this element component is provided in the concluding section of this report.

Data Review and Plans for Improvement

Data is regularly analyzed, summarized, and discussed with the Professional Community. The unit holds two assessment retreats a year to discuss the implications of data gathered. Assessment results are also regularly discussed in unit meetings and with the Professional Community including the Higher Education Faculty at meetings of the Teacher Education Council and with the Cooperative Council. The unit website makes all data available to candidates and to the public when there are more than three candidates represented. Data on the website has been redacted to protect confidentiality, but that information is filed in the unit. Candidate performance is also reviewed during advising meetings twice each academic year.

In unit meetings, Assessment Committee meetings, and in meetings with the educational community, the department identified areas for improvement and developed strategies for improving candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations. For example, the analysis of Praxis II scores, particularly on sub-tests, has been discussed with members of the higher education faculty and has been used to help candidates prepare more effectively for the examinations. Assessment data gathered through the Exit Survey suggested that candidates believe that the curriculum could be improved to better address technology in courses beyond Education 220. In order to address this need, technology in

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

the classroom is now being addressed in Education 345 and this change will be subsequently reviewed in future assessments to ensure that it is meeting the needs of candidates. Additionally, the BOE report following the last site visit indicated that the unit may not be adequately exposing students to English language learners. The unit, in cooperation with the Cooperative Council, created a method of collecting information to ensure that each candidate is exposed to English language learners during their field placements. The unit will discuss how to use this information and its implications for field placement at its August 22, 2012, assessment retreat. Additionally during the August 22 retreat, the unit will review spring end of semester assessments and assessment data from recent graduates. The unit will identify areas for improvement and will draft improvement plans for these areas. These plans will be vetted with its Professional Community and will be made available on the unit's webpage.

Summarize activities and their impact on candidate performance and program quality that have led to target level performance.

Assessment System

After receiving the BOE report, the unit began the revision and development of our assessment system by revisiting our Conceptual Framework. The unit resoundingly agreed that it still believed in the foundation that had led it to endorse the "reflective decision maker." The literature supporting this foundation was updated within the Conceptual Framework.

This led to the creation of the unit's Assessment Committee that reports to the entire unit. The committee's first task was to align our unit learning outcomes to Indiana's P-12 Developmental standards and to the College's Liberal Learning Outcomes. This necessitated the addition of the INTASC content standard because the State Standards did not adequately address content knowledge. The committee's minutes report work done in response to the BOE finding that "The unit's assessments do not reflect the candidate proficiencies identified in the unit's Conceptual Framework."

Once the Standards and learning outcomes were aligned, the unit, in collaboration with the Professional Community, began review of all assessment tools and measures to evaluate the appropriateness of these measures in light of the newly aligned Standards and learning outcomes. All current assessment measures were reviewed and were aligned to the Standards and learning outcomes and were calibrated to a four-point scale that established some consistency in measurement across internal assessment measures. The unit specifically identified the individual items that align to the Standards in order to ensure that candidates were being assessed using multiple measures and at multiple transition points and to ensure that all standards and learning outcomes were being assessed.

Through this process, the unit identified areas where the assessments could be improved to more accurately assess the standards. To that end, the student self-evaluation of the attainment of dispositions was dropped and a research-based, academically-vetted instrument was adopted. Additionally, an exit survey that follows student teaching was developed and implemented. The unit elected to embed program specific questions into the already existing College's One and Five-Years-Out Alumnae Surveys. Terminology now in use in Indiana to gauge teacher quality was used, as each statement referred to "the effective teacher..." The unit looks forward to receiving this information for the first time in the summer 2012 for graduates from the classes of 2007 and 2011.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

To help organize and visualize the unit assessment system, an Assessment System Schematic document was developed that displays the alignment of the Standards to the outcomes, the outcomes to the assessment measures, the measures to the data findings, and reports of how the information was used. The schematic also allows the unit to visually display transition points and their appropriate assessments throughout the program as the assessment of each Standard is disaggregated by the Steps. Additionally, the assessment system and assessment tools were reviewed for fairness, accuracy, and consistency. These processes are described in more detail in an earlier section.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation

In reviewing procedures for data collection, analysis, and evaluation of data produced from assessment measures guided by the assessment system, the unit reached out to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to develop a collaborative partnership. Through this collaboration, a database was developed to store and maintain the unit's assessment data to provide regular and comprehensive data on candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations. A process was developed by which each assessment initially would be reviewed by the NCATE Coordinator and then added to the database to be summarized and analyzed. This is done immediately following the administration of each assessment measure to facilitate the timely processing and usefulness of the data reports.

Data reported from the assessment system was intentionally stored and is analyzed in order to disaggregate data by the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs and content area minors. The data is analyzed using a variety of statistical methods to both describe the data and to statistically analyze the data. It was determined that when appropriate, all data reports would include appropriate measures of inter-rater reliability. In support of transparency for its educational community and the higher education community, the unit has elected to provide all assessment measures and corresponding data reports and committee minutes on the unit website. In cases where the number of students completing a particular assessment is less than three, the data is redacted in the public presentation.

Since the last visit, in order to support the assessment system, the unit considered potential technology solutions. The unit is currently satisfied that the current technology adequately supports the database that maintains this information but will evaluate this regularly as assessment technology develops. The College will begin a process to review potential vendor assessment technologies in the fall semester. A member of the unit will serve as a key player in the process.

The unit revisited and confirmed its procedures for candidate complaints.

Use of Data for Program Improvement

The unit assessment system was revised and developed during the last two academic years following the BOE report. In that time, the unit established its assessment system and collected a full-year of assessment data using the system. This data is being reviewed following the administration of the assessment measures and is systematically considered at both unit meetings and assessment retreats. Although the Assessment Committee has been meeting regularly and assessment retreats have been held, in August 2012, the first assessment retreat of the 2012-13 academic year will be held to consider 2011-12 academic year assessment data. Because the assessment system has been recently developed, the unit has had limited opportunities to continue to develop evaluations and to appropriately review and revise the assessment system and analytical techniques used.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

For similar reasons, the unit had not yet had the opportunity to assess the impact of changes which are based on assessment data. The unit has established appropriate processes to facilitate this in the future. At unit meetings and bi-annual assessment retreats, areas for improvement will be identified and an improvement plan will be drafted. These will then carry over to the agendas of the next unit meeting or retreat.

Additionally, faculty and candidates will continue to regularly review the assessment data as it relates to candidate performance and program quality at multiple decision points as described in more detail earlier in the report.

Impact on Candidate Performance and Program Quality

Since the implementation of the assessment system, discussions in the unit regarding student learning are more intentional. Conversation in the unit has centered on using the data gathered through the assessment processes to drive decision-making. Revisiting the Conceptual Framework, the unit affirmed its fundamental commitment to the teacher as a reflective decision maker. This helped the unit to conceptualize what the three themes—**Scholarship, Mission, and Competence**—mean within the accountability and transparency movements. In aligning outcomes with State P-12 Developmental Standards and Conceptual Framework and outcomes to the assessment measures with the Conceptual Framework, the unit has seen how assessment at key transition points impacts candidate performance and program quality. For example, candidates have become much more cognizant of their own performance regarding the standards, as was evidenced in their performance on the Critical Reflection on Teacher Standards oral presentation (end of Step 2), oral presentation on Standard 3 (mid Step 3), and their oral presentation of the Education Portfolio (end of Step 3).

In terms of program quality, the data from the assessments have caused the unit to review the preparation process, especially as it relates to the Elementary Education candidates. Secondary Education candidates have been prepared related to the standards via their Education 346 class, whereas Elementary Education candidates attended a workshop on the topic. The utilization of a course to help candidates unpack the standards has initially seemed to be a more successful approach than the workshop format.

Additionally, by looking at candidate dispositions more closely, the unit was able to measure the effectiveness of course learning outcomes in Education 201. The addition of the Cooperating Teacher Survey has provided important information about the quality of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs, and finally, the renewed involvement of the Professional Community has proven valuable, especially as the unit moves forward with program recognition.

Because the unit's assessment system has been revised and implemented in the past two years, these are just a few examples of the impact that the assessment system is having in the unit related to candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations. The unit anticipates continued, significant impact on candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations in the future.

Discuss plans and timelines for attaining and/or sustaining target level performance as articulated in unit Standard 2.

Attaining Target Level

Alignment with Professional Standards

In order to attain and sustain target level performance as related to Standard Two, the most significant next step for the unit to complete will be the submission of programs for SPA (Specialized Professional Association) recognition in fall 2014, three years prior to our next NCATE visit, since this timeline requirement did not permit us to address these during the eighteen month period prior to this focused visit. In preparation for this next step, the unit faculty have been or will be attending a variety of professional development activities to enable the unit to complete this using the appropriate timeline before the next NCATE visit. With regard to this undertaking, the unit is closely following correspondence from the State of Indiana, which is currently considering alternative requirements for "smaller programs." While we think that this may include many of our programs, the definition of small programs is not yet available from the State of Indiana.

In summer 2012, the unit head and NCATE Coordinator contacted Jeri Carrol (ACEI), who suggested ways to appropriately prepare for this next step. The unit intends to bring her to campus to provide assistance in preparing one program for SPA recognition, providing a process model that will be helpful as we submit each additional program for recognition.

Assessments as Predictors of Candidate Success

As indicated previously in the report, due to the recent revision of the assessment system, the unit does not yet have enough data available to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessments as predictors of future candidate success. As additional data is collected in upcoming semesters, the database will continue to be developed to allow analysis of the effectiveness of each assessment measure as a predictor of future success. The unit will collaborate with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to plan for these analyses and aims to account for student academic preparation and demographics to best understand the relationship between the assessment and candidate future success. This will be done using SPSS 19 which provides the statistical functions for both basic and more advanced analysis of these relationships. These findings will be reviewed by the unit and its Professional Community to revise assessment measures as needed. Thus far, appropriate preparations have been made in the technology system for this future analysis.

Change and Assessment of Change

As indicated above, due to the recent revision and development of the assessment system, the unit does not yet have enough data available to evaluate the impact of any changes made to improve candidate performance, program quality, or unit operations. As additional data is collected in upcoming semesters, the database will continue to be expanded to allow analysis of the impact of changes on candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations. During the upcoming August 22 assessment retreat, the unit will review the end of semester and end of year assessment data reports and will identify areas for improvement. The unit will then develop strategies for improvement in those areas and will articulate these in a formal plan that will be posted to the unit's website. Data will be collected during the upcoming semester (or academic year, depending on the assessment) in order to evaluate the impact that the change had within the program. As indicated in the previous section, appropriate preparations have been made in the technology system to facilitate this future analysis.

Sustaining target level performance

Assessment System

In order to sustain the target level performance that the unit has achieved in the past eighteen months, the unit will continue to evaluate the assessment system and will make modifications as necessary as the system continues to be utilized. The unit will collaborate with its Professional Community to evaluate the effectiveness of the revised assessment system to ensure that it is providing appropriate assessment information to the Professional Community. These efforts will be especially attuned to ensuring that the assessment system adequately measures key aspects of the Conceptual Framework, the Professional and State Standards, and the unit learning outcomes. Additionally, the unit will keep apprised of changes related to State Standards to ensure that any changes are adequately incorporated into the assessment system. Unit representation will also actively participate in College efforts to evaluate and potentially purchase additional technology solutions to support assessment of student learning. The unit will critically analyze the benefits and drawbacks of potential assessment technologies as they relate to meeting the needs of the unit assessment system.

The unit will continue to utilize multiple measures at each step of candidate progress through the transition points of the program. If necessary, the unit will modify, add, or eliminate assessments to ensure that appropriate assessment measures are used at each transition point throughout the program. As discussed in the previous section, the unit will utilize data gathered in the upcoming academic years to evaluate the relationship between assessments and future candidate performance. This analysis will provide information to the department that will be used to determine if various assessment methods are appropriate. The unit will also continue to conduct studies to establish the fairness, accuracy, and consistency of its assessment procedures and unit operations. Appropriate modifications to the assessment system and assessment measures will be made based on these analyses.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation

Data will continue to be collected as indicated in the assessment system in order to gather data on candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations. Candidate performance and program quality data will be gathered at each stage as the candidate progresses through the program. The unit will also continue to ensure that data is gathered at various stages from both internal and external sources, including student self-reflection, unit faculty, and P-12 teachers in educational settings. The unit is looking forward to receiving the new information from the One and Five-Years-Out Alumnae Surveys to enrich the unit's understanding of candidates' post-graduate practice.

Although the unit does not have off-site or distance education programs, the unit will continue to disaggregate assessment data for the Elementary and Secondary Education Programs as well as for content area minors. It is anticipated that as additional data is collected, the number of students in some smaller programs will increase in the data set and will allow more reliable information to be gathered from a more substantial number of students. Assessment data will continue to be compiled, aggregated, analyzed, and summarized using the current methods described previously. The unit will continue to upload this information to the unit's website in order to make this information available to all internal and external audiences for improvement of candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations.

Saint Mary's College Focused Visit

The unit will also continue to monitor candidate complaints utilizing both the unit processes as well as the broader College methods. As indicated in the previous section, a unit representative will actively participate in the evaluation of additional possible assessment technologies to support the unit's assessment system.

Use of Data for Program Improvement

The unit will continue to review the effectiveness of its assessment measures and assessment system in order to improve their relationship to understanding and evaluating candidate performance and program quality. As needed, the database will be revised to accommodate any changes to the assessment system. Appropriate analytical techniques will be utilized, modified, or expanded to accommodate any changes to the system and to improve the utility of the information.

As described in the section related to achieving target level performance, the unit anticipated systematically making changes based on the assessment data in order to address areas for improvement. The unit will attend to this throughout the academic year, but most specifically during assessment retreats where areas for improvement will be identified and improvement plans will be developed. The assessment system will then be utilized to assess the effects of these changes. Modifications will be made to the program and assessment methods as needed. Unit faculty and candidates will continue to review performance data regularly in order to identify areas for improvement and to systematically address these identified areas.