



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN
COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT IX.A.

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Michael T. Perry, Director of Higher Education and Educator Support Services, Maine Department of Education, on behalf of Commissioner Pender Makin

DATE: February 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Acceptance of Saint Joseph's College Educator Preparation Program Interim Report

BACKGROUND:

The Saint Joseph's College Educator Preparation Program (EPP) was last approved by the State Board of Education for the period of Spring 2022 through Spring 2027. Upon the recommendation of the EPP review team, the State Board's approval was conditional, pending an interim report from St. Joseph's College to be submitted by October 2023. In particular, the review team shared four recommendations primarily focused on the program's online graduate program.

Dr. Kathleen Clements, Director of Teacher Education at Saint Joseph's College, submitted the program's interim report on October 31, 2023. The interim report is organized around the review team's four recommendations and expresses the program's progress toward addressing each of the highlighted areas for improvement.

State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, *Purpose, Standards and Procedures for the Review and Approval of Preparation Programs for Education Personnel*, subsection 3.11(d)(3), states that an interim report "will serve as the basis for either: full program approval or a re-visit by the Review Team to determine eligibility for full program approval status".

During its regular meeting on January 24, 2024, the State Board's Certification and Higher Education Committee voted unanimously to accept the Saint Joseph's College EPP interim report.

RECOMMENDATION: That, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule Chapter 114, subsection 3.11(d)(3), the State Board accept the interim report of the Saint Joseph's College educator preparation program and further, that the Board affirms the state's full approval of Saint Joseph's College educator preparation program through its current review period ending in Spring 2027.

St. Joseph's College of Maine
Education Department
Interim Report
Submitted to the Maine State Board of Education
October-2023



St. Joseph's College of Maine Mission Statement

Saint Joseph's College of Maine, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and animated by the vision of Catherine McAuley, is a Catholic college in the liberal arts tradition distinguished by its welcoming community. We foster an ongoing dialogue between faith and reason so as to prepare our learners to live meaningful lives that improve the world around them.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The St. Joseph's community commits itself to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as an expression of our shared core values, the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, and Catholic Social Teaching. We carry out these values through our authentic embrace of the many dimensions of diversity among our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Commitment to Community

St. Joseph's College of Maine is a Catholic, co-educational liberal arts college sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Offering residential learning experiences for one thousand students, as well as online undergraduate and graduate programs for 2,500 adult learners across the United States and twenty countries, we continually strive to shape our online experiences around the same sense of community students would find with an on campus learning experience. Continually renewed by our Mercy values, we weave together the skills, the space, and the spirit that lifelong learning requires. Community grows in our students, faculty, and staff, who recognize learning as a tool to lift ourselves in the service of others.

Commitment to Sustainability

In 2022, the College earned STARS Gold rating after earning Silver in 2017 from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of its campus-wide sustainability achievements. This program is the most widely recognized in the world for reporting comprehensive information related to a college's sustainability performance.

In 2018 and again in 2023, Princeton Review recognized the College for its environmental responsibility and features Saint Joseph's College in the 2023 edition of its book, *The Princeton Review's Guide to 399 Green Colleges*.

Introduction

As outlined in the college's 2022 *Self Study Program Review*, The St. Joseph's College Education Department promotes and embraces a shared vision in our efforts to prepare effective teacher leaders. In pursuit of developing teacher leaders, we are guided by three primary teaching and learning principles: inquiry, practice, and reflection. In this iterative learning process, students in our education programs experience dynamic learning opportunities.

From March 28, 2022-April 1, 2022, a program review team conducted a virtual visit to the college to review certification programs in accordance with Chapter 114 standards and procedures. The review team was comprised of representatives from four Maine institutions with teacher preparation programs. One member of the State Department of Education and one observer from the State Board of Education served as non-voting members of the team.

The following certification programs were reviewed:

Elementary Education: (K-8) Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

Special Education (K-12) Bachelor of Science in Special Education

Physical Education (K-12) Bachelor of Science in Physical Education

Secondary Education: (6-12) Minor (Mathematics, History, Life Science, Physical Science)

Graduate Programs: MSED Leadership Administration for 045 Assistant Building Administrator Endorsement

Recommendation to the State Board of Education

The review team committee recommended that the State Board of Education approve St. Joseph's College of Maine Review Team report of findings and that the institution's educator preparation program be granted five-year program approval from Spring 2022 to Spring 2027 in accordance with the standards set forth by Chapter 114. The Review Team further recommended that the Unit submit an interim report of progress toward meeting the recommendations related to the online graduate program within the report, by October 2023.

Report of Progress Towards the Recommendations

In the Spring of 2023, the college conducted a search and subsequently hired a new full time Program Director of Graduate Online Education (PD); this position includes responsibilities to maintain the instructional integrity of the graduate MSED programs, the program review and evaluation of these programs, to provide leadership in the support of adjunct faculty, and to collaborate with online student advising, enrollment management, instructional design support (TEI) and admissions.

The role of the Program Director (PD) has been that of a collaborative leader in addressing the following recommendations with support and input from the Unit and Chair of the Department of Education, the Office of Learning and Programs, the Office of Advising and Engagement, and the Office of Online Admissions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the graduate online education programs examine the alignment between courses supporting 045 assistant building administrator certification and the PSEL standards. Once gaps are identified, a plan should be developed with current online faculty to revise all content and materials. In parallel, the team recommends that the graduate online programs update all student facing materials (catalog, website) to clearly detail the 045 preparation program.

Progress Toward Recommendation:

A complete curricular program review of all courses included in the MSED program offerings began in July 2023. The first courses selected for comprehensive revision and review are those courses that are stated specifically in the 045 Endorsement for Assistant Building Administrator as required: ED 533 Federal and Maine Civil Rights Law; ED 538 Special Education Law; ED 531 Supervision and Evaluation of Personnel; and ED 535 Organizational Theory and Planning.

Working in collaboration with the director of Technology Enhanced Instruction (TEI), we designed a prospectus for revisions tool. This document allows adjunct faculty, the PD, and TEI to work together in identifying current course descriptions, outcomes/learning objectives, texts/readings, PSEL standards to be addressed, a week-by-week curriculum map, student assessment/evaluation, and *Quality Matters* criteria being met or not met in each individual course. This tool then allows us to begin to create a reference for deeper content review, a cross walking of specific assignments to PSEL standards, and a clear alignment between

the PSEL standards and the required course outcome expectations. In addition, the *Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric* assists this process in reconstructing courses to the highest level of research informed quality online learning experiences for our graduate learners. (Please see Appendix 1: Graduate: Course Quality Review Checklist).

By way of example, this process has already revealed opportunities to integrate the PSEL standards when planning course assignments that reflect a renewed emphasis on PSEL standard 2. Ethical and Professional norms across all course offerings in the 045 Assistant Building Administrator required courses suite.

Alongside the curricular program review, with support and guidance from the Office of Learning and Programs, the MSED program continues to participate in a comprehensive 360-degree review which includes a gap analysis and critical examination of current and projected practices and resources applied towards enrollment, management operations, online MSED admissions, alumni relations, and program review.

The online catalog sections which directly pertain to the MSED courses and programs will be changed to reflect the ongoing work stated above. Comprehensive and incremental catalog updates and edits are usually completed in the summer months and will reflect the first of our current revisions from our phased program review in the Summer of 2024.

The Program Director (PD) has been working closely with Brand Studio, the college's in-house marketing and communications agency to revise and update the website content related to the MSED programming and courses related to the 045 Assistant Building Administrator pathway. Meetings with Brand Studio occur regularly and the review and updating of content, text, arrangement, and visual materials continue as part of the overall 360 degree and curricular course changes.

Recommendation

Acknowledging that the pandemic stalled the Unit's collection and analysis of employer surveys, the review team recommends restarting that process for both master's level and undergraduate education programs.

Progress Towards Recommendation

The Education Department Chair and Program Director have instituted a standing monthly meeting which began in September 2023 and one of the priorities of our

collaborative planning is to discuss the potential of constructing a new survey tool for both the undergraduate and graduate levels. When a draft survey is designed, we will then plan to consult faculty and appropriate staff as to the most efficient and productive way to circulate this survey.

Recommendation

The Unit may want to consider providing more formalized opportunities and support for the online part time graduate faculty, specifically related to inviting online faculty to dialogue and participate in graduate course updates, revisions and towards the purpose of providing clearly defined lines of communication between the Education Unit and the graduate programs.

Progress Towards Recommendation

In response to this recommendation, this is work that is also ongoing and continues, as the new PD continues to build and establish positive, compassionate, respectful, and constructive relationships with the MSED adjunct faculty. Clear, consistent, and steady communication is an important part of this dynamic. Within the first month of hire, the PD began a series of “listening meetings”; these remote meetings were scheduled to meet the convenience of the individual faculty and occurred over a period of 6 weeks. The PD and individual faculty member were able to share their roles, responsibilities, observations, vision, ideas, and teaching expertise, as well as their personal and professional goals, in an effort to begin to build a caring and mission inspired relationship between the new PD and the MSED adjunct faculty.

There are regular tri-annual meetings scheduled with the MSED adjunct faculty as a whole with the PD, and as needed, meetings with individual college collaborative teams, which include advising, TEI, and other college offices, going forward as we conduct the program review and operationalize on the day-to-day tasks, course/program planning, teaching, professional growth opportunities, and the further development of the MSED program. The invitation to and involvement of the adjunct faculty is intentional and inclusive.

In regard to the effective lines of communication between the Education Unit and the MSED graduate program, as mentioned above, the Department Chair and Program Director have a regular standing monthly meeting, we also have an ease of in person communication as our physical office spaces are within a few steps of each other, and we communicate often via email, phone, and Google meet as

questions, concerns, ideas, situations and opportunities arise that would support each of our collective roles and responsibilities.

The PD is also now attending the Education Department meetings each month where there is the opportunity to establish a more robust working relationship and to standardize communication between the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the online program examine and bolster the level of support provided to online students in the course registration process.

Progress Towards Recommendation

Online MSED courses at St. Joseph's College of Maine are designed to run concurrently across five 10-week terms beginning in January, March, May, August, and October. This allows for an extended flexibility for non-matriculated and matriculated learners. In an effort to improve our support to students in the course registration process, there have been several strategic discussions as part of the 360-degree review process between the PD the Office of Admissions and Office of Advising and Engagement and the Office of Learning and Programs in an effort to streamline and improve this process. In addition, the PD now has regularly scheduled meetings with the online advising & engagement and admissions teams with an eye to examining how communication around student registration flow, course projections, a student's progress within program, the updating of and how we process required forms has resulted in a recently improved process of collaborative support for new and continuing students. We will continue to build upon this work in the next phase of the 360-degree review work.

We respectfully submit this Interim Report as requested by the 2022 St. Joseph's College of Maine Review Team Report of Findings for the Maine State Board of Education as a demonstration of our continuing progress toward the stated recommendations.



TEAM REPORT OF FINDINGS FOR THE
MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Saint Joseph's College

Program Approval Visit for Educator Preparation Program
March 28, 2022, through April 1, 2022
Virtual Visit

Program Review Team:

Erin Connor, Chair
Elaine Hughes, University of New England
Rachel Somerville, Maine College of the Arts
Pamela Thompson, Thomas College

Non-Voting Participants:

The Honorable Wendy Ault, State Board of Education
Ángel Martínez Loredó, Department of Education

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I. Introduction:

From March 28-April 1, 2022, a review team visited Saint Joseph's College to review school certification programs in accordance with Chapter 114 standards and procedures. Saint Joseph's College of Maine is a Catholic, co-educational liberal arts college sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. It offers a residential learning experience for one thousand students, as well as online undergraduate and graduate degree programs for 2,500 adult learners across the United States and twenty other countries. The review team was comprised of representatives from four Maine institutions with teacher preparation programs. One member of the State Department of Education and one observer from the State Board of Education served as non-voting members of the team.

The following certification programs were reviewed:

Elementary Education: (K-8) Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

Special Education: (K-12) Bachelor of Science in Special Education

Physical Education: (K-12) Bachelor of Science in Physical Education

Secondary Education: (6-12) Minor (Mathematics, History, Life Science, Physical Science)

Graduate Programs: MSBD Leadership Administration - for 045 Assistant Building

Administrator Certification

Leading up to the team visit, a self-study along with an online repository of evidence and artifacts, were made available to team members. During the team visit, members were provided with time to review the online repository along with opportunity to meet virtually with faculty in all programs along with administrators and staff across various levels of the college, current candidates, alumni. Additionally, the team was provided with time to observe college coursework and meet with candidates and cooperating field placement teachers, counselors, and administrators in neighborhood schools and clinical sites.

The following report is based on the findings of the team of peer reviewers and is derived from empirical data including interviews, observations, and supporting documentation provided by the College, and represents the team's objective assessment of the programs' alignment with the standards outlined within Chapter 114.

II. Summary of the Unit's Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework(s) establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work effectively in P-12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The conceptual framework(s) is knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and/or institutional mission, and continuously evaluated. The conceptual framework(s) provides the basis that describe the unit's intellectual philosophy, which distinguishes graduates of one unit from those of another.

Findings:

The Unit has a well-articulated conceptual framework ensuring that graduates of the Saint Joseph's College Teacher Education Programs will be able to demonstrate their abilities in three areas: knowledge, pedagogy and dispositions. The framework articulates the importance of deep reflection in all aspects of college life. This is evidenced in the Unit's commitment to service; teaching as service and vocation is robustly represented in the institutional mission.

The Unit's program outcomes are aligned with and expanded upon in the Conceptual Framework, which also includes how the Unit aligns itself with the mission and Institutional Student Learning Outcomes of the College, and how Collegewide initiatives have benefitted the Unit. The framework serves as scaffolding for the Unit's assessment plan and, therefore, allows for drilling down from the conceptual to the pragmatics of student artifacts and data. Students and faculty referenced the framework during interviews in the contexts of their studies and teaching.

III. Summary of the Team's Findings for Each Standard

Standard One: *Initial Teacher Candidate Performance Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.*

Findings

Candidate Standards:

The Teacher Education Department at Saint Joseph's College offers four undergraduate program options which lead to state certification. Elementary Education (K-8) and Physical Education (K-12) candidates complete a Bachelor of Science degree which include courses in the college's core curriculum and professional education. Students completing the Secondary Education (7-

12) minor may complete the Bachelor of Science in Biology, Chemistry, or Mathematics or a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, or History. Students pursuing a major in Special Education are certified (K-8) to teach in inclusive environments.

The Unit takes considerable pride in their methods courses which build upon student skills, inquiry, and implementation of teaching practices. These courses are completed by all undergraduate education majors. In the methods courses we observed we saw considerable coverage of the 11 InTASC standards for teacher preparation especially with regard to technology where students were exposed to tools like: Tinkercad, 3D printing, online math tools, digital science books and Google classroom.

Teacher candidates are being instructed in the curriculum standards for Maine students, for example in the Science Methods course students were learning about Cross Cutting Concepts which are a component of the Next Generation Science Standards.

We were impressed with the resiliency of the college to react to the COVID pandemic and how they and their students were able to pivot to online teaching. Many of the alumni interviewed spoke of how their student teaching experience was very different than initially planned due to completing it through a computer screen instead of a live classroom.

We also observed that the Unit is deeply committed to student reflection through the e-Portfolio project. Portfolio development based on the InTASC and CEC Standards begins in the freshman year in ED100, ED110, and SE 110. Students continue to develop their portfolios as they proceed through their major. The e-Portfolio which is presented and defended to a committee at the end of their junior year. The student's e-portfolio in Elementary Education, Special Education, Secondary Education and in Physical Education is the basis for candidate assessment during Senior Research Seminar when students demonstrate proficiency in the appropriate teaching Standards.

Building/District Leader Standards (Online Program):

With regard to the delivery of online graduate level courses, we did not observe any of these courses. With regard to the materials presented for the online courses we were concerned that the catalog descriptions were not updated recently and that some online materials referred to the ISLLC standards when other materials referred to the updated PSEL standards.

In the curriculum map that was shared for the 045 Assistant Building Administrator courses we could find no evidence of coverage of some of the PSEL standards, for example those of ethics and integrity. It is our assumption that those are addressed in the courses, however the curriculum map may not have been updated to reflect this.

The online instructors also shared frustration that although they would like to make large scale improvements to the courses, there was no support for this work.

The current online graduate students interviewed reported a very different support experience with regard to course selection. In their undergraduate coursework they worked closely with education faculty to choose courses, however in the graduate space they did not receive guidance.

This standard is *MET*.

Commendations:

The undergraduate education programs are commended for their strong sense of community that they foster with their students and their dedication to reflection and continuous growth throughout the program.

Recommendations:

(1) It is recommended that the Graduate Online education programs examine the alignment between the courses supporting 045 assistant building administrator certification and the PSEL standards. Once gaps are identified, a plan should be developed with current online faculty to revise all content and materials. (In recent years, online courses have been tweaked as needed, with unwavering support of the IT team, but deep curricular changes have not been implemented.)

(2) In parallel, the team recommends that the Graduate Online programs update all student facing materials (catalog, website) to clearly detail the 045 preparation program

Standard Two: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the qualifications of applicants, the performance of candidates and graduates, and on unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

The Unit has implemented many laudable measures to incorporate the feedback offered through their 2017 review. The assessment system as documented through the self-study and corresponding artifacts reflects both the conceptual framework and the professional standards associated with State of Maine certification. In conjunction with the Department's Conceptual Framework and its central focus of developing teacher leaders, the department established an essential question that drives the continuance of data collection efforts: "To what extent does the Education Department of Saint Joseph's College prepare qualified new teachers?"

The Unit engaged in a revision of their assessment plan in 2018-19 resulting in the adoption and funding of a part-time position of Data Coordinator for the department starting in 2020. The role is responsible for collecting and analyzing data that informs the Unit actions to improve programming. For example after analyzing Institutional Learning Outcomes, Department Learning Outcomes, professor observations, and student feedback, the Unit aligned and revised major writing projects across the program to verify and further articulate the scope and sequence of the essential teaching skills of both writing and lesson planning required of Education students throughout the program of study

Student assessment is captured via SNOW surveys. This annual survey solicits feedback in 4 categories: Strengths, Needs, Opportunities (for future program developments) and Weaknesses. The data is coded, tabulated and reviewed each year by the Education Faculty. As an example of the use of SNOW survey feedback, key course-based projects were identified and evaluated validated for their efficacy in developing proficiency with the InTASC standards.

The Unit employs a Gated Assessment program to monitor candidate progress and maintain quality of graduates. This system was refined in 2018 to include key specifics for parties responsible for assessing the required artifacts of each gate, communication of the clear consequences of each gate, and recordkeeping responsibilities. The five gates are:

1. Entrance to the College and the major
2. Completion of the first year
3. Entry into the professional core of courses (end of Sophomore year)
4. Completion of professional core (end of Junior year)
5. Program completion (end of Senior year)

All students in the Teacher Education Department are required to submit a standards-based professional e-portfolio. The portfolio is organized to demonstrate evidence of proficiency with the InTASC or other appropriate certification standards. Rubrics are used to assess the portfolios. This e-portfolio assessment program has become a model for the entire College. The Education Department has worked to improve the e-portfolio program. Data collected from students indicated a need for more clarity in the development of the e-portfolio and the Department created MA325, a course conducted in the spring of Junior Year, when the e-portfolio presented.

The standard is *MET*.

Commendations:

That the Unit's portfolio assessment system serves as a model adopted by all programs at SJC college illustrates the success of this assessment practice and the respect the College has for the

Education program's work.

Recommendations:

Acknowledging that the pandemic stalled the Unit's collection and analysis of employer surveys, the review team recommends restarting that process for both master's level and undergraduate education programs.

c. **UNIT STANDARD THREE: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice.** *The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that educator candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. In the redesign of educator preparation programs there is the expectation that an early, expanded, and on-going emphasis will be placed upon clinical practice experiences and that these experiences will become the norm.*

Findings

All undergraduate teacher preparation programs at the Unit make a consistent commitment to getting students out into schools every year in the program. They gain increasing responsibilities in the classroom as they progress through their training. They are also exposed to different grade levels as appropriate for the certification they are seeking upon program completion. The college has partnered with the Portland and Lewiston Public Schools and ensures students spend some time in those districts where there is more diversity than is found in other parts of Maine.

To facilitate field, experience the college employs a full-time Field Placement Coordinator who is well known and respected by the local school partners. They complimented the communication and organizational skills of the field placement coordinator. The college also has long standing relationships with many area schools, the supervising teachers and school principals all report great satisfaction with St. Joseph's students and they are eager to continue the partnership. Evidence shows frequent opportunities for candidates to reflect upon their practice and self-assess their performance in field experiences.

When interviewing principals, they reflected that teaching has become an even more demanding profession than in the past. Challenging parents can frustrate even veteran teachers but can prove especially challenging for new teachers. They recommended that it would be beneficial for all future teachers to have training on how to have difficult conversations with parents.

This standard is *MET*.

Commendations:

- The teacher education program is commended for the following:
 - their approach to field experience which ensures that students have varied experiences each year,
 - the high level of support for candidates in the field,
 - strong collaborative relationships with longstanding school partners.

UNIT STANDARD FOUR: Diversity.

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

Findings

As noted in the College's mission statement, Saint Joseph's College is a liberal arts College "that nurtures intellectual, spiritual, and social growth in students of all ages and all faiths within a value-centered environment." The education department at Saint Joseph's College has purposefully designed programming in the community that enhances a diversity-conscious campus.

Through their strategic plan, the college has outlined targeted DEI initiatives that aim to 'work towards creating a more diverse, multi-generational learning community.' To advance this goal, in 2020, President Dlugos convened the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) working group. The JEDI's focus is to 'enhance the College's efforts in recruitment of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.' Also, as part of its commitment to DEI, Saint Joseph's College is actively seeking candidates for its first Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A focus of this position is to develop and communicate policies that advance the College's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The education department is aligned with these broader college initiatives. The faculty and staff have engaged in a myriad of professional development opportunities focused on the topic of DEI. Saint Joseph's College offers events and professional development focused on social justice, diversity, and inclusion. Some examples include Mercy Week, Wabanaki Reach and Racial equity training, and sponsored lectures, and programs on a wide variety of topics. During the oral defense phase of the e-portfolio review, students are asked to directly speak to their growing understanding of diversity and inclusion.

As a result, several programs have been established to support students from historically underserved communities, such as the Mercy fund, Talbot scholar program, transfer student articulation agreements, and the Growing Future STEM teachers in Maine program.

Community-Based Learning (CBL) programs offer students experiences diversity, applying what they learn in the classroom to a real-world setting. Course offerings are grounded in theory regarding diversity, including an understanding of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction. In addition, instructors' content is enriched through guest speakers and cooperative learning experiences.

Across the curriculum, candidates are required to address diversity through methods of differentiation in lesson planning. The departmental lesson plan template requires students to consider differentiation and multiple pathways for all learners to achieve success. Students are challenged to reflect upon the rationale for the type of differentiation they have identified. Field placements for candidates include a variety of practicum experiences in diverse contexts, including a student teaching experience.

This standard is *MET*.

Commendation:

The Undergraduate education program is commended for dynamic and carefully coordinated community-based programming that enriches the learning and preparation of its teacher candidates. There is clear articulation and alignment of standard four indicators throughout the curriculum, and through instruction, and supervision/assessment.

STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS, PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service and teaching including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance; they also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates faculty development.

The Unit's self-study begins with the statement: "Community is commitment." This action-based practice was an observable hallmark demonstrated by the Education faculty during the review team's visit. Faculty model authentic teamwork and collaboration; the self-study states that this is a "collegial team" and that this forms the foundation for a "productive organization."

In addition, the Unit's conceptual framework includes several core factors, including, *community*. This factor is described as expressions of hospitality, courtesy, inclusive relationships, shared values, and collaboration.

Interviews with college administrators indicated that the Education faculty are leaders in the institutional efforts to promote a culture of "radical hospitality." It was also noted that the Unit faculty have designed programming that have contributed to the campus aspirations to become a "learning destination" for diverse intergenerational learners.

Further evidence, from interviews with administration, faculty, and online exhibit artifacts, confirm that there is strong commitment by Education faculty to model for their candidates a sense of community and to promote teaching as service; one faculty member stated that "Community is an opportunity"; and that Unit faculty use these principles to engage teacher candidates in active reflection, critical thinking and problem solving.

There are five full time faculty in the Unit. Four faculty have specializations in Elementary Education: one in Physical Education, and one in Secondary Education. There are four part time adjunct faculty. Additional college faculty provide instruction in the core curriculum, the required liberal arts coursework, and undergraduate electives. All teacher education faculty hold terminal degrees. Three part-time adjunct faculty hold master's degrees and one holds a doctorate in Education.

Exhibit artifacts and interviews with the review team illustrate that the online graduate part time faculty have extensive background in educational leadership; one individual faculty leader was the 2016 Maine Superintendent of the Year. Graduate faculty hold advanced degrees beyond the master's level, many holding doctorates and have several years of experience in teaching, administration, and academic instruction. They demonstrate an active support and promotion of the online programs in which they participate.

While several sources affirmed that the Unit faculty were responsive to online graduate faculty and it was clear to whom the lines of communication were directed for day to day operations in support of online faculty needs, there was a general consensus that opportunities to connect with Unit faculty on a more regular basis for both social and professional support was lacking. One example given was that of an ongoing scheduled faculty opportunity to meet socially through a faculty forum that was abruptly discontinued without notice or explanation. It was unclear who had made the decision to discontinue these forums.

During an interview with graduate online faculty, the overall pervading sentiment was one of enthusiasm to deliver a more updated curriculum and to engage with Unit faculty on a more regular basis. One graduate faculty stated, "We have support, we could have more resources."

There may be an opportunity here for the Unit to further bridge the collegiality that is evident among the graduate online faculty with the strong collaborative efforts of the undergraduate faculty for the benefit of both the academic intersections and potential curricular outcomes.

All full time Education faculty have K-12 teaching experience and collaborate regularly with colleagues in K-12 school settings. There is a wide variety of ongoing service work offered by Unit faculty across the college which encompasses the responsibilities of Secretary and Vice President of the Faculty Senate, Institutional Review Board, Student Affairs Committee Chair, Faculty Development Committee, Rank and Tenure Committee and Task Force on Online Teaching Standards, along with a number of other institutional and public service advisory roles.

Numerous sources support that the faculty participate in an extensive network of professional academic organizations which are directly connected to their field of specialization. Membership is represented in organizations at the local, state, and national levels.

Evidence also affirmed that faculty are evaluated on an annual basis. A practice that the self-study notes “was implemented over twenty-five years ago” and to which Unit faculty have remained dedicated. Evaluation is conducted through a self-reflective process including a professional development plan in addition to student course evaluations. Each academic year, individual faculty formulate their goals and are supported in these goals by the planning, action, and reflection of the Unit’s collaborative work. The Chair reviews each faculty performance plan at the beginning and close of each academic year. Individual Unit faculty may also request a formal review from a peer. The Chair may also oversee additional faculty performance assessment as appropriate. The Chief Academic Officer may conduct separate assessments as in the case of tenure review. The Faculty Handbook outlines the guidelines for the selection, retention, and promotion of faculty.

There are multiple examples presented of faculty engagement in action based academic research. The self-study states that “although primarily a teaching institution” faculty engage in publication, conference presentations, professional training, and have recently acquired a major grant from the National Science Foundation, which has benefited the Unit’s ongoing work in STEM and serves to cultivate multiple learning opportunities for their teacher candidates in collaboration with local public schools. The National Science Foundation grant is the largest grant awarded to the institution, to date.

Unit faculty research areas include how STEM campus community partnerships can be utilized in the wider public school systems; the effects of pedagogical applications of Singapore Mathematics, language acquisition of and literacy development in students on the autism spectrum, pedagogical approaches to community based learning and practice based learning, women’s leadership, school finance, perceptions of postsecondary disability services, special

education legislations, accessibility of special education services and the public good mission of higher education

This standard is *MET*.

Commendation:

The faculty as a whole promote an authentic sense of collegiality and mutual respect for each other. They also exemplify a model learning community. Faculty demonstrate, by example, the concept of teaching as service and vocation; living into the practice of radical hospitality, which was stated and observed across several instances during the review.

Recommendation:

The Unit may want to consider providing more formalized opportunities and support for the online part time graduate faculty, specifically related to inviting online faculty to dialogue and participate in graduate course updates/ revisions and towards the purpose of providing clearly defined lines of communication between the Education Unit and the graduate programs.

STANDARD SIX: UNIT GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and unit standards.

The college recently revised and updated its strategic plan, Sustaining the Promise: 2021-2026. Outlined in the plan are commitments to sustain and grow a financially sound, intergenerational learning community committed to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. There are also aspirational goals: to be committed in all activities to transformation; to be recognized as a “best place to work” and as an exemplary 21st century Catholic College in the Mercy tradition. Senior administration stated that the Education faculty provide “key institutional leadership through their outreach and partnerships with area public schools and continued to model the aspirations of a one college philosophy” through the recent institutional transitions in governance.

Interviews revealed a respect and admiration for the Unit by senior administration for their support of institutional efforts to offer hands-on and experiential educational opportunities for a wide variety of diverse learners. A senior leader stated that the Unit has a longstanding history of teacher preparation, reaching back to its foundation which dates to over a hundred years ago and it continues to be integral to the college overall.

The self-study states that there has been a reduction in the Unit’s former budget coupled with the reduction of administrative support through the retirement of a staff member. Regarding the Unit

budget, the consensus of the Unit faculty is that “we have what we need, maybe not what we want.” There is a focused commitment in the strategic plan to college sustainability and interviews with both Unit leadership and college administrators confirmed renewed goals to provide a sustainable education department.

The institution has seen the recent restructuring of some senior administrative roles; the college has also established a new Vice President of Diversity to promote the strategic focus on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) initiatives across the college. Due to this restructuring, a number of senior college leaders have been in their positions for less than a year. Senior leadership functions on a highly flexible and adaptable organizational chart that is constructed less on lines of authority and more towards lines of institutional accountability.

The graduate Education programs are managed separately from the Unit in the areas of marketing, scheduling, operations, and budget. It was not immediately clear through documentation provided what the relationship was between the Unit and the online graduate program leading to the 045-endorsement pathway; however, in subsequent interviews it was illustrated that there is an established line of communication for curricular planning between the Unit and part-time online faculty in the graduate program. There is an established director of the online graduate programs who is also transitioning this year (2022) into the position. Additionally, the Online Educational Policies Committee makes recommendations to the faculty senate concerning undergraduate and graduate curricula and academic policy.

The administrative structure of the department is currently held by the Unit Chair who oversees day to day operations, support of faculty performance reviews, course scheduling and other administrative tasks related to the Education Unit. The role of Director of Teacher Education was created to “maintain a knowledgeable person in the front facing role with the Maine Department of Education.” This allows, as stated in the self-study, “for the college to implement different organizational structures without disrupting the Education program requirements.” This role is currently held by the Unit Chair; however, it could be a separate role if determined by faculty Unit vote.

Faculty workloads include a maximum of twelve credit hours per term, ordinarily faculty members teach three (3) credit courses per semester or 4 (3) credit hours per semester. Faculty may request a course release for administration, data collection, or research. Faculty sabbatical guidelines are based upon requirements located in the Faculty Handbook. Unit faculty are entitled to \$150.00 to support membership in professional organizations. Faculty seeking funding for research and/or conference attendance from the Faculty Development Committee. Multiple sources confirmed that the instructional technology team consistently delivered excellent service and response times to both the in person and online instructional needs of the Unit and the graduate programs.

The Unit enjoys a mutual and “positive collaborative trust” with the Chief Learning Officer who supports the Unit’s growth, development, and operations. The Chief Learning Officer also has the supervisory oversight of hiring of Unit personnel.

Institutional governance systems are outlined in the college by-laws located in the Faculty Handbook, All-College Governance Committee materials, Staff/Employee Handbook, and other documents in print and online. The self-study states that the college’s bylaws and articles of incorporation were revised in 2020 to reflect a new relationship with the institution’s original founders, (Sisters of Mercy) and decision-making board (The Conference for Mercy Higher Education). The college currently defines governance as “sustainable planning and decision-making” and recognizes a strategic identity as a “learning organization.”

Online exhibit documents and interviews confirmed that there are five considerations that now guide all aspects of decision making at the college. These include alignment with the college mission and values; alignment with the college’s strategic plan and goals; and an informed awareness of the impact on all operating Units at the college.

This standard is *MET*.

Commendations:

(1) There was a consistent and repeated recognition of the high level of service and expertise from the instructional technology (IT) staff. They are to be commended for the outstanding responsiveness, timely assistance and support they offer both the Unit and graduate Education programs across the institution.

(2) The institution is to be commended on the continuing work in fostering and promoting a strategic plan, *Sustaining the Promise 2021-2026* which states a commitment to key areas of its integral mission, that supports transformation across the institution, that commits to providing an exemplary work place for its faculty and staff and for cultivating a diverse, multigenerational learning community committed to justice , equity, diversity and inclusion.

Recommendations:

(1) It is recommended that the institution’s updated strategic plan, *Sustaining the Promise 2021-2026* be communicated to all levels of administration and faculty and that there be a more clearly defined role as to the Unit’s participation and contribution to the overall strategic intent of the plan.

(2) It is recommended that the online program examine and bolster the level of support provided to online students in the course registration process.

IV. Recommendation to State Board of Education

The review committee recommends that the State Board of Education approve the St. Joseph's College Review Team report of findings that the institution's educator preparation program be granted five-year program approval from Spring 2022 to Spring 2027 in accordance with the standards set forth by Chapter 114. We further recommend that the Unit submit an interim report of progress toward meeting the recommendations related to the online graduate program within the report, by October 2023

V. List of Individuals Interviewed

Administration

Dr. James Dlugos, President
 Dr. Russell Mayer, Interim Chief Learning Officer
 Dr. Christopher Fuller, Vice President and Chief Sponsorship and Integration Officer
 Dr. Dale Brooker, Associate Dean
 Mrs. Shanna Webster, Assistant Dean and Director of ACE
 Dr. Raymond Brown, Interim Director of Admissions
 Mr. Jonathan Tuttle, Associate Registrar
 Dr. Nina Eduljee, Faculty and Assessment Coordinator

Reaccreditation Co-Chairs

Dr. Kathleen Clements
 Dr. Patricia Waters

Education Department Faculty

Dr. Kathleen Clements
 Dr. Christopher Healy
 Dr. Kevin Mahoney
 Dr. Suzan Nelson (Retired Online Program Director)
 Mr. Gary Rosenthal (Online Program Director)
 Dr. Patricia Waters
 Mr. Christopher Willer

Online Faculty

Dr. Anita Charles
 Dr. Philomena McPhee
 Mrs. Anne Cohen

Supervisors

Marilee Dunklee
 Dr. Janice Rey
 Donna Stephen
 Terry Taiani

Online Students

Ryan Gleason
 Eric Klein
 Jason Adickes

Undergraduate Alumni

Melinda Aubin
 Cassadie Gallant
 Natalie Blackington
 Amanda Cross
 Danielle Pinkham
 David Walbridge
 Renee Leask
 Luke Johnson
 Sarah Anderson

Secondary Faculty

Dr. Michelle Laughran
 Dr. Emily Leshner
 Dr. David Pinchbeck

Public School Principals

Danny Blake
 Matthew Lokken
 Drew Patin
 Dr. Kyle Rhoads

Undergraduate Students

Brianna Bastarache
 Alia Bradley
 Maddison Cormier
 Olivia Haraden
 Koby Humason-Fulgham
 Abigail O'Brien
 Samuel Randall

Cooperating Teachers

Jody Colangelo
 Kerry McKenney
 Deb Milair
 Logan Hallett

All supporting material were accessed via a website that served as a virtual workroom for the visiting team:

<https://my.sjcme.edu/education-program-reaccreditation/>