

South Dakota Board of Examiner Report

for unit approval

**SD State Board of Examiners
Team:**

State Consultant

Steve Fiechtner, DOE

Team Chair

Pami Hagen-Erickson

Team Member

Dr. David Calhoun, BHSU

Team Member

Tom Raymond, OLC

Accreditation Visit to:

**SINTE GLESKA
UNIVERSITY**

Date: April 11 - 14, 2010

**SDEA or South Dakota Board of
Education Representative:**

No Representative

Type of Visit:

- First
- Continuing
- Combination
- Probation
- Focused

Summary for Professional Education Unit

Standards		Team Findings	
		Initial	Advanced
1	Unit Mission, Conceptual Framework, and Responsibility	M	
2	Preparation of Candidates in Teacher Education	M	
3	Assessment System and Unit Evaluation	M	
4	Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	M	

M = Standard Met

NM = Standard Not Met

NA = Not Applicable (Programs not offered at this level)

Standard 1

Unit Mission, Conceptual Framework, and Responsibility

Higher education programs for the preparation of education personnel shall operate under a written mission statement. The unit's statements of goals and program objectives, consistent with the mission statement, shall serve as a basis for decision making regarding policies affecting all of the programs for the preparation of education personnel and shall assure that education graduates are prepared to serve in P-12 schools.

This section sets the context for the visit. It should clearly state the mission of the unit. It should describe the characteristics of the unit and identify and describe any branch campuses, off-campus sites, alternate route programs, and distance learning programs for professional school personnel. This section also provides an overview of the unit's conceptual framework. The overview should include a brief description of the framework and its development.

Information reported in the institutional report for Standard 1 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the IR that are incorrect.)

X Yes **No**

UNIT	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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In 1968, a committee was formed on the Rosebud Reservation to study the idea of creating a community college. Sicangu people wanted to provide higher education opportunities to tribal members who were not able to leave the reservation for a myriad of reasons. In 1970, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe granted a charter to Sinte Gleska College. Sinte Gleska College was chartered to provide post-secondary and other educational opportunities to area residents. In 1976, Sinte Gleska College sought and received candidacy for accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The second biennial site visit in 1980 and a final site review in 1982 enabled Sinte Gleska College to receive accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in the spring of 1983. The accreditation at the Associate and Baccalaureate levels made Sinte Gleska College the first tribal college in the nation to receive accreditation at the four-year level and the second in the nation to receive accreditation at the two-year level. In 1988, Sinte Gleska College requested a focused evaluation for the purpose of accreditation approval for the offering of a Master's in Education degree program in Elementary Education for teachers of Native American children. The program was approved in the spring of 1989, making Sinte Gleska College the first tribal college to offer a Master's program on an Indian Reservation. Nine area teachers received M.Ed. degrees that year. Sinte Gleska College became Sinte Gleska University on February 2, 1992, in a traditional tribal ceremony. In addition, the Board of Directors became the Board of Regents. Since 1992, Sinte Gleska University has focused efforts on increasing its endowment, building adequate facilities and strengthening academic programs. In 2009, Sinte Gleska University conducted visits to all 20 communities on the Rosebud Reservation in order to listen to various concerns and issues identified by tribal members and to use the information compiled from these visitation for

updated institutional planning efforts in a way that will strengthen our tribal nation in the future. In October of 2009, the Education Department’s Masters in Education (M.Ed.) program received state approval to offer a K-12 Reading Specialist program making it the first tribal college in South Dakota to offer such a program. In November of 2009, the Master’s level Educational Administration program was given state approval.

Sinte Gleska University, a tribal-controlled university chartered by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, is located on the Rosebud Reservation in south-central South Dakota. The tribal charter specifically grants the university the right and authority to grant degrees to those students who complete the required courses of study. The authority of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe to grant such a charter is set out in the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Constitution, which was adopted pursuant to the Indian Organization Act of 1934. Sinte Gleska University is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a public higher education entity. Sinte Gleska University is also designated as a 1994 land grant institution that serves constituents through higher education programs, which involve teaching, community outreach and/or research per the auspices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Lastly, Sinte Gleska University is one of the six original institutional members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

Sinte Gleska University provides a model for Indian-controlled education. It is an institution governed by people rooted to the reservation and culture, concerned about the future, and willing to work to see the institution grow. It provides each Lakota person the opportunity to pursue an education and does so in a way that is relevant to career and personal needs. Sinte Gleska University graduates will help determine the future development and direction of the Tribe and its institutions. The mission of Sinte Gleska University is to plan, design, implement and assess post-secondary programs and other educational resources uniquely appropriate to the Lakota people in order to facilitate individual development and tribal autonomy.

Conceptual Framework	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The mission of the SGU Education Department contains four main strands:

- The need for effective facilitators of a journey of the wakanyeja (children). This includes an understanding that, even in the terminology, children are sacred;
- graduates of education will be committed to the Lakota wisdom of looking ahead for seven generations;
- The Teacher Education unit will assist Sinte Gleska University in strengthening tribal culture and government. This includes the teaching of the four Lakota virtues: Woksape (wisdom); Woohitika (bravery); Wowacintanka (fortitude); and Wocantognaka (generosity);
- Graduates will model and promote the concept of lifelong learning so that young children will see it as a value.

The goals of the unit are to prepare teachers who will have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach all students by recognizing each one’s unique gifts, to be committed to the profession, and to be reflective practitioners who can use past experiences to improve future practices.

The Conceptual Model focuses on the students, the culture(s) of the students, and the unique gifts that each brings to the community of learners. The next circle focuses on the content and processes of learning and teaching, which includes current understanding related to how students learn, human development from both western-European and traditional Lakota views, specialty knowledge from an academic perspective of content knowledge, skills in the use of technology, concepts of diversity, and models of teaching. The processes include best practices in a variety of instructional models and assessment protocols through a variety of in-class microteaching experiences and internships that include observation, teaching practice and clinical supervision. Also included are professional studies and opportunities in instructional design, developing communities of learners, and instructional values and ethics. The Constructivist Model serves as the vehicle that drives all knowledge bases, theories, research, best practices and educational policies that guide the work of the unit.

Only minor changes have been made to the conceptual framework since the last visit. Changes include changing the word “child” to the word “student” to better reflect the students in the Education Program as well as the students that they teach and adding an outer ring to the model to better reflect the constructivist model upon which the program is based.

Summary of Strengths:

The educational unit at Sinte Gleska University has developed a vision, mission, and conceptual framework that are very much student centered and it is evident that this is their central focus. The faculty and candidates are aware of the purpose of the educational unit at Sinte Gleska University and how this directly relates to the mission and conceptual framework. It is evident that the unit has developed a “family-like” atmosphere. This is directly linked to their framework and purpose. The faculty converse with each other on a daily basis, they know all of the candidates individually and are aware of their individual strengths and needs. If there is an issue, the faculty and candidates are in contact promptly and the issue is addressed. The faculty are strong supporters of the candidates and celebrate each individual’s success. The candidates are appreciative and respectful of the faculty at SGU.

Areas for Improvement: None

Rationale: N/A

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Institutional Report: None

Standard 2

Preparation of Candidates in Teacher Education

The unit shall print and distribute a policy with specific admission standards and procedures that govern student recruitment and acceptance into the preparation programs. The unit shall provide written verification that candidates are informed about state laws and rules that govern the issuance of certificates for educational personnel.

The unit shall prepare candidates to work in a school as a teacher, administrator or school service specialist, these candidates must know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. Assessments shall be given to the candidate to ensure the candidate meets professional, state, and unit standards.

Information reported in the institutional report for Standard 2 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the IR that are incorrect.)

X Yes **No**

Candidate Knowledge and Skills	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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Admission criteria are comparable to other South Dakota teacher preparation programs: GPA 2.5 overall and 2.6 in major, the application process includes a review of attendance record, course completion record, and a Conduct Review Statement.

Praxis II content area and Praxis II pedagogy (PLT) pass rates of 100% have been achieved for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years. Candidate scores on these nationally standardized licensure exams range from high in the “average range” to well into the “above average” range.

SGU complies with and meets all state requirements relevant to admission requirements and candidate performance on state content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge licensure exams.

In addition to course syllabi and course grades, candidate course portfolios for each education course reflect a broad array of course assignments requiring both conceptual and practical application of constructivist concepts. Student Teacher Evaluation forms and Portfolios provide additional assessment data specifically relevant to each INTASC and ACEI standard. The Teacher Work Samples and associated lesson plans in the Student Teaching Portfolio provide particularly strong evidence relevant to INTASC standards found in Administrative Rule.

In addition to components on parent and community relations in the Human Relations and South Dakota Indian Studies classes, all other courses, including the methods classes, have family support for student learning as an embedded thread. Additionally, during student teaching, candidates are encouraged to participate in as many parent teacher conferences as they are permitted. Special Education majors also take a dedicated course on professional collaboration with families as well as other professional service providers. During their student teaching,

candidates participate in IEP meetings attended by family representatives, school professionals, and other service providers.

Surveys of graduates and employers are administered each year. Graduates are surveyed at 1, 3 and 5 years out. Response rates were 86% at 1 year, 75% at 3 years and 66% at 5 years. The Institutional Report documents that all graduates still in teaching positions are viewed by their employers as meeting all standards. Graduates consistently report high levels of satisfaction with their preparation. Data from surveys expressing the need for additional preparation in any area (e.g. differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students) is used to modify course curricula to strengthen candidate effectiveness in relation to positively impacting student learning.

Summary of Strengths:

Emphasis on a constructivist approach to teaching and curriculum development is strongly modeled by faculty and field based clinical faculty. Collegial and collaborative relationships between university and unit administration, faculty and staff are apparent. The unit provides personal and personalized academic advising relationships between faculty and candidates. Transportation is provided to students from outlying areas to facilitate class attendance. SGU provides access to computer technology through lab access and loaner laptop computers. Highly qualified full time faculty supplemented by qualified adjunct methods faculty chosen for their public school teaching expertise is consistent with SGU's constructivist philosophy.

Areas for Improvement: None

Rationale: N/A

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Institutional Report: None

Standard 3

Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit shall develop an assessment system with its professional community that reflects its conceptual framework and professional and state standards. The units' system shall include a comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that shall be used to monitor candidate performance and to manage and improve programs. Decisions about candidate performance shall be based on assessments conducted during admission into programs, at appropriate transition points, and at program completion. The unit shall take effective steps to eliminate sources of bias in performance assessments and work to establish fair, accurate, and consistent assessments.

The unit shall regularly and systematically compile, summarize, and analyze data, which shall be used to improve applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate proficiency, and program quality.

The unit shall regularly and systematically use data, including candidate and other school personnel performance information, to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, programs, and clinical experiences. The unit shall analyze program evaluation and performance assessment data and initiate changes if necessary. The unit shall regularly share candidate and faculty assessment data with candidates and faculty to help them reflect on and improve their performance.

Information reported in the institutional report for Standard 3 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the IR that are incorrect.)

X Yes No

Assessment System	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The education department uses an assessment framework, which is aligned with the conceptual framework, the university mission statement, as well as state and professional standards.

The University Assessment Council provides oversight and coordination of campus wide efforts to understand and improve learning outcomes. The Assessment Council is made up of each department chair at SGU. They work together to build assessment of student/candidate learning into their shared programs. Each department is responsible for developing, providing, and maintaining evidence of candidate learning assessment at both the candidate and departmental level. It is also the Assessment Council's responsibility to annually evaluate the efficacy of the teacher education assessment system.

The data collection system is based on candidate performance on multiple internal and external assessments made during clearly defined transition points to monitor candidates as they progress through the program. Policies, procedures, and assessments have been implemented for each of the transition points and are communicated to teacher candidates in the Teacher Education Handbook as well as through faculty and advisors.

Candidates, faculty, including adjunct, and cooperating teachers have well defined expectations as noted in the Teacher Education Handbook, Faculty and Adjunct Handbooks, allowing assessment procedures to be fair, accurate, consistent, and free of bias. Adjunct faculty shared they receive one on one training from the education chair before classes begin.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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Timelines and procedures are identified to ensure data are collected regularly and systematically to provide comprehensive information on candidates, program quality, and unit operations.

The responsibility to analyze and evaluate data is the responsibility of the unit. Any adjustments or changes identified after review of data by the unit head and faculty is presented at monthly Department Chair Committee/Assessment Council meetings. Recommendations from that committee are presented to the Faculty Council for vote and then on to the board and SGU President for final approval.

Currently, the only information technologies used for the collection of data is the Jenzabar, which is a system that maintains candidate grades through the registrar. Collection of candidate data identified through timelines and transition points is not at this time maintained through the use of information technology. Plans are in place with the Management Information Systems department to assist the unit in developing a data collection system through the use of technology to insure accuracy and consistency in the systematic gathering of data to strengthen candidate performance, the unit, and its programs.

Use of Data for Program Improvement	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The unit uses data to evaluate the efficacy of, and initiate changes to, courses, programs and clinical experiences through data reports, analyses, and recommendations from faculty. At the end of every course, candidates complete evaluations that ask them to provide feedback about the faculty member, the course content, strengths and needs, and how they believe both the course and the instructor’s methods could be improved. The results of these surveys provide data relevant to the effectiveness of the courses and may also initiate changes deemed necessary for effective course delivery. Through ongoing conversations, all members of the unit are thinking and acting in ways that reflect a culture of continuous improvement.

Listed are several data driven changes that have occurred:

- Require Praxis II before student teaching to ensure content knowledge
- Require MA 150 before taking Praxis II to ensure math knowledge
- Require Lakota Language and Lakota History to ensure cultural knowledge

Summary of Strengths:

The unit has clearly articulated expectations for its candidates and has identified key assessments to be used to evaluate the efficacy of the unit, its programs and candidates. Although, the assessment system is not maintained through information technologies, the unit has timelines as well as policies and procedures in place to ensure data are collected regularly and systematically.

Areas for Improvement:

The unit does not maintain its assessment system through the use of information technology.

Rationale:

The use of information technologies will insure accuracy and consistency in the systematic gathering of data to strengthen candidate performance, unit operation, and its programs.

Recommendation: Standard Met**Corrections to the Institutional Report: None**

Standard 4

Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personal develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills, necessary to help all students learn.

In this section, the unit must include (1) initial and advanced programs for teachers, (2) programs for other school professionals, and (3) off-campus, distance learning, and alternate route programs, noting differences when they exist.

Information reported in the institutional report for Standard 4 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the IR that are incorrect.)

X Yes **No**

Collaboration Between Unit and School Partners	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Target
		X	

The Todd County School District is the primary school partner of Sinte Gleska’s clinical and field experience; other schools sharing in this responsibility are St. Francis Indian School located on the Rosebud Reservation, Norris School in the White River School District located to the north and west, Colome-Wood Consolidated District approximately sixty miles to the east; and the Crow Creek Tribal Schools on the Ft. Thompson Indian Reservation. Interviews with candidates and cooperating teachers confirmed the unit’s partners and how they work to support and engage in the design, delivery, and evaluation of student teachers.

Formal and informal assessments completed by the schools involved in clinical and field experience provide important feedback. Interviews with cooperating teachers and student teachers confirmed that student teachers receive daily feedback about their progress and suggestions on how to make their field experience more meaningful and effective. These forms were reviewed and are included in the Sinte Gleska University Student Teaching Handbook. Evaluations completed by cooperating teachers provide information that is used to adjust experiences to improve educational opportunity for candidates.

Collaboration between school and unit partners at the field level determine early and professional field placement of candidates. The unit and its school partners work cooperatively to provide optimal placement of candidates in setting which will ensure that they reach their maximum potential. Partnerships are designed through written agreements with cooperating schools. The partnerships focus on the improvement of teaching and learning for K-12 students, the candidates, their cooperating teachers, and the Sinte Gleska University faculty.

Initial requests for placement are made by a candidate to the Director of Field Placement. The director reviews this request with the unit supervisor and contact is made with a school partner. Each of the school partners follows their own policy for placement of candidates. This is done in

collaboration with the unit. Student teachers interviewed, along with cooperating teachers, all supported this collaboration between school and faculty.

Regular contact with unit members and cooperating schools provides an opportunity to build cooperative relationships between the schools and the unit. All student teachers or first year teachers interviewed confirmed this. Sharing of resources and expertise is a regular part of this relationship with the cooperating teacher and school supporting and complimenting the unit supervisor.

School partners provide resources and expertise in response to the need for determining quality placement for the unit’s early field experiences and internship experiences. Teacher candidates are placed with highly qualified cooperating teachers selected because of their professional expertise and qualifications. Teacher candidates are supported while in the partner schools through supervision provided by a cooperating/mentor teacher. Candidates placed in schools also have the opportunity to participate in school professional development activities provided by the schools. Through these processes, school partners continue to provide information to the unit, which is used to make future decisions about candidates.

Review of available documents and information gathered from interviews reveals a strong bond between the unit’s field experience supervisors, the cooperating teachers, and the student teachers. These entities and persons work closely together to ensure optimal development of the teacher intern.

Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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In order to engage in clinical practice candidates must have:

- Maintained a cumulative grade point average of 2.5.
- Maintained a grade point average of 2.6 in their major area of study.
- Registered for, taken, and passed the Praxis II *Elementary Education Content Knowledge Test(s)*.
- Discussed their placement with their academic advisor and/or the Chair of the Education Department.
- Understood and assumed responsibility for contacting the proper school administrator regarding the candidate’s placement.
- As part of the exit requirements, each candidate must prepare a portfolio according to department guidelines. A scoring rubric along with performance criteria and levels of proficiency is used to document candidate progress.
- Cooperating teacher evaluations of the student teacher are also used to assure that each candidate meets the criteria for the successful completion of clinical practice.

Table seven in the IR verifies that one fifteen week, full-time experience in an elementary setting is needed for the K-8 Elementary Education Program; one full-time experience in an elementary setting and one full-time experience in a special education setting is needed for completion of the K-8 Elementary / K-12 Special Education Program; One fifteen week full-time experience in a K-12 setting is needed to complete the K-12 Art Education Program; and one fifteen week, full-

time experience in a 7-12 setting is needed to complete the 7-12 History Program. Candidates and cooperating teachers interviewed confirmed this and several lent their support to the length and benefits of these requirements as being a positive factor in their development as professional teachers.

Planned sequential field experience and clinical practice are a part of the unit's professional preparation programs. Candidates participate in some type of required field experience in a variety of required course such as Child Growth and Development, Educational Psychology, Children and Adolescent Literature, Adolescent Learner, and Introductions and Foundations of Education. These clinical experiences reflect institutional, state, and national professional standards. Assessments are aligned with these standards as well. The Final Student Teaching Evaluation is aligned with the New Interstate Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards.

The development of the unit's technology program continues, but appears to be hampered by the lack of available funds. In addition, the cooperating schools use computers and white boards and other technological methods as instructional tools and include them as training and development for student teacher candidates.

The cooperating teacher's role in the preparation of future teachers is significant. The selection criteria for cooperating teachers are carefully applied to ensure quality learning environments. These criteria include:

- Current State certificate in the teaching assignment
- Completion of a minimum of three years of successful teaching
- Completion of a minimum of one semester in current grade level/content field
- Minimum of one semester in current teacher site
- Minimum of 50% of teaching assignment in certification area of student teacher

Preference will be given to cooperating teacher candidates who:

- Possess a graduate degree in their field of expertise
- Have completed course work in supervision of student teachers

Interviews with the unit supervisor, cooperating teachers, first year teachers, and student teachers all gave evidence supporting that all school-based faculty have obtained Highly Qualified Teacher status. The Unit supervisor assists in the preparation of K-12 cooperating teachers for their role in working with student teachers. An orientation meeting and seminar meetings scheduled throughout the semester serve to support the ongoing development and provide opportunities for questions and reflection and progress in field placement. Informal meetings also occur which lends support to the overall process.

Clinical faculty / cooperating teachers engage in and provide regular and continuing support for teacher candidates in the field. This was evidenced through interviews conducted with faculty, cooperating teachers, student teachers, and first year teachers. Persons interviewed stated repeatedly that the faculty and cooperating teachers were available all the time or whenever needed to assist with development and assessment of the progress being made by student

teachers. A common theme from those interviewed was the availability of faculty through email and by phone whenever they were needed.

Summary of Strengths:

The bonding, which takes place between student teacher, cooperating teacher, and the unit faculty, is exemplary and points to a close knit family who know and is supportive of each other. The many years of field experience of most of the student teachers adds a variety of experiences to the repertoire of the candidate before they complete the program. The welcome and support of the cooperating schools was very evident when contact was made with school staff other than candidate or cooperating teachers.

The focus on the child demonstrates the Lakota value of children as being Wakanyeja or sacred. Several persons interviewed, although of diverse cultures, spoke of the importance of including Lakota language and culture into their experience.

Areas for Improvement:

Candidates have limited electronic information technologies access on campus.

Rationale:

The perceived need for increased technology available for candidates to learn and use in teaching current methods was evident through interviews.

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Institutional Report: None