

To: Provost Winston Langley
From: LTET co-coordinators Brady and Taylor
Re: Response to Deans' Response to AQUAD Review Committee's Report on the Learning, Teaching, and Educational Transformation (LTET) non-licensure Teacher Education M. Ed. track
Date: 26 April 2011
Cc: Deans Wilczenski and Liem; C&I Chair Levy; LTET core faculty DeGennaro, Kiang, Patmon

Preamble

Before Lisa Gonsalves agreed to be nominated this month as acting Chair of Curriculum & Instruction for '11-12, she established that the non-licensure programs in the Department, e.g., CCT, LTET, Instructional Design, would be moved so that her responsibilities as acting Chair could focus on the Teacher Education programs for licensure and accreditation. The LTET faculty fully supports this focus for C&I and for Lisa as acting Chair. If the College of Education decides to wind down LTET rather than move it into another unit, so be it. However, if the continuation of the LTET track is still on the table, it would be relevant to consider the following four points about Mission; Kinds of students served; Student quality, retention, tracking, and numbers; and Resources.

1. Mission

The self-study began its presentation of the LTET mission as follows:

Following the recently adopted Mission Statement the College of Education and Human Development “generates knowledge, fosters engaged learning, promotes social justice, and empowers students, educators, other professionals, and community members through teaching, research, evaluation, and public service. The urban setting of the University of Massachusetts Boston informs—and is informed by—CEHD efforts to fulfill the academic and civic purposes of education in a diverse democracy.” To accomplish that mission, the College will, among other things, offer “learning environments that prepare students, educators, and other professionals to assume leadership roles in the design, development, and implementation of teaching and learning experiences that are consistent with our values.” In this spirit, **the mission of the Learning, Teaching, and Educational Transformation (non-licensure) Master in Education track (LTET) is to provide its students with knowledge, tools, experience, and support so they can become constructive, reflective agents of change in education within traditional and non-traditional roles and settings, from a social justice perspective and by embedding reflection within their practice.**

The broad vision conveyed in the passage highlighted above is elaborated in the 2010-12 catalog¹(and also conveyed in the self-study):

The Master's in Education track in Learning, Teaching, and Educational Transformation (non-licensure) allows students to pursue diverse inquiries and practical projects building on a foundation in curriculum development, research and writing, and collaborative action for change and social justice through education. Because this track is designed for

¹ Copies of this catalog became available in late March 2011.

individuals who do not wish to be certified in Massachusetts (or who are already certified), it helps students work in a broad range of education-related professions including those outside of classroom teaching, such as adult- and community-based education, educational research, policy analysis, philanthropy, and advocacy. With assistance from a faculty advisor, students design a sequence of education-related courses to support their specific interests. The current faculty advisors have special interests and experience in Asian American Studies, ethnic studies, urban studies, curriculum studies, teachers as writers, applied behavior analysis, critical and creative thinking, science in its social context, and education in technology-mediated environments.

The mission of a program needs, of course, not only to be promoted in the catalog and through other means, but also to be translated into goals and objectives. In recent years the LTET objectives have focused on improvements to the operation of the track and transitioning of responsibility for advising, admissions, and other administration from the Office of Student Services to the LTET faculty (see examples below, extracted from the summary of recent Annual reports given in the self-study). In future years the areas to be developed (as summarized in the LTET response to the AQUAD reviewers' report) provides a valuable roadmap.

Examples of objectives in recent years

A.1 Get a positive name for the track through governance.

B.1 Get minor changes through governance to create more coherency and flexibility of courses taken to fulfill core requirements.

B.2 Make what we already do more accessible to students and to prospective students in the "feeder" tracks (ABA, CCT, BWP...).

In particular, assign LTET advisors to match student's interests.

B.3 Implement new capstone option of a "Written paper with oral presentation"

2. Kinds of students served

On particular question about the mission is whether LTET should serve all students who might choose to join a non-licensure track, including those who have not described their career objectives in terms of educational transformation. Guided by the vision and mission in #1, the LTET faculty has chosen to serve the range of non-licensure students, but is open to the possibility that some kinds of students could, in the future, be served by other programs.

The students served by LTET currently consist of four kinds in proportions conveyed by the graphic on the next page. (The circle of those who add a certificate after matriculating in LTET could be a fifth category, but it does not constitute a different route to LTET.) At present the various certificates other than ABA have not been feeding students into LTET, but may in the future. (One exception is that it is not expected that CCT certificate to LTET M.Ed. will ever be a student pathway because there is a CCT Master's degree. LTET first, then adding the CCT certificate has become common, but that is a quite different matter.)

Matriculate ABA then LTET

Direct matriculation into LTET

add a Graduate certificate (not ABA)

transferred because career interests changes

Transfer from other M.Ed. tracks

transferred because they were not or will not be able to complete requirements to teach for licensure

3. Student quality, retention, tracking, and numbers.

The admissions process for the Teacher Education tracks in Curriculum and Instruction had been handled by the Office of Student Services for some time and it was only when the responsibility returned to the LTET faculty that we learned that applicants were being admitted by OSS with undergraduate GPAs less than 3.0. A more careful review of applicants is now an LTET priority.

It took some time for the transition of records from OSS and establishment of a database that could be readily used for advising to happen. In Fall 2009 a check by LTET of students on the books revealed 23 no longer having active student status. Since that time, only one student has withdrawn. These figures don't translate readily to a meaningful long-term figure for attrition rate. It is also notoriously difficult to get responses from students who withdraw or let their student status lapse, and the survey of student satisfaction for the self-study only yielded one completed response—certainly not enough to formulate hypotheses or draw lessons.

As noted in the self-study, "*The drop in new matriculants and total numbers in 2010 [from 88 to 57] is an artifact of the following:* When students transfer into LTET from the ABA certificate their matriculation date is recorded as when they matriculated into the ABA certificate. This procedure ensures an accurate picture of how long it takes to graduate. However, because recent ABA matriculants have not yet applied to join LTET, they are not (as of early 2011) recorded as being in LTET." The number 88 is confirmed by the student names listed in the follow-up document sent to the Reviewers, "LTET students active during calendar year 2009" (27 March), but, as acknowledged in that document:

2. The Self-study should have highlighted the following consequence of working on a calendar year basis: In 2009, 7 of students graduated before the summer and 16 matriculated summer and fall, so a snapshot at any point during that year would have produced a total between 70 and 79.
3. There are other reasons that the Program records show a higher number than the Fall snapshots from the Registrar: a. LTET retains someone in its records even when they haven't paid the program fee [to keep their student status active] until they withdraw or return; b. Student plans are not always coded accurately on the University system [though this is becoming less of a problem]...

In light of the questions raised about the data in the LTET self-study, the fields in the LTET database have now been revised so that it will be possible to identify: a) how many students are being served at any given point of time (so there is no need for calendar year or academic year totals); and b) how long since they matriculated—even when they matriculated first in ABA (or another certificate) and later joined LTET. The number of students being served by LTET at any point of time will often still be higher than the Registrar's figure because a student who transfers in, say, February is not shown in the Registrar's system as having changed till the Fall semester starts. At the moment (late April 2011) there are 73 LTET students.

4. Resources

The LTET faculty's response to the AQUAD reviewers' report identified five items required to provide a minimum level of service to LTET students, one of which was "Appointment of a Coordinator who advises students not covered [by other faculty] and is dedicated to LTET (that is, not serving LTET at the expense of a primary leadership responsibility to another program)." If such an appointment is not deemed possible, an option foreshadowed by the Deans in an email of 3/13/11 might be considered, namely, inquiring of the CCT Program, which now has professional staff funded by a partnership with University College, whether it can assume responsibility for advising LTET students who are not covered by other faculty as well as assist with a systematic admissions and advising process and a shift from the capstone exam to the capstone paper option for LTET students.

Another option if there is no faculty member dedicated to LTET is to inquire whether the advising of LTET students who are not covered by other faculty can be written into the assignment of whichever C&I faculty member assumes responsibility for the Department's half of the partnership with Leadership in Education around the recently approved new Teacher Leadership CAGS track. The new CAGS is directed at teachers in schools, but otherwise seems to share LTET's mission of producing "agents of change in education... from a social justice perspective and by embedding reflection within their practice."