Overview & Conceptual Framework

I.1 What are the institution’s historical context and unique characteristics (e.g., HBCU or religious)?

Historical Context

James Madison University was established in 1908 as the State Normal and Industrial School for Women with the sole purpose of preparing teachers. Throughout its 104-year history, despite several name changes, it has never lost sight of those beginnings. Teacher preparation continues to be at the core of the mission of the institution as affirmed by President Rose in 2000.

James Madison University has had only five presidents in its over 100 years of existence. Each of the five men shared outstanding leadership abilities and each also possessed the rare capacity to anticipate future needs of the institution and to act decisively to meet those needs before they became critical. Dr. Linwood Rose, the fifth president of the university, announced in January 2011 that he would be stepping down from his position June 2012. It is anticipated that by the date of our on-site NCATE visit, the new president will be named.

Today, JMU boasts an enrollment of over 22,000 students in 109 degree programs at the undergraduate, masters, educational specialist, and doctoral levels. Our campus occupies 712 acres with 11 buildings and an operating budget of over $418 million. It continues to rank among the top colleges in national polls, is consistently selected as one of the nation’s top values for a college education, and has one of the highest rankings of alumni serving as Peace Corps volunteers. It prepares more teachers than any other traditional teacher preparation program in the Commonwealth of Virginia, keeping in touch with its historical foundations.

I.2 What is the institution’s mission?

We are a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives. - JMU mission statement

The mission statement of James Madison University provides the context for the professional education unit. At the heart of JMU, its very foundation is the preparation of teachers. For a century, JMU has led the way in training teachers who have gone on to work their unending magic in classrooms across the country and the world. It just makes sense that a dedication to teaching is shared throughout JMU’s faculty and benefits students in all majors.

I.3 What is the professional education unit at your institution, what is its relationship to other units at the institution that are involved in the preparation of professional educators, and what are the significant changes since the last NCATE review?

The College of Education is central in the work of preparing teachers and other school
professionals at JMU and has evolved as an academic college over the past several years, undergoing a significant reorganization under the leadership of the new dean, Dr. Phillip Wishon, in 2005. Today, the College serves as the home to five academic departments, four of which are actively engaged in the preparation of teachers and other school professionals and central to the professional education unit at James Madison.

Today, JMU is home to over 34 licensing programs and or endorsements for teachers and other school professionals which have been aligned with both national and Virginia’s Department of Education program standards. While the College of Education houses the majority of the teacher education programs, the Professional Education Unit is comprised of all programs across the university designed to lead to licensure or advanced study in education. In addition to the College of Education, this includes the colleges of Art and Letters, Integrated Science and Technology, Math and Science, and Visual and Performing Arts; the School of Strategic Leadership Studies; and University Studies.

The mission of the James Madison University professional education unit is to prepare caring, knowledgeable, skilled, and reflective educators who believe that all students can learn and succeed as reflected in our professional education coursework. Our candidates and faculty are committed to lifelong learning and aspire to meet educational needs in a changing, pluralistic, and democratic society. The personal and professional development of candidates is accomplished by emphasizing excellence and continuous innovation in quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs.

The Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC) is the official governing body within the university responsible for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel. The membership of the PECC includes the coordinators or representatives of all initial licensure and advanced study programs in education, both those accredited through NCATE and also by other national accreditation associations, a representative from the IDLS major, and the directors of the Education Support Center and the Educational Technology and Media Center. The dean of the College of Education serves ex officio as head of the Professional Education Unit. The associate dean for academic programs serves as the chair of PECC.

I.4 Summarize basic tenets of the conceptual framework, institutional standards and candidate proficiencies related to expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions as well as significant changes made to the conceptual framework since the last NCATE review?

We view our work as a “Commitment to Cultivating Change” which has become the brand of our conceptual framework. The four major components – commitment, community, creativity, and content – support our work and are reflected in coursework and evaluations. Our alignments with national professional and state standards ensure that we are providing for our candidates the best possible professional preparation. Conceptual Framework propositions are reflected in the following competencies of our program completers:
• Certain personal qualities and dispositions reflective of a professional educator.
• Deep understanding of the content to be taught and ways to effectively teach the content.
• An understanding of the impact of research on learning and development and how culture influences development.
• An understanding of how students differ in approaches to learning and creating instructional opportunities for diverse learners.
• Skill in effective planning for learning.
• Skill in a wide variety of instructional strategies and technologies.
• Skill at creating positive, effective learning environments.
• The use of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media techniques that foster inquiry, collaboration, and positive interactions.
• Skill in a variety of effective assessment techniques.
• The ability to reflect on practice, adjust teaching methods and techniques, and seek professional growth.
• Skill in developing positive relationships with parents, colleagues, and families.

Being an educator today requires us to strive for creative ways of thinking of doing our work. Innovation in teaching, new ways of applying technology, and keeping abreast of the literature on best practices are critical if we are to keep ahead in our profession. We are not alone in our work. We serve and are served by, a much larger community. Therefore, we must be in tune with the needs of our partners in education and work together to create communities of learning.

Our conceptual framework is a dynamic entity. A thorough examination of our beliefs and how they are realized was undertaken through an inclusive process involving faculty, candidates, and school personnel in extensive conversations and debate. While the basic premises have not changed, the conceptual framework we live today better reflects best practices and research in preparing teachers and school professionals for today and tomorrow’s schools.

The unit’s goal is to support candidate mastery learning and demonstration of the expected knowledge, skills and dispositions of the programs. Programs have used a variety of dispositional measures to assess candidate’s ability to work well with others and create supportive learning environments. In spring 2011, the unit adopted a new disposition rubric that will be used across all programs. This will be piloted during fall 2011 with the intention of refining and developing the unit-wide plan for full implementation fall 2012.
Standard 1. Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

1.1 What do candidate assessment data tell the unit about candidates’ meeting professional, state, and institutional standards and their impact on P-12 student learning? For programs not nationally/state reviewed, summarize data from key assessments and discuss these results.

In order to insure that our candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards, curriculum and assessments have been designed to align with JMU’s Conceptual Framework unit outcomes, specialized professional association competencies, program goals, and applicable Virginia Department of Education endorsement competencies. These competencies/outcomes are also aligned with NCATE standards.

Standardized test scores are used as one measure of content knowledge in the initial programs. Passing Praxis I scores are required at admission, and passing the Praxis II is a licensing requirement for most programs. As reflected in our Title II report, our 100% pass rate suggests that our candidates possess the content knowledge required to teach all students. In addition, minimum grade point averages are required for admission and retention in all programs.

Evaluation and assessment of candidate performance is completed at the program and the unit level across five areas: Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Content and Professional Knowledge, Dispositions, Impact on Student Learning and Diversity. Data reviewed at both the unit level, through presentations and discussions at the Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC) and at unit-wide meetings, and at the program level through departmental/program meetings and retreats, inform our decision making and program planning.

Across the unit, initial licensure candidate performance data is analyzed using a specifically developed instrument, the ST-9 (Student Teaching Evaluation Form). A comprehensive observation tool, the ST-9, provides data at both the program and unit level on candidates’ content knowledge, pedagogical content and professional knowledge, dispositions, impact on student learning, and diversity competencies. Candidate mean scores on all five areas suggest that candidates meet or exceed unit competencies. The mean scores, on a three point scale, range from 2.88 for diversity to 2.96 for dispositions. These data gathered from the ST-9 validate the data gathered from the key assessments identified by each program and provide evidence of candidates’ knowledge skills and dispositions across the same five areas. Success on these measures is a requirement for continued progress through each program’s transition points.

Scoring scales used in the evaluation of the key assessments vary across the programs. Many of the key assessments have subsets that relate to professional organizations and/or
program-specific competencies. Candidate performance is assessed on the range of items for each subset. The resultant data indicate if a candidate did not meet expectations on one or more subsets; the data may reflect individual candidate performance on a specific item or set of items and not performance on the entire key assessment.

If candidates meet or exceed expectations on subset scores of the assessments, no intervention is necessary. However, if a candidate has challenges in any of the subsets, faculty may provide remediation opportunities.

Taken holistically, the data derived from the program-level assessments support the unit data. Candidates’ performance on the key assessments suggest that they overwhelmingly met the expected competencies of the programs. This may be in large part because of the mastery learning strategies that are stressed and implemented across the unit.

Follow-up surveys of completers, alumni, and employers also provide data on candidate performance. Over the past three years, 84-87% of the Virginia public school principals surveyed indicated that JMU graduates “very often” exhibit behaviors indicating they know the subject matter they teach, understand best pedagogical and professional knowledge, and reflect the dispositions that support diversity and the belief that all students can learn.

JMU offers three graduate degree programs for the advanced preparation of teachers: an M.A. in Art Education; an M.M. with a concentration in Music Education; and an M.Ed. in Mathematics. The M.Ed. in Mathematics, the only program being not reviewed by an external accrediting body, has identified key assessments across the five unit focus areas. Course grades are used to gauge candidate content knowledge. Of the 29 grades earned by eight students in these courses between fall 2008 and spring 2010, the mean GPA across the courses was a 3.6 out of 4.0, the median grade was an A-, the modal grade was A-, and the range was B- to A. Specific sections of the Teacher Work Sample are used to document candidates’ performance. This program is in its infancy, and we have data on only four candidates to date. Performances are typically at the acceptable level; however, given the low N and also the limited data, the faculty are taking into consideration any potential implications. No curricular or program revisions have been made as of the writing of this report, but that may change as data continue to be gathered.

Programs for the advanced preparation of teachers and the preparation of other school professionals have identified key assessments that provide evidence of candidates’ knowledge and skills and their ability to impact student learning and establish educational environments that support student learning. These include performance in practica and other projects such as: assignments that demonstrate leadership abilities, ability to critically reflect and analyze student data, conduct applied research, and design school projects. A broad range of assessment tools have been developed to reflect the unique expectations of each program.

Educational Leadership candidates complete a principalship project, which is scored from 1(low) to 5(high) on seven criteria. The instructor works closely with candidates
throughout the development of the project and is able to offer assistance throughout the process. All of the candidates earned final mean scores of 4 or above.

Programs have used a variety of dispositional measures to assess candidate’s ability to work well with others and create supportive learning environments. All initial candidates must submit two references that focus on dispositions that are expected of candidates in professional education as part of the admission process for acceptance in teacher education. Candidates who have a pattern of negative evaluation items are identified in the application process; the program is informed so that faculty can monitor these candidates when they start the licensure courses. At the end of their program, the ST-9 includes indicators of professional dispositions.

Continued progress in programs requires that candidates exhibit professional dispositions in field placements as well as university classrooms. Departmental review of candidates at the conclusion of each semester may bring to light specific concerns that are addressed one-on-one with the candidate. The unit’s goal is to support candidate mastery learning and demonstration of the expected knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the programs.

Survey data from alumni and employers indicate that JMU graduates demonstrate appropriate professional behaviors, including the belief that all children can learn. However, the PEU continues to believe that a formal, unit process measuring proficiencies as the candidates progress through the programs is critical. In spring 2011, the unit adopted a new disposition rubric that will be used across all programs. This will be piloted during fall 2011 with the intention of refining and developing the unit wide plan for full implementation fall 2012.

Educational Technology and Educational Leadership programs are currently developing their own survey that will provide feedback on the success of their candidates in their eventual employment settings. They expect to begin surveying stakeholders in fall 2011. Since the M.Ed. in Mathematics cohorts have been small and that program often engages in activities with Secondary Education, to date those candidates have been included in the overall unit surveys. Similarly, Reading Specialist M.Ed. candidates are included in unit surveys. The Math Specialist program has not had graduates yet, but that program is in the process of identifying a suitable follow-up survey methodology.

School Psychology surveyed its 2000-2003 graduates in preparation for a NASP visit. Satisfaction with the program, quality of advising, and resulting career options was high. James Madison University does not offer support with graduate level follow-up surveying so the School Psych program, like other programs, has struggled to establish regular procedures for following up with graduates. Nonetheless, following up with alumni occurs on a less formal basis (e.g. bi-annual newsletter and alumni events at a national annual conference).
1.2.b Continuous Improvement

- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in unit Standard 1.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has made significant changes to its program approval process, and during the 2008-09 academic year, documentation on all existing licensure programs was forwarded to the Virginia Department of Education for review. In January 2010, the Virginia Department of Education notified the College of Education that all educator licensure programs were fully approved under the newly-adopted biennial measure standards. These standards include candidate progress and performance on prescribed Board of Education licensure assessments, with a required passing rate of 70% for individuals completing and exiting the program and achievement of an 80% biennial passing rate required by July 1, 2010. Candidates’ test scores were submitted to the Board of Education in July 2009 and will be submitted again in September 2011.

Additional biennial standards include candidate progress and performance on an assessment of basic skills as prescribed by the Board of Education for individuals seeking entry into an approved education preparation program. Indicators for this standard include results on prescribed entry-level assessments and documentation that candidates who fail to achieve a minimum score have the opportunity to address any deficiencies. In response to this standard, a peer tutoring program for Praxis 1 was developed to provide additional support to students who might fail to achieve the required Praxis 1 score and did not have the requisite SAT scores to exempt this entry-level assessment. Data are gathered on the level of support provided and the resultant performance by the candidates. Pass rates for participating candidates indicate that the peer tutoring program does have a positive impact.

To address the state biennial standards focused on structured and integrated field experiences, the unit continues to gather data on candidate performance and the quality of field experiences through assessments such as the ST-9 and surveys. Information from these sources is then used at both the program and the unit level to consider any needed changes in field experiences. As a result of this process, several changes have occurred. For example, the Education Support Center initiated on-line training modules for cooperating teachers in order to provide them with current and accessible information. Programs in the Department of Middle, Secondary and Mathematics Education (MSSE) noted that there was a need to support candidates’ work on Teacher Work Samples and have increased the level of faculty involvement in supervision of field experiences. To assist with coordination of elementary education field experiences, program faculty have developed explanations of various field experience expectations and goals and have worked on clustering both practicum and student teachers.

In addition, in keeping with the unit focus to prepare candidates to work in diverse educational environments, additional field experience sites were developed in Richmond.
and Williamsburg, practicum and service learning opportunities were provided by the Career Development Academy and 21st Century grant-funded programs, and additional options for international student teaching were explored. These opportunities expand our candidates’ experiences in diverse settings that enhance our already diverse communities.

A need to develop a shared response to teaching English Language Learners resulted in the formation of the English Language Learner Academy, which allowed the college to bring all of its English language learning resources together. ELLA spent a very productive year developing curriculum and beginning the approval process for a four-year undergraduate minor in TESL with an initial endorsement in ESL and a five-year program that results in an MAT in TESL.

Faculty from two of our approved licensure programs – early childhood and early childhood special education engaged in extended examination of their programs and the needs of our school partners and determined that the development of a dual licensure program, Inclusive Early Childhood Education, would best serve the needs of our candidates and the children and families they serve. The first full cohort of candidates began in the fall 2010. Program goals and curriculum have been aligned with state and national standards and course content has been further defined. Key assessments have been identified and review of these will continue.

The MEd Reading Specialist program has been aligned with national and state standards and key assessments have been defined. This program was revitalized in 2008 and is offered off-campus using a cohort model. The first cohort of 25 completed the program in spring 2011, with 50 candidates currently pursuing Reading Specialist licensure through this program at three different locations and the potential for a fourth to start Fall 2011.

Since summer 2009, Dr. Kidd, (Learning, Technology, & Leadership Education Department) has expanded the Educational Leadership program and added three more Educational Leadership Outreach cohort programs, in Winchester/Fredrick County, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, and Martinsville, VA. Total enrollment in these programs now exceeds 65 graduate students.

Utilization of technology to support the assessment and evaluation of programs has expanded. Not only have the unit’s teacher licensure programs begun documentation of candidate progress and performance through the use of key assessments in Tk20, non-licensure programs in the college (i.e. Adult and Human Resource Development) are taking advantage of the electronic Tk20 system.

The Educational Technology Master's Program has been redesigned under the leadership of Drs. Karen Kellison and Michelle Estes. Under the leadership provided by Educational Technology, an Emerging Technologies Lab has been established in Memorial Hall 3320, and the undergraduate educational media minor has been revised.

Two new licensure areas, an M.Ed. for K-8 math specialists developed through a partnership between the College of Education and the College of Math and Science and
Dance Arts (P-12) have been fully approved by the VDOE within the past three years. While both are small programs at this time, it is anticipated that they will grow and meet the diverse needs of our candidates and the schools we serve.

The Assessment Progress Template (APT), an annual program review process, required by the university, often results in the development of data from multiple sources that may lead to significant revisions to existing programs and the development and delivery of several new programs for teachers and other school professionals. Programs’ use of these data has led to several curricular changes. While the APTs provide valuable information for program improvement, a more integrated process for sharing the APT information across the unit is needed. In developing unit and program data sites, it is our expectation that deeper and richer discussions will result.

The ST-9 represents a valuable and consistent source of unit and program data. During discussions of unit and program data, faculty and others have expressed a desire to review and possibly revise this instrument. Such discussions will continue, and it is anticipated that a recommendation to form a task force to review this instrument will be brought to PECC for consideration during the fall 2011 semester.
Standard 2. The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

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

James Madison University has a rich history of transforming curriculum through data based decision-making. Through its nationally recognized Center for Assessment and Research (CARS), comprehensive and systematic assessment of all programs is conducted.

The JMU Professional Education Unit Assessment System for our initial and advanced programs has been developed collaboratively to reflect the professional education unit Conceptual Framework (CF). Incorporating national and state standards, the system has been developed to provide continuous data supporting the improvement of candidate performance, program quality and unit operations. Five core areas are reviewed for both initial and advanced programs: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, impact on candidate learning, diversity and dispositions, which facilitates discussion of our CF and whether those competencies are being achieved by our candidates. In addition, data gathered through the system inform decision making about resource needs, facilities management and other issues related to efficient unit operations.

The process has been finely honed. On an annual basis, all programs are required by JMU to complete an Assessment Progress Template (APT) as a way to gather data for the university’s accreditation with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Feedback is distributed back to programs following the review, which is used in the following year’s report submission, describing improvements made to the assessment plan.

The APT report interfaces with our Unit Assessment System. Program key assessment data are presented in the APT and the process promotes a structure of collecting and disseminating data for departmental and program review and interpretation. From January-March the director of assessment organizes the data and uses it to complete the relevant parts of the APT report. The documents are then forwarded to program faculty. The remaining sections are then completed based on conversations about the data. Any changes to the programs, decisions about programs and insight about program strengths and weaknesses are based on a data-driven decision-making process.

The unit has clearly defined admission and program completion criteria and uses data from unit key assessments to monitor candidate performance throughout program transition points. Each program has defined a set of key assessments that are comprehensive and fully integrated within the curriculum. These instruments provide evidence about whether candidates meet competencies outlined in the Conceptual Framework (CF) and in NCATE and professional standards. Key assessments include, but are not limited to, lesson plans, unit plans, case studies, and teacher work samples. Key assessments are both formative and summative in the sense that they may represent a culmination of efforts over the
length of the particular course in which they are embedded or lay the groundwork for subsequent activities. From admission to recommendation for licensure, candidates are provided clear directions on appeal processes, should they not be meeting the progression standards. Documentation of the results of the appeals is kept on file and follow up action is taken when warranted.

Program expectations are presented at the start of their programs, as well as in course syllabi and other program materials (e.g. Teacher Education handbook). Most key assessments are designed to allow the candidates to make revisions to their projects throughout the semester, so the key assessment grade represents their best and final effort.

Key assessments, developed and administered at the course level across the unit, are evaluated by faculty. Final rubric scores for each program key assessment are entered into Tk20, the unit data management system. The director of assessment monitors the completion of this step on a monthly basis, at a minimum.

Tk20 report summaries are updated regularly by the director of assessment, providing readily available up-to-date results. Report summaries are used to develop the departmental annual reports and the university’s assessment progress templates, both of which are due each June.

Data are regularly and systematically collected, compiled, aggregated, summarized, and analyzed. The unit assessment system is continuously evaluated by internal stakeholders (i.e., Unit faculty, administrators and candidates). The professional education unit Assessment Committee, Professional Education Coordinating Council and community members participating in the School Partnership Committee are all presented with opportunities to review the unit assessment system and provide feedback.

The unit assessment system supports decision making about unit operations, as well as guiding program decisions. While resource allocations at the university are determined based on college or academic unit needs, the professional education unit has been successful in using data to leverage additional support for its operations. For example, an analysis of the expenditures of the field-based operations resulted in a significant increase in the College of Education budget that was targeted to offset the costs across the unit. In addition, reporting processes and systems required of all academic units and centers (Planning Data Base and Annual Reports) at JMU have yielded data that support the unit as a whole. One specific example is the addition of a PC lab that is housed in Memorial Hall – the home to the College of Education and majority of courses leading to initial teaching licensure programs at JMU. Finally, through data gathered from candidates across the unit, the need for extended operating hours in the Education Technology and Media Center was identified and resulted in a request that was granted for increased funding to support staff to accommodate the need for extended hours of operation.

To ensure the fairness of its assessments, the unit has carefully aligned its curriculum with its candidate proficiencies, state licensure regulations, P-12 standards, and national professional standards. These alignments map courses in the curriculum where candidates
have had the opportunity to learn and practice the material being assessed. The alignments with national professional standards are regularly reviewed and updated. Course syllabi state the timing and structure of key assessments, how they are scored, and how they contribute toward program completion. This information is also included in such documents as program handbooks or other course materials.

Construct validity is addressed through outcome alignment with the unit conceptual framework and SPA standards. Faculty members use their experience and expertise to produce and revise assessments. Assessment results are regularly reviewed in light of related external assessments such as grades, Praxis testing, GPAs, and program retention/completion.

The unit is refining processes to gauge whether key assessments produce results which are dependable and consistent. The unit measures the extent to which internal consistency and inter-rater reliability are present once an assessment is in place and administered. Several of the unit’s key assessments are scored by multiple raters. The unit provides specific training for raters as appropriate and inter-rater reliability data are regularly collected and analyzed. For example, at the initial level, the unit’s Student Teaching Evaluation Form (ST-9) is scored by both the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher analysis of their ratings occurs annually. Both groups receive training during regularly scheduled support meetings, clinical faculty training or refresher sessions, or as part of web-based training modules.

A major factor in avoiding bias within an assessment system or within individual assessments is a combination of having accurate assessments and using them in a consistent fashion. However, this is not sufficient, and assessments must take additional steps to minimize bias. Therefore, the unit has developed specific procedures to check assessments for bias. Faculty members regularly review unit assessments to ensure that they are free of racial and ethnic stereotypes and that they use culturally sensitive language or task situations. The majority of the key assessments are iterative, course-embedded, untimed, and completed in a setting of the candidates’ choosing.

When data are reviewed, faculty members look at all available information to make a determination about whether the results reflect candidate work, program issues, or a combination of both. These conversations comprise the discussion at 2-3 departmental retreats each year. In addition, programs aim for regular meetings outside of monthly departmental meetings. The results of these conversations are chronicled, in part, in the APTs.

2.2.b Continuous Improvement

- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in unit Standard 2.
As the unit continued to review and develop an assessment system, the need for a dedicated assessment position became apparent. A director of assessment and evaluation was hired during the 2006-07 academic year. A specialist was hired in 2007 to support our increasing needs in data management.

In spring 2007, we collected data into a variety of centrally located program-level databases and started to conduct some analyses and reporting. The Teacher Education database, an Access-based system, only handled field experience, clinical practice and licensure data. It did not house candidate performance data. Live Text was utilized briefly, but did not meet the data needs of the unit and was dropped. Limitations of the databases indicated a need for a centralized database management system. During the 2007-08 reporting period, a time was spent reviewing various electronic data management systems. After weighing and comparing the merits of several different electronic data management systems, and identifying the features we desired, the decision was made in May 2007 to purchase the Tk20 system. An ad hoc Tk20 Advisory Team comprised of faculty and administrators was established to help oversee transition of the unit to Tk20 utilization. Major emphases of the Advisory Team included piloting use of Tk20 by select instructional faculty within the college, and transitioning from reliance on the Teacher Education (TED) database housed in the Education Support Center, to confidence in (and increasing reliance on) management of data utilizing the Tk20 system. This team facilitated training for faculty and staff in the utilization of Tk20, and developed a plan for assimilation of the system into unit operations. In fall 2008, the process of loading CoE candidate data into the system began, and troubleshooting of subsequent issues regarding the interfacing of Tk20 with PeopleSoft (JMU’s student information management system) commenced. Key assessments were collected and their transition to electronic rubrics entered into Tk20 began in fall 2008.

An ongoing endeavor related to assessment is improving the functionality of Tk20. The structure of our unit poses challenges in terms of requiring candidates in advanced and non-teaching licensure programs to purchase a subscription to Tk20, necessitating the maintenance of “shadow” data collection processes. Interface issues continue to be encountered and addressed with the vendor. As of July 1, 2011, all new applicant data is being entered into Tk20. From September 2008 through June 2011, applications were completed using a web-based interface and any new student data was entered into an Access-based system. Prior to that, all application materials were primarily completed in paper form. As a final step of their application for admission to Professional Education, initial-level candidates are now required to purchase a subscription to Tk20. In addition field experience forms are now distributed and collected via Tk20. At this time, Tk20 is the platform used to assess candidate student teaching performance.

The resulting reports are shared with programs to use in developing their APTs.

Intentional and meritorious completion of the University Assessment Progress Template has been a focus over the last two years. Starting in spring 2010, the scope of this report was changed to include data from the prior calendar year. The director of assessment and evaluation compiles the first sections of the report (program objectives, linkages to courses, measurement tools, and collected data) and then asked program faculty to focus
on discussing, interpreting, disseminating and acting upon the results. After submission, a panel of raters (comprised of university faculty members and doctoral students) reviews the APTs and provides feedback about the quality of the assessment plan. By fostering a collaborative model of completion, this well-organized and highly reviewed report (at the university level, as well as college, unit, departmental and program levels) will now serve as the anchoring event for subsequent data conversations and reporting.

In spring 2010, the unit Assessment Committee developed a unit dispositions rubric. The committee decided to draft a general instrument that could be used across programs, settings and time points. The instrument was reviewed and adopted by the Professional Education Coordinating Council in April 2011. The new rubric will be piloted with select initial and advanced programs in fall 2011.

The first ST-9 rater agreement analysis was conducted using spring 2010 final assessment data. At the PECC discussion of that data, committee members stated that they would like to include mid-block ratings in the analysis as well. Both mid-block and final ratings have been included in subsequent analyses (fall 2010 and spring 2011). In general, the analyses demonstrate two important results. First, agreement between raters is higher at the time of final assessment than it is at mid-block. From a measurement standpoint, this illustrates that when fewer observations are used and raters have less experience with a rubric, reliability is lower. The higher percent agreement between the raters at final evaluation (range: 81%-98% in spring 2011) reinforces that final rubric scores are a reliable evaluation of candidate behavior. Second, mean scores are close to the top of the scale both at mid-block (average scores ranged from 2.63 to 2.98 in spring 2011) and final evaluation (scores ranged from 2.57-2.99 in spring 2011). Our unit has discussed this phenomenon several occasions. The scores should be high at the time of the final evaluation; however, the unit is planning to undertake further validity work to determine whether the instrument is sensitive enough to pick up on growth throughout the semester.

In 2010, the unit instituted what will hopefully be an ongoing event. Our university holds two dedicated assessment days each year: 1) In February, for students with 45-70 completed credits, and 2) in August, for incoming first-year students. Classes are cancelled on the February assessment days, providing faculty with an opportunity to work on projects as a large group. In February 2010 faculty development workshops related to assessment were held. The events included discussion and refinement of the Teacher Work Sample (used by the Middle, Secondary and Mathematics Education department), work on a unit-wide dispositions rubric, focused work by the Diversity Committee, and a discussion of the SPA reporting process. A similar opportunity was offered in February 2011.

The JMU College of Education was one of three colleges/schools of education in the Commonwealth selected by the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia to provide leadership in the development, implementation, and assessment of the statewide Teacher Education and Licensure (TEAL) longitudinal educator preparation data-tracking, management, and analysis initiative. The primary emphasis of TEAL is to gather and track data on all professional educator preparation students from the point of entry, through program completion and follow-up in the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 10th years of service.
Unfortunately, full implementation of this statewide system (later changed to VITAL) was never realized and the project was terminated by the state. This meant that the unit had to resume developing a system for disseminating alumni and employer surveys. A graduate alumni survey was administered in the fall of 2006. Graduate and employer survey data are now being regularly collected at the unit level. Graduates are surveyed the semester they are scheduled to graduate. Each spring a cohort of graduates from three years prior are also surveyed. The web-based surveys inquire about their current vocational situation, feelings of preparedness attributable to training at JMU, and professional attitudes. During the summer, employers at Virginia public schools are surveyed to provide feedback on graduates employed in their schools. Educational Technology and Educational Leadership are developing a survey for the employers of their graduates and plan to deploy the survey at the close of the fall 2011 semester.

The unit has also responded to several changes in the Virginia Department of Education’s Regulations Governing the Licensure of School Personnel and the Review and Approval of Education Programs. One of the key features of these proposed changes was the Cycle of the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia and requirements associated with program compliance and Biennial Measurable Targets. The first report on the 7th Biennial Measurable Target (“Partnerships and collaborations based on P-12 school needs.”) was submitted to VDOE in July 2008. Faculty in the unit continue to address program matrices and the six other Biennial Measurable Targets. The Education Support Center database has continued to revise monitoring of candidate performance to reflect changes in prescribed state assessment guidelines (e.g. Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA); Reading for Virginia Educators (RVE, replaced VRA effective July 1, 2011); Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA); and School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA).
Standard 3. How does the unit work with the school partners to deliver field experiences and clinical practice to enable candidates to develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to help all students learn?

3.1 How does the unit work with the school partner to deliver field experiences and clinical practice to enable candidates to develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to help all students learn?

James Madison University Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC) determined that Standard 3 would be measured against elements at the target level. The reason for this decision was multifaceted, and included the presence of widespread, varied, and historically strong partnerships, and a shared, consistent, and reflectively based process for evaluating candidate performance in clinical practice. Unit faculty, school partners, and others collaborate in a variety of ways, both formally and informally, to design, deliver, and evaluate field experience and clinical practice. The unit participates in a broad array of partnership activities with local school divisions – Augusta County, Harrisonburg City, Page County, Rockingham County, Staunton City, Shenandoah County, and Waynesboro City.

The rich history we enjoy with our partners includes not only the school divisions in our local communities in which our candidates are placed, but also a unique collaborative relationship with colleagues from three area universities and colleges who are engaged in the preparation of teachers. This nationally recognized partnership, the MidValley Consortium, is a partnership among the James Madison University, Easter Mennonite University, Mary Baldwin College, and Bridgewater College teacher preparation programs and seven regional school divisions (Rockingham County, Augusta County, Shenandoah County, Page County, Harrisonburg City, Staunton City, and Waynesboro City) which host education candidate practicum and student teachers during field placements. Work of the consortium includes a range of activities such as the development and implementation of the student teaching evaluation instrument. Data gathered from this tool serves as a primary method of looking at candidate performance in clinical practice at both the program and unit level.

A 7-member steering committee representing teachers, administrators, and teacher educators meets monthly to plan consortium activities. The steering committee and central office contact persons from the seven member school divisions meet annually to evaluate consortium projects, set policy, and approve the annual budget. Since its establishment in 1988, one of the primary endeavors of the consortium is the development and delivery of training to cooperating teachers who host candidates from the institutions. The Consortium continues to train approximately 100 Clinical Faculty each year, and we now have over 700 active trained teachers. The skills taught in Clinical Faculty training are essentially the same skills as those needed to mentor beginning teachers. Many of our Clinical Faculty do indeed serve as mentors to beginning teachers in their own school divisions. The members of the MidValley Consortium collaborate to rotate requests for clinical faculty among the four institutions over a period of time to provide the best match for student teacher needs. Consortium members meet annually to review their student teaching placement needs and to determine which clinical faculty each institution
will request for the next year. The seven participating school divisions honor the consortium’s requests for specific clinical faculty whenever possible.

Partnerships are a critical component of the Virginia Department of Education program approval process. As part of the required state biennial measures accountability, the 2009-2011 Accountability Measurement of Partnerships and Collaborations Survey was submitted in July of 2010 and subsequently received State Board of Education approval in the fall of 2010. This measure details the many partnerships and collaborations that the professional education unit maintains with local school divisions, individual schools, and regional consortia. Over 100 partnerships are noted, with wide-ranging opportunities for candidates and other school professionals to engage in meaningful field experiences and clinical practices. In addition, the partnerships provide unit faculty occasions to collaborate with school partners, thereby affording them the opportunity to continue to engage in meaningful dialogue and examination of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions needed in the classrooms of today.

While the MidValley Consortium and the accountability measures of the Commonwealth provide the larger context for our partnership and collaboration with schools, we also are actively engaged in more intimate relationships with administrators and teachers that inform and guide our day-to-day operations. The most formalized school partnership programs have historically been with Augusta County and Waynesboro City Schools, supporting JMU teachers-in-residence, and selected JMU faculty liaisons.

Advisory groups and standing committees also inform our relationships. At the teacher education unit level, the Community Relations Professional Development and Growth committee (CRPDG), includes representation of the unit as well as from the public schools. The charge to the committee includes: 1) developing, monitoring and coordinating partnership efforts with school divisions and other community members, including other Colleges and organizations within JMU; and 2) identifying ways in which James Madison University can provide valued services to its community partners and monitoring these endeavors.

For the past four years, a school partners advisory committee comprised of instructional leaders from the seven local school divisions, has met regularly to exchange information and ideas. Through these discussions, models used for placement and supervision of field experiences are being examined and new models piloted. Conversations and planning on all manner of issues related to not only the preparation of teachers but the teaching of students in the schools has been the focus of the meetings. Input on the revision of the unit’s Conceptual Framework was solicited and incorporated into the unit’s document. Common issues, concerns and approaches to evaluating the dispositions of our candidates resulted in the divisions’ adopting some of the strategies to be considered in the evaluation of their school faculty.

The close relationships that we embrace with our school partners are reflected in all aspects of our program. While the placement of candidates is truly a joint venture, so to is the development of research projects, identification of professional development activities,
supervision of candidates and development of unit policies and procedures. We sustain our relationships through regular and systematic communication and planning at the unit, program, division and school building level.

A prime sample is the work that has been undertaken by Dr. Alison Kretlow in the Exceptional Education Department. Through her work with Response to Intervention (RTI), connections are made in the classrooms in research, professional development activities supporting teachers and working with our candidates in the field.

3.2.a Standard on which the unit is moving to the target level.
- Describe areas of the standard at which the unit is currently performing at the target level.
- Summarize activities and their impact on candidate performance and program quality that have led to target level performance.
- Discuss plans and timelines for obtaining and/or sustaining target level performance as articulated in the rubrics of Standard 3.

Unit and school-based faculty are involved in designing, implementing and evaluating the unit’s conceptual framework and the school programs in a number of different ways. Each semester, candidates, cooperating teachers and university supervisors are asked to evaluate all aspects of field experiences through the use of surveys and course evaluations. More formal feedback of the conceptual framework is provided by groups such as the School Partners Advisory Group, which reviewed the Conceptual Framework most recently in February of 2011.

Unit and school-based faculty participate in professional development activities and instructional programs sharing expertise and integrating resources to support candidate learning. The unit focuses on obtaining feedback from our partners and making adjustments to programs based on this input. As a result, we have revised or revitalized our curriculum for initial, advanced and in-service programs. Examples include incorporating opportunities for our candidates to become more knowledgeable and skilled in RTI in their professional education program, linking professional development for elementary teachers in problem based mathematics instruction, and incorporating school improvement plans as part of the required curriculum for school leaders enrolled in our Educational Leadership program.

The unit and our seven partnership schools as well as divisions across the Commonwealth jointly determine student teaching placements. The placement process varies from one division to another, but always involves significant collaboration among partners. Not only do our partnerships support field experience and clinical practice placements, they are also vital to the selection of and support provided to clinical faculty. The Education Support Center coordinates these functions and is charged with working with schools and agencies to select cooperating teachers/on-site internship supervisors. Individual programs are responsible for the selection of university supervisors for field experience and clinical practices. Careful preparation of cooperating teachers as well as all clinical faculty in the
use of the evaluation tool through training offered by the ESC ensures consistency between the on-campus and field-based programs. The Student Teaching Performance Guide provides detailed guidelines and expectations for both candidates and clinical faculty.

Candidates, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors use Tk20 management system to access feedback forms and monitor candidate progress. Data collected through Tk20 is then provided to both the unit and the individual programs to assist with review of candidate progress and the review of unit operations and programs.

Field experiences allow candidates to apply and reflect on their content, professional, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a variety of settings. Candidates enter into schools as observers, gradually becoming more and more involved in the responsibilities of teaching and culminating in assuming full responsibility for the learning of the students. The design, implementation and evaluation of field experiences and clinical practices allow candidates to be fully engaged in the application of theory to practice supported by colleagues, clinical and university faculty. The evaluation forms that are used for clinical practice are based on an alignment with our conceptual framework.

Candidate participation in clinical practice is integrated into the school program and into teaching practice. Observations, planning, instruction and assessment of students are all conducted to support the culture of the schools in which the candidates are placed. Our approved programs meet the competencies prescribed by the VDOE, and at the same time, we are cognizant of the unique needs of each classroom and support our candidates in adapting their strategies and methods to support the learning of all students, integrating their knowledge of best practices into the culture of the classroom in which they are placed.

Seminars accompany all field placements, allowing opportunities for rich exchanges of ideas and reflections on practice. These small group learning environments, facilitated most often by university faculty members, provide a forum for candidates to question their own practices and experiences, while learning from others. The seminars are content-rich, focusing on topics such as working with diverse learners, collaboration with families, and applications of content specific methodologies.

In a pilot program initiated during the 2010-11 academic year, secondary candidates were placed with instruction teams in a local high school for one full semester rather than being placed with two different content specific teachers in two different locations. The rationale was that the extended experience would allow for candidates to become more involved in instructional teams, more immersed in the culture of a school and have opportunities to develop relationships with students over a semester long experience. In addition, the placement practice supported the schools long-term planning for classroom-based support and created a co-teaching situation. The model will continue to be explored and expanded as we move toward new ways of envisioning and solidifying our partnership relationships.
Candidates are active members of the school communities in which they are placed. Candidates are involved in a variety of school-based activities including collaborative projects, using information technology and engaging in service learning. Even before the candidates step into the classroom as a pre-service teacher, they are expected to participate in service learning activities as part of the education foundations experience. Through our partnerships with area schools, opportunities for working with children and families in settings outside of the traditional classroom enrich the candidates’ understanding of addressing the needs of the whole child as a way of establishing a community of learners. The learning for our candidates is connected to the content of the class and while perhaps not directly linked to specific pedagogical theories or practices, certainly provides contexts and experiences on which their teacher preparation programs are built.

All programs include one or more opportunities for collaborative projects, ranging from inquiry projects in elementary education to support for the development and implementation of teacher work samples in middle and secondary education. Candidates’ use of information technology is integrated throughout their programs, including their use of web-based applications such as Blackboard and Tk20, Smartboards and other presentation formats, and response systems and digital media applications. The support of the Educational Technology and Media Center in the College of Education provides technical support to the candidates and the faculty in the development and implementation of technology mediated instruction.

Candidates in advanced programs create links between theory and practice through a lens supported by their own experiences. Candidates in programs for other school professionals are engaged in field experiences and clinical practices that are directly related to the roles for which they are preparing. In fact, their projects are often based on real world challenges they face on a daily basis in their classrooms. Candidates in the Educational Leadership program typically complete practicum and internship experiences in their own school divisions. A critical component of the program is the development of school improvement plans that can readily be applied and have an impact on the home schools and/or divisions of the candidates. This direct link between the advanced program and the schools is impacting the environments in which the students are learning and ultimately their academic success.

Similarly, in the Reading Specialists program, the classroom-based research conducted as their culminating project will have a profound impact on the children they teach and provide a vehicle for sustaining the work of the program.

A cornerstone of the unit programs’ clinical practices is having candidates work collaboratively with other candidates and clinical faculty to critique and reflect on each other’s practice and their effects on student learning with the goal of improving practice. While programs might facilitate this in different ways, all programs emphasize the role of co-teaching and collaboration between clinical faculty and candidates during clinical practice. Seminars designed to facilitate collaboration and reflection are a part of clinical practices and may take place on-site, on-campus, or through web-based media such as Ellumination, Skype, and course-specific Facebook accounts. Candidates are provided
feedback on their impact on student learning through observation forms, evaluation instruments such as the ST-9, and careful analysis of projects such as Teacher Work Samples.

Field experiences and clinical practices facilitate candidates’ exploration of their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions related to all students. All candidates participate in course-related activities and reflections designed to inform and develop their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions related to working with students with exceptionalities and those from diverse, ethnic/racial, linguistic, gender and socioeconomic groups.

In January of 2010, Dean Wishon named a Field and Clinical Experiences Ad Hoc Committee to explore efficiencies and effectiveness of our current field experience practices and policies. Throughout the remainder of the academic year, the committee reviewed current practices, identified available options and suggested necessary changes. In particular, it focused on examining the use of existing resources, best practices and philosophical foundations for field experiences. After meeting with local school representatives and sharing information with our School Partners Advisory Council, the committee decided to explore developing a capacity model of placement and a focused model of supervision. As a first step, the task force worked to establish a cluster model for field experiences at a single school or campus with designated university contacts for each cluster. The pilot is being implemented on a broader scale during the 2011-12 academic year.

Two small pilot programs were conducted in fall 2010, one in Waynesboro City and one in Fairfax County, with middle education faculty serving as the field experience supervisors. Feedback from the university supervisors, candidates, and school partners was gathered and used to revise this model. In spring 2011, a cluster of candidates was again placed in Fairfax County with a single university supervisor. In addition, several secondary education student teachers were placed for the entire 16-week placement in Harrisonburg High School, with one supervisor assigned to this cluster. Concurrently, a modified cluster model was also undertaken, utilizing the same placement for a 16-week practicum, and an 8-week subsequent student teaching placement. This model had been used in the past for some elementary education and special education field experiences. As reported by candidates, university supervisors and cooperating teachers, this sustained model of placement had the benefit of socializing candidates to the school and classroom culture, and enabling them to “hit the ground running” during their student teaching placement.

In reviewing TES results and gathering feedback on these pilots, school partners have shared that the advent of a statewide tool for evaluating teachers based on student performances may create a problem if veteran teachers do not want student teachers in their classrooms because the classroom teacher wants to maximize instructional efforts. This has led to wider discussions among all partners on how to best address these concerns while continuing to provide the needed professional field experiences for our teacher candidates. In collaboration with the School Partners Advisory Council a modification of the proposed cluster pilots to include a long-term capacity model is under now under
discussion. This would mean that the Professional Education Unit and school partner representatives would jointly determine the number and placements of all levels of candidate field experiences throughout a system. Candidates would be placed in one division for the majority of their field experiences, with their specific assignments determined by the capacity of each school and classroom to provide a quality experience. School partners have expressed that having long-term projections of the number of candidates and the types of needed field and clinical experiences would be of great benefit and lead to more deliberate and planned placement processes. Implementation of such a changed process will be based on the success of previous collaborative initiatives. For example, in 2008, the process of distributing student teaching requests was revised from a semiannual request cycle to a yearly request cycle, with both fall and spring clinical practice requests submitted to school divisions at the same time. Last year, school divisions and professional education unit program coordinators favorably reviewed the process. The unit has adopted this practice and continues to have student teacher candidates submit their application for student teaching in October the year prior to their planned student teaching experience.

Access to Tk20 reports has led the unit to examine the ST-9 data on a regular basis. One of the questions investigated was whether there was a significant difference between university supervisors (US) and cooperating teachers’ (CT) ratings. Results indicated that the ratings were very similar and followed a similar trajectory across all programs. In examining this data, the next question asked was whether the instrument itself provides enough discriminability. The unit will continue to examine this, utilizing our school partners’ knowledge of the newly constituted state teacher evaluation system to inform this process.
Standard 4. The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools.

4.1 How does the unit prepare candidates to work effectively with all students, including individuals of different ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and/or geographical area?

As articulated in our Conceptual Framework, the goals of JMU Professional Education Unit are to prepare educated and enlightened individuals who contribute to the common good through teaching, educational leadership, civic responsibility, and local, national and international service. Our increasingly diverse, technological, and global society demands continual examination, adjustment, and renewal of practices, programs, and outcomes for student achievement, societal development, and democracy. Through well defined, measurable, and meaningful professional dispositions, practices, and performances, candidates demonstrate proficiencies necessary for commitment to the critical intersection of content, creativity, and community in learning environments that cultivate change. Specific proficiencies related to diversity are identified and assessed in our candidates throughout their programs.

Valuing global competence and better understanding of diversity is emphasized throughout the curriculum, not only in our teacher education unit, but also across the university community. The foundations of ensuring that our candidates reflect the ideals of our Conceptual Framework are established in the General Education curriculum, The Human Community, required of all JMU students. This core academic program of the university provides a foundation for understanding diversity.

In compliance with our program approval process through the Virginia Department of Education, all licensing programs were required to document how candidates are prepared to work with diverse students. Each program requires specific coursework in diversity and/or has woven diversity into the curriculum and performance standards for each program. Working with diverse populations is addressed across all programs. Coursework has emphasized the importance of inclusionary teaching practices and differentiated instruction to address each student’s special needs.

Professional education coursework has been designed to infuse diversity and multiculturalism more extensively through the participation of guest speakers who represent diverse groups, community-learning service projects, and a variety of field experiences and clinical practice opportunities. Coursework has emphasized the importance of inclusionary teaching practices and differentiated instruction to address each student’s special needs. Candidates learn about and have experiences with
exceptionalities, gender differences, and multiple intelligences, as well as the impact of socioeconomic status on learning.

Candidates for initial teacher licensure are evaluated by university faculty, supervisors, and cooperating teachers on their ability to design and implement modifications to standards-based instruction for individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, abilities, values, and perspectives. Key assessments developed by the individual programs have been developed to measure the candidates’ competencies in field-based settings.

Candidates in advanced programs and for other school professionals must demonstrate their ability to use their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to create supportive learning environments for all P-12 students. Required coursework varies, yet diversity is embedded throughout the advanced programs.

A common point of evaluation for all candidates in initial programs on proficiencies related to diversity is evident in the student teaching evaluation (ST-9). It is used across the unit as a common measure of candidate proficiencies in demonstrating an understanding and appreciation for how to address diversity in clinical settings. It includes specific items related to candidate diversity proficiencies.

Programs for educating teachers and other school professionals are designed to provide extensive field-based opportunities for our candidates. Throughout the professional programs, candidates are placed in settings within and outside of our community that reflect a wide range of diverse populations.

JMU’s immediate area has been considered rural, although recent population trends have resulted in significant changes. The unit tracks diversity of the schools and school divisions where candidates are placed. As candidates progress through their programs, field placements are monitored and every attempt is made to ensure that all candidates have experiences in a variety of placements. In addition, opportunities exist for candidates to have field-based experiences at international locations. Candidates are offered the opportunity to experience teaching in international schools through a wide range of international short-term programs. Over the past four years, faculty has accompanied over 50 candidates to Korea, Australia, Kenya, Italy, and Mexico. In addition, through the JMU Office of International programs, semester-long programs are available for our candidates. Student teaching opportunities are available through a formal agreement established in 2009 with the Educators Abroad.

It is important to note that the unit faculty experiences in diverse educational settings enhance the experiences of our candidates. Faculty across the unit have been engaged in traveling internationally with candidates to support international practicum experiences. Faculty have provided professional development to teachers and professors in countries such as Cyprus, Iraq, Italy, and Australia. Faculty have traveled and taught in programs in Guam, Florence, Italy, London, and Belgium. Through the Professor-in-Residence program, we have faculty assigned to schools in Richmond, Harrisonburg, and Roanoke, working with diverse faculty and students, helping them realize that post-secondary education is a
possibility for them. In addition, faculty members' school-based teaching experiences help them bring the world of inner city, international, rural, tribal schools, and private school settings into their university-based teaching.

James Madison University is dedicated to providing opportunities for our candidates to have experiences with a broad range of experience, cultures and backgrounds. As President Rose has stated, “Diversity is not just a buzz word at JMU, it is a way of life. At JMU, we embrace the uniqueness in the individual and provide the resources and support to celebrate the distinctiveness of all people.” To that end, resources, programs, support and advocacy are provided to faculty, staff and students to enhance the diversity of our campus. JMU has over 327 faculty members, of whom 84% identify themselves as white. The Professional Education unit reflects a similar ethnicity distribution. James Madison University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Concerted efforts are undertaken to recruit and retain diverse faculty. When advertising for new positions, the net is cast widely to recruit from under-represented groups. James Madison University has a high quality program for orientation of new faculty prior to the start of each new academic year. A modest increase in the diversity of our faculty at the university and unit level can be observed over the past five years.

Ongoing efforts are made at the university and the unit level to recruit and retain diverse candidates. James Madison University's Office of Admissions conducts a series of “open houses” and special events aimed at supporting the admission of students from under represented populations. Specifically, Take a Look Day is an event in which special orientation sessions are offered to students who may be interested in attending JMU. Student Ambassadors from the teacher education unit play a major role in conducting sessions and sharing their JMU experiences with prospective students. The results of this focused recruitment may be measured in part by the increase in the diversity of our student body, both at the university and unit level.

4.2.b Continuous Improvement

- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in unit Standard 4.

A focus on promoting the cultural competence of our faculty and candidates is evident in our work since the last NCATE accreditation visit. To make public our commitment, Dean Wishon issued a proclamation: Affirmation of a Cause, a public statement of our unit’s commitment to cultural and global competency. In 2005-2006, the unit redefined our definition of diversity in our conceptual framework to be more inclusive. The educational professional understands that diversity means individual and group differences that are characteristic of all human beings and which included, but are not limited to, culture,
language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, ability, religion, age/developmental stage, and learning styles.

In 2006-07, the unit initiated a series of VOICES panels for faculty to build their cultural and global competency and skill in integrating cultural and global competency into the curriculum. By raising competency of faculty and candidates we hope to build a community in which people from diverse backgrounds (cultures) will feel welcome, valued, and represented. Over the past five years, the "Voices" symposia series has expanded; events have included, but are not limited to, sponsored campus-wide presentations by representatives of Richmond City Schools, international teaching fellows sponsored through a USDE grant, and stories of candidates and faculty serving in the military.

As a unit, we have participated in university-wide efforts to recruit and retain diverse candidates and faculty. Data suggest that we have been modestly successful in our efforts. Recognizing that we need to be more proactive in our efforts to recruit diverse faculty, we have been engaged in conversations to develop a closer relationship with Morgan State University, a HBC in Baltimore, Maryland. Facilitated through the efforts of Dr. David Owusu-Ansah, JMU Office of Diversity, faculty and administrators from the unit have made visits to the Morgan State campus. At those meetings, conversations have focused on opportunities that exist for collaboration between the two campuses. During the most recent visits, plans were made for formalizing the development of faculty research projects and candidate exchanges. In addition, plans are being developed for the College of Education to host a doctoral candidate from Morgan State on our campus for one academic year to provide teaching opportunities and dissertation support.

As reported in our Part C reports, several unit faculty have been engaged in activities to recruit diverse candidates that extend beyond the university efforts. For example, three faculty are engaged in social networking, reading, and college preparation activities with teachers and students in high schools in Roanoke, Harrisonburg and Richmond. Leadership academies designed to provide under-represented high school students with enrichment experiences focusing on career and pre-college readiness experiences, including self-discovery opportunities, are offered by the Dupont-funded Middle School Summer Leadership Academy and facilitated by unit faculty. And in another example, Dr. Dave Herr brought a group of 9th graders from William Fleming High School in Roanoke where he is the Professor-in-Residence (PIR) to campus with the hope of attracting first-generation college students. Dr. Herr’s role as PIR at William Fleming High School in Roanoke has resulted in the chartering of two student service organizations this year – a Friends of Rachel chapter and more recently, a new organization called Students of Service.

Assessments show that, in general, our candidates’ performance on diversity proficiencies meets or exceeds expectations, especially at the point of student teaching. However, reviewing these data, the PECC decided that we needed to more systematically track the development of the diversity competencies of our candidates. During the 2010-11 academic year, representatives from the unit identified candidate proficiencies that will be measured at predetermined points in their program. This new documentation of the
proficiencies in diversity, which will be piloted during the 2011-12 academic year, will complement the unit data already being gathered during student teaching and internships.

Our 2004-05 data on candidate performance indicated that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. To better highlight where candidates acquire this knowledge, each program developed a course that focuses on diversity/differentiation; a number of these also include a field component. We recognize that a critical way to develop the cultural competence of our faculty and candidates is through rich service and practicum opportunities with children and families in and outside of the school environment.

The Education Support Center staff continues to seek opportunities to provide candidates greater diversity in field experiences. For example, the director and the coordinator of field placement developed a memorandum of understanding with Richmond and Williamsburg City Schools. So far, nine candidates have been placed in 16 placements with these systems. Through externally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Center grants with the Harrisonburg City Public Schools, faculty have provided candidates experiences with at-risk, ESL, and ethnically diverse students. Educational Technology and Media Center personnel use two-way videoconferencing equipment to arrange opportunities for faculty and candidates to observe and interact in P-12 exceptional education classroom settings. ETMC personnel also assist faculty in developing interactive web sites utilizing WIKI technologies to report cross-cultural and service-learning events in real-time.

Reflections on our curriculum, an understanding of best practices, and the desire to continue to meet the changing needs of students and families has resulted in several curriculum changes in our programs. In addition to ensuring that all candidates have a foundation of culture understanding through their Cluster 3 General Education program and developing required courses that specifically address diversity and cultural competence, the concepts are woven throughout the curriculum at initial and advanced levels. Response to the needs of our constituents in the schools resulted in major revisions in three of our licensing programs – K-12 special education, early childhood special education/early childhood education, and teaching English as a second language.

In addition to specific curriculum changes, the unit is organizing itself around structures that will enhance the opportunities for faculty and candidates to engage in experiences with cultures other than their own while providing a service to the university and larger community. The Career Development Academy is developed to support the education and workforce needs of hundreds or young adolescent and adult learners. The Academy serves over 300 adult learners annually.

Over the past two years, a move has been made to create an entity that will support the work undertaken by the unit to prepare professionals who will serve individuals whose language and culture are other than ours. It was recognized that, across the unit, multiple efforts are undertaken not only to deliver pre-service and in-service programs intended to enhance cultural competence and understanding, but also to provide direct services to families and communities, research projects, and service-related activities. In 2009, under
the leadership of Dr. Laura Desportes, Department Head of Exceptional Education, and Dr. Diane Foucar-Szocki, Department Head of Learning, Technology and Leadership, the English Language Learning Academy (ELLA) was conceived. It is envisioned as a centralized location to provide language learning opportunities and support through licensure, minor, clinical, and direct service programs. ELLA will serve as a vehicle to provide opportunities for our candidates to learn from and interact with children, families, and adults from other cultures, informing and enhancing their teacher preparation. Governance by an advisory board with representation from across the unit and the community will ensure the diverse needs of the constituents are met.
Standard 5. 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 professional development.

5.1 How does the unit ensure that its professional education faculty contributes to the preparation of effective educators through scholarship, service, teaching, collaboration and assessment of their performance?

As referenced in our Conceptual Framework, our candidates and faculty are committed to lifelong learning and aspire to meet educational needs in a changing, pluralistic, and democratic society. To accomplish this goal, we must have highly qualified faculty members as teacher scholars who serve not only our institution, but also our schools and the profession itself, at local, state, national, and international levels.

Professional education unit faculty hold the credentials and have the professional experience to support the high quality programs at JMU. All faculty with assignments in the professional education unit hold the required degrees, expertise and/or certification that qualify them for the positions. Faculty represent the College of Education, College of Visual & Performing Arts, College of Integrated Science and Technology, and College of Mathematics and Science. It should also be noted that additional faculty in these colleges, as well as the College of Arts and Letters and the School of University Studies, are closely connected with the education programs, although their appointments reside outside of the Professional Education Unit. Over 130 full-time faculty have roles and responsibilities assigned to the preparation of teachers and other school professionals. Of these, 120 hold terminal degrees in the appropriate fields. In addition to the full-time, tenure-track faculty in the unit, 13 full-time (non-tenure-track) faculty with the rank of instructor teach courses and/or supervise field experiences, and part-time, adjunct faculty instructors have similar responsibilities. Adjunct faculty have either a doctorate or master’s degree with other specialized qualifications (e.g., clinical certification, school- or district-level teaching or administration). Some adjunct faculty are currently P-12 school teachers who are recognized for their expertise in particular subject areas. Clinical faculty who supervise field experiences including clinical practice and internships, also have credentials that include both appropriate degrees as well as teaching and/or administrative licenses. Many of the clinical faculty members who act as field experience supervisors are retired COE administrators, superintendents, supervisors, and principals who hold state licensure and considerable experience. Careful selection, orientation and support of clinical faculty ensure that the goals of each program are met.

Faculty are expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the content they teach, scholarly work in their fields of specialization, and service to the college, university, schools and broader community. These three components serve as the basis for all full-time faculty members’ annual evaluation.
Professional education faculty have an in-depth understanding of their fields and are actively engaged in integrating current knowledge of content and the scholarship of teaching and learning into their teaching practices. Faculty encourage the development of reflection, critical thinking, and problem solving by candidates through the individual course activities and assignments. Course syllabi reflect skillful incorporation of best practices in candidate opportunities for learning, application of instructional strategies and successful application of a range of assessment tools. Examples are further described in the following paragraphs.

Candidate opportunities to develop skills as reflective practitioners include but are not limited to: reflective journal writing, self-evaluation of their teaching practices, reflections on research readings, on-line reflections related to course experiences, and reflections in final portfolios on artifacts related to concepts, theories, and objectives emphasized in courses. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are addressed through the use of case studies, critiques of journal articles with implications for professional practice, discussions of controversial issues, application questions on mid-term and final course examinations, and development of projects such as teacher work samples and inquiry projects that require active candidate engagement in using the problem-solving skills of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of multiple variables.

Teaching is a high priority across the unit. Faculty model a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to support candidates’ development of professional, state, and institutional standards. Examples of instructional strategies used in classes include but are not limited to: interactive lectures, guest lectures, whole group and small group discussions, multimedia rich presentations (video, slides, video conferencing, PowerPoint, SmartBoards), web-enhanced learning, cooperative learning activities, candidate presentations, learning contracts, concept maps, and case studies and simulations. Assessment of candidate learning is key. Unit faculty members report using and modeling both formative and summative assessment strategies in their courses, as well as using traditional and authentic assessments. Examples include but are not limited to: written essay and multiple tests (in-class and take home exams), skills assessment of selected performances such as demonstrations, oral presentations, evaluation of lessons taught, reflective papers and journals, annotated bibliographies, lab reports, critique of research articles, completion of literature reviews, online and classroom discussions, pre-and post-surveys, midterm and final written exams, research papers, projects, and portfolios.

Supported by technology-equipped classrooms and support services for developing technology skills, unit faculty members integrate various types of technology applications in their instruction. Sample applications include Blackboard, personal response systems, and Smartboards, as well as iPads, digital cameras, and flipcams. Three computer labs are located in Memorial Hall, where most of the education classes are located, as well as classroom buildings throughout the university campus. In addition, two laptop carts and an iPad cart are available. The support of the Education Technology and Media Center (ETMC) and the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) are invaluable in the development, delivery, and evaluation of instruction delivered and supported via technology.
Faculty demonstrate being reflective practitioners by regularly assessing their own teaching, not only informally through discussions with candidates and regular course feedback using exit tickets and anonymous surveys, but also formally at the end of each semester through the course and instructor evaluations. Many unit faculty utilize the services of the Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI) in conducting TAPs (Teaching Analysis Poll). The TAP process provides anonymous feedback on several aspects of the course to the faculty at midterm. The information is invaluable to the faculty and allows time for making adjustments in the course delivery, content, and assessment to better support the learning of the candidates. Excellence in teaching is highly valued by the unit. All classes are evaluated each semester using the agreed-upon rubric. A five-point scale measures candidates’ perceptions on major constructs of the courses such as content, organization, instruction, evaluation, reflection, climate, and technology. Data suggest that faculty are successful in being effective teachers regardless of the format – standard face-to-face, online, or field-based classes.

Scholarly activity and service are expected of all full time faculty members. General guidelines are provided in the university Faculty Handbook. For example scholarship is broadly defined and includes such activities as publication of scholarly works, presentations at professional conferences, achievement through performance in the arts, engaging in recognized research, obtaining research grants, continuing professional development through formal course work, publication of educational materials, and consulting activities. These are further delineated by each department across the unit. Similar guidelines are provided for service.

The university’s Faculty Handbook describes the university expectations for the evaluation process and identifies three types of evaluations: initial, annual and comprehensive. It also identifies the three areas of performance – teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service to be assessed.

A number of college-wide and unit-wide professional development-related meetings/events are held throughout the academic year. Several of these focused on providing faculty and staff professional information. Opportunities for research grants, travel support, and collaborative projects are supported through professional development funds distributed through the Faculty Development and Support Committee. Each college is awarded a number of grants for educational leave based on available funding. The leaves are awarded through a competitive process within each college. Eligibility is limited to faculty who have been at the university at least three years and who have not had a leave in the previous five years.

The unit also provides regular professional development opportunities for its clinical faculty. University supervisors are provided an initial half-day orientation for all new supervisors, as well as a full-day seminar each semester for all active supervisors. In addition, the unit supports the efforts of its clinical faculty through a tuition waiver plan. Clinical faculty may earn course tuition waivers by accumulating “units” that are earned based on various roles and levels of involvement with JMU faculty or candidates (e.g., serving as cooperating teachers for practicum and/or student teachers; teaching
selected class sessions within education courses, or participating in action inquiry projects). The Education Support Center (ESC) and/or individual program coordinators issue vouchers for units earned at the end of each semester.

5.2.b Continuous Improvement

- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in unit Standard 5.

In 2004-05, the College of Education initiated a mentoring program for new faculty. While JMU has an established program for transitioning new faculty to the JMU community, the college determined that the specific nature of our work would support having our own program. This program has continued through the last seven years and has expanded to include faculty in their first two years. Topics include getting to know the JMU student, practices to improve teaching, and balancing scholarship, teaching and service at the university. It is anticipated that the mentoring program will continue with the addition of special sessions that will be of interest to faculty across the unit involved in the preparation of teachers and other school professionals.

Throughout the last seven years, support and recognition for faculty effort in scholarly activity has continued. In response to faculty request and a university initiative, a Scholarly Writers Group was instituted in 2006-07, to support the scholarship and publication agenda of CoE faculty. Co-sponsored by the University Writing Center and the Center for Faculty Innovation, the Writers Group met two Fridays each month during Spring 2007 under the expert mentorship of Dr. Kurt Schick. Although not formally organized in the last two years, individual faculty have continued with these projects, often utilizing the faculty commons area as a space to write and share. Recently, the college participated in a university-wide scholarship forum. Faculty from each college department provided evidence of their scholarly endeavors. These will be showcased again at the start of the 2011-12 academic year. Individual faculty projects are routinely highlighted on the college website.

In addition to the professional development opportunities offered to all university faculty, several professional development opportunities are offered for unit faculty. For example, during 2007-08, CoE faculty book groups developed, focusing on current issues in education, followed by visiting scholars to facilitate discussion (E.D. Hirsch and Gary Marx). The book groups were so successful that they continued as the Education Faculty Reading Group, with faculty focusing on books related to leadership, teaching and the context of education. Other professional development opportunities have included faculty brown bag sessions on topics of interest such as TWS, Universal Design, and Assessment Practices. Some of these events have been open to both faculty and students, presenting a unique opportunity to share in our professional learning trajectory. These professional
development opportunities have been available to not only faculty in the college, but across
the unit. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, a survey will be developed and
distributed to unit faculty as we plan events for the upcoming academic year.

ETMC staff members continue to actively support classroom instruction at faculty requests
presenting on a variety of topics including: JMU electronic database resources, digital video
applications, web 2.0 resources for learning, digital copyright and fair use law,
SmartBoardTM technologies, concept mapping, specific software tools and technologies as
requested by faculty. The ETMC staff also is involved with the Shenandoah Valley
Technology Consortium supporting various projects related to K-12 educational
technologies in the area. The ETMC continues to work on upgrading a variety of
technologies available in the center. As a result, these increasingly utilized tools for
instruction found their way into many classrooms in the College of Education. To support
this effort we upgraded several of our video editing computer lab machines to be more
capable and functional for our students and faculty. Particular support is provided on the
Tk20 electronic data management system.

During the 2007-08 academic year, the Faculty Development and Support Committee
investigated the departmental practices for reviewing faculty for tenure, promotion and
annual reviews. The data collected provided a picture of the practices across the college
and also suggested areas for improvement to support faculty development and success.
Continuing this cross-department inquiry, departments continued these efforts to clarify
the expectations that the respective department uses for the three different types of
evaluations (initial, annual, and tenure and promotion) as required by the Faculty
Handbook. The goal of this work is not to have all departments look alike, but instead to
make more transparent departmental expectations for faculty productivity so that all
faculty are informed as to how they are progressing and will be evaluated at various points
in their career. This committee is also responsible for the identification of faculty for
university awards as distinguished teacher, scholar, and service provider. Mini-grants
and/or research and teaching grants are provided to support teaching and scholarship
efforts.

In-service needs of teachers in our partnership schools receive high priority. For example,
Harrisonburg City Schools have the highest proportion of English as Second Language
Learners in the Commonwealth. In order to meet the needs of these students in the
classroom, a professional development program in teaching second language learners was
developed and is delivered through the JMU Office of Outreach and Engagement. Originally
developed as a certificate program, the option exists for teachers to complete requirements
for certification in the area. To date 133 teachers have participated in the
program. Addressing the needs of teaching the gifted and talented student has been
addressed in a similar fashion. A certificate program has also been offered through the JMU
Offices of Outreach and Engagement, enrolling over 639 teachers.

Both of the programs mentioned above (ESL and Gifted and Talented) have been made
available to our pre-service teachers but have met with little participation. Both programs
mentioned above provide professional development for in-service teachers but are not
structured to provide explicit linkages between these professional development offerings and our teacher candidates


**Standard 6.** 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 institutional standards.

6.1 How do the unit’s governance system and resources contribute to adequately preparing candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards?

*The unit has the leadership and the authority* to plan, deliver and operate coherent programs of study. The dean of the College of Education is designated the *head of the professional education unit,* represents the unit in all administrative matters, and has responsibility for all programs leading to Commonwealth of Virginia licensure or advanced educator preparation. Initial and advanced programs in professional education and allied content disciplines are administratively housed in the *Colleges of Education, Arts and Letters, Visual and Performing Arts, University Studies, Science and Mathematics,* and *Integrated Science and Technology.*

Program coordinators and/or department heads direct the program-level work of the unit. The work is guided by the *Professional Education Coordinating Council* (PECC), its standing committees and task forces. The PECC is made up of representatives of each of the professional education programs, the College of Education dean, associate dean, and assistant dean; the directors of the Education Support Center, the Educational Technology and Media Center, and Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies; and the chairs of all unit committees. It meets monthly and serves as one of the primary governing bodies for the unit.

The unit governance structure is linked to university governance by the unit head’s representation on the Academic Council. Chaired by the provost, the Academic Council is composed of upper level administration, including all deans and vice provosts. It meets weekly to discuss institutional-wide issues, set institutional priorities, plan strategies for meeting university-wide goals, and share information related to academic affairs. The unit head meets twice each academic year with administrators from the allied colleges to which unit programs are administratively tied. These meetings with *unit head administrators* provide a forum for discussing issues related to preparing educators and other school personnel across the university. In addition, for the past four years, the dean has met on a regular basis with *division administrators from our partnering school divisions* to share concerns related to education of all students, the preparation of future teachers, and professional development needs of in-service teachers.

*Advising is central to the university* and a web site dedicated to providing information and support for faculty, staff and students describes the expectations of good advising and processes to ensure that each student receives accurate information in planning his/her academic program. Student support and advising is also the focus of the Office of Career and Academic Planning. All freshmen are assigned a freshmen advisor as they matriculate into the university before transitioning to their major and education program advisors. Each education program has specific advising policies and processes. Transfer students are assigned both a major and an education advisor upon entering the university. Some transfer students enter under the *Regional Teacher Education Agreement (RTEA),* a reciprocal agreement between the professional education unit and three local community...
colleges to support the transfer of community college students into initial licensure programs. Transfer students who enter under the RTEA are considered to have met all teacher education admission requirements as well as JMU admission and general education requirements.

The Education Support Center (ESC) is the key conduit for information related to admission into the Professional Education Unit for all students, including students entering under the RTEA. The unit’s admissions policies are clearly and consistently described in publications and catalogs. The university catalogs are revised on an annual basis. Admission requirements for the education programs are outlined in the JMU undergraduate and graduate catalogs and on college and program web pages. Revisions in programs and polices not mandated by federal or state bodies, must be approved by the University Curriculum Committee before publication in the catalog.

The development of the budget is a collaborative process with the deans and provost working together to ensure that cross-college and cross-division activities receive appropriate attention. Budget allocations go to the various colleges; however, many aspects of the unit functioning are funded under the CoE budget (e.g., the ESC, the ETMC, and travel for student teaching supervision). Not unlike most institutions of higher education, recent economic events times impacted JMU and as a result, the professional education programs. Prior to 2007, the university had experienced growth and budgets realized modest but steady increases. However, with the economic downturn, the university began to take measures to ensure that the academic programs would be impacted as minimally as possible. Faculty salaries have been frozen since 2007. In 2008-09, each academic unit was required to return 10-20% of its budget across two areas – travel and professional development, which translated to a $15,494 rescission for the CoE. Through planning and the use of foundation and indirect funds from grants, the college was able to continue to provide support for student scholarships, faculty travel, research and partnership activities. To address the NCATE standards, increased Title II reporting requirements, and the need to better track candidate performance, the provost has invested the necessary resources to support the procurement of Tk20, a data management system. Even given the budgetary problems, the unit has been fortunate to witness an increase in the numbers of faculty lines assigned to our licensing programs. While there is a continued need for additional faculty, the unit has experienced an increase in the numbers of faculty assigned to the unit over the past seven years.

Workload policies and practices are consistent with our unit conceptual framework and guidelines for merit, promotion and tenure. They encourage faculty engagement in teaching, scholarship, and service, and collaborations with P-12 schools. The typical semester workload for tenured, tenure-track, and RTA faculty is 12 workload unit-hours for teaching, scholarship, and service. Supervision of student teaching is figured at one credit hour per student teacher; therefore the full-time load equivalent is 12 candidates. Program coordinators, special project directors, and others have reassigned time for administration.

The unit employs high quality support staff and adjunct faculty to ensure program
coherence and integrity. Many of our staff have a long tenure in working with the programs. JMU provides extensive opportunities for staff development. All full-time staff are required to have annual evaluations that include a professional development component. All adjunct part-time faculty are oriented and mentored by the program coordinator or designee and are evaluated annually using the same process as that for full-time faculty. Graduate assistants provide faculty and program support but are not used for teaching in professional education programs.

The unit and university also support the operation of JMU’s Young Children’s Program (YCP), located in Anthony Seeger Hall. The YCP is a laboratory school operated by the early childhood education program. It serves two groups of children Monday through Friday – a morning session for three-year-olds and an afternoon session for four-year-olds. The YCP is an exemplary early childhood program, accredited by the National Association of Early Childhood Programs and licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. The centers that provide faculty development for technology for the larger university community include the Computing Support Center (CSC) and the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). The CSC provides training for general productivity tools. CIT provides more advanced training for faculty. Candidates can access technology support services and resources through the JMU libraries and the CSC. Candidates may take individual courses that are offered online, and support is provided through library support services and through Blackboard. The Educational Technology and Media Center (ETMC) provides additional technology resources for candidates and faculty members in the unit. The primary goal of the ETMC is to support candidates, faculty, and staff in their efficient use of technologies to support learning. This goal is achieved through access, instruction, and promotion of educational technologies available within the center.

JMU Libraries, consisting of Carrier Library, East Campus Library, and the Music Library, support research, study, and instruction in the use of information resources at JMU. The library liaison for education, Jonathan Paulo, has a master’s degree in library and information science and has a strong background in creative writing and secondary education.

6.2.b Continuous Improvement
- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in unit Standard 6.

During the academic year of 2004-05, Dean Wishon charged a committee to propose an organizational structure that would bring greater coherency and shared sense of purpose to the various academic entities, provide greater administrative and operational focus, and support the work of the college and the unit more expeditiously and effectively. As an outgrowth of the Strategic Planning Process, a newly conceived organizational structure was implemented in fall 2005. The basic structure focused on transitioning from a programs-based organizational operation to a departments-based structure, resulting in the formation of five departments: Early, Elementary and Reading; Exceptional Education;
Learning, Technology and Leadership; Middle, Secondary and Mathematics; and Military Science. With the exception of the Commander of Military Science, Dean Wishon appointed department heads for a three-year term.

The Professional Education Unit was impacted by this reorganization because of the change in representation to the Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC) committee. In 2007-08, the Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC) was expanded to include representation from the Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies major (IDLS) and the newly approved licensure area in Dance. After reorganization of committee structure, committee chairs representing standing unit committees were added to the PECC. In the last several years, a new governance structure for IDLS has been created, and significant curricular revisions were undertaken that resulted in changes in the Math/Science/Technology concentration and a new track for Special Education candidates in the Humanities/Social Sciences concentrations.

A focus of the PECC is unit-wide assessment efforts including program key assessments and the acquisition and implementation of an electronic data management. After a year of research the Tk 20 electronic data management system was procured in the summer of 2008. A new director of assessment and evaluation, Dr. Amy Thelk, was hired in April 2009 and charged with providing leadership and assisting with the development and implementation of our Unit Assessment System. Dr. Thelk’s duties include working with each of the programs and the PECC to clarify key assessments, continuing to develop and refine assessment instruments as needed, and to ensure that programs have multiple years of continuous data.

Responding to a need to coordinate and share information and advances related to the use of technology in teaching and learning, a newly organized Technology Committee was established within the college during the 2009-10 academic year. With representative from all departments and the ETMC, the goal of this committee is to support college and unit faculty in the implementation and modeling of educational technologies, recommend appropriate technology for faculty use, and offer professional development to faculty and staff. Over the last several years, significant purchases have been made to populate the Emerging Technologies Lab, serving the Educational Technology Media Minor. The COE 3245 instructional lab negotiations led to it becoming a university lab, with new MACs being installed in summer 2009.

Technology continues to expand the ways in which we learn and in which we teach our candidates. In order to sustain and enhance our programs through the understanding and application of technology, we will explore opportunities to exploit the possibilities of applying technology in new environments. For example, two possibilities are the potential use of iPads in our clinical supervision processes and imagining enhanced applications of Tk20 across our unit.

In terms of programming and curriculum, the unit continues to explore and develop new initiatives to meet the needs of our partner school divisions. For example, at the advanced level, our partners reported a critical need for additional licensed, well prepared school
administrators. The Educational Leadership program was revitalized and has now expanded to include cohorts in 12 localities. For 2012, there are possibilities of starting cohorts in three additional localities.

Typically, the candidates in the programs are teachers employed by the division who are being prepared for leadership in their schools. A critical component of the program is the development of school improvement plans that can readily be applied and have an impact on the home schools and or divisions of the candidates. This direct link between the advanced program and the schools is impacting the environments in which the students are learning and ultimately their academic success.

Similarly, the Reading Specialist program was redesigned, serving four cohorts across three districts. In May of 2011, the first cohort of graduates in the Reading Specialists program graduated with 25 candidates receiving their degree. Their classroom-based research will have a profound impact on the children they teach and provide a vehicle for sustaining the work of the program.

To support and strengthen the development of partnerships throughout the community, region and Commonwealth, in 2006 a new administrative position was established in the college: Director of External Relations. In fall 2007, a School Partnership Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from our local partnership schools to serve as advisory to the dean. The group addresses issues related to field placement of our candidates, professional development needs of the faculty in the schools, and ways in which we can continue to enrich and expand our relationships. The group meets at least once a semester. As a result of the discussion by this group, a TESL program targeted at a local school division needs was started and an outreach effort focused on providing the professional studies courses needed by secondary teachers teaching with provisional licenses was developed.

The unit will continue to examine its present organizational structure to ensure that we have the most efficient mechanisms in place to develop and deliver high quality programs. At the present time, our partnership activities are reflective of conversations and goal setting among a wide range of parties. While the autonomy of the partnerships is valued and clearly supports the unique needs of the interested schools, faculty, and unit, we will examine how we develop partners and determine if a more deliberate, strategic planning process should be considered as we expand our partners and engage in conversations about preparing teachers.

A significant change in facilities occurred when the College of Education was relocated to Memorial Hall (MH) in 2006. The relocation of many of the unit’s entities into Memorial Hall provided opportunities for the unit to review and enhance operations. For example, with guidance from the college Advisory Council, additional technology enhancements, such as the purchase of mobile computer labs and “smart board” technology were incorporated into the rooms in Memorial Hall. Summer 2010 marked the opening of the newly constructed Forbes Center for the Performing Arts. With a 175,000 sq. ft. footprint, the Forbes Center includes classroom, rehearsal, and office facilities.
As part of a reorganization of college and unit committee structure, a Student Support and Advisement Committee (SSAC), made up of candidate and faculty representatives, was formed and charged with reviewing and developing resources to enhance the advising process among Professional Education Unit faculty and candidates. The committee solicits input from candidates and reports the results of their findings to the dean and the PECC. Based on the results of the survey, a full time advisor was hired for the IDLS program. The SSAC developed a Student Advisement Website, and an Education Student Ambassadors group (TEACH) was organized. While housed in the college, candidates from across the unit may be selected to serve on TEACH. In addition to instituting these changes to support candidates, the unit has recently reviewed and expanded support for candidates’ Praxis 1 efforts. These include posting key information on the ESC website, peer tutoring provided by TEACH ambassadors, and working with JMU Student Support Services to identify support for test-taking strategies and specific math and/or writing assistance.

The Regional Teacher Education Agreement (RTEA), a collaborative agreement between JMU and three area community colleges (Blue Ridge, Lord Fairfax, and Piedmont Virginia) provides graduates from those institutions with a seamless transition into the unit’s teacher education programs. Education, arts and sciences, admissions, and community college representatives meet annually to review and revise the agreement and accompanying curriculum guides. This fall the unit is piloting a new web-based orientation for interested community college students.