Fall 2012

1. Program Description and Goals

The M.S. Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction prepares knowledgeable, reflective practitioners to work in both school and community educational settings. Students pursuing the M.S. Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction are educators whose professional contexts of practice include school and community educational settings across grade/age levels (pre-school through higher education). Courses help educational practitioners clarify professional purposes and improve the pedagogical environments in which they function. The degree focus lies in the professional development of effective educators who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be regarded as leaders among their peers. The major courses include the area of curriculum leadership, environmental education, and secondary education. Students may choose to focus their course work on one of these areas or combine course work across areas to meet their professional needs.

The master's degree program in Curriculum and Instruction has set the following expectations for students based on state professional teaching standards and the NIU Conceptual Framework indicators at the advanced level:

1. Analyze the influences of social, political, historical, environmental, and ideological contexts on decision making in curriculum and instruction.
2. Identify best (research-based) practices in curriculum and instruction.
3. Support positions on issues in curriculum and instruction with scholarly literature.
4. Demonstrate effective communication skills orally and in writing.
5. Compare/contrast various models of curriculum and instruction.
6. Incorporate best practices in the design of curriculum for diverse learners in school or community educational settings.
7. Reflect on professional roles and activities.
8. Synthesize principles from course work in a master's project.

2. Assessment Activities

Data sources that inform program assessment and results include the following:

1) **Course-embedded measures.** Students complete course projects and assignments with an acceptable level of competency as determined by program-area faculty. Since the last review cycle, an assessment program has been put into place, thus affording the program area to collect data on an annual basis. Course-embedded measures were added to all of
the required courses in the master's degree program: TLCI 500 (Issues Analysis Assessment), TLCI 510 (Action Research Assessment), and TLCI 598 (Master's Project Results and the Literature Review for the Master's Project). Data are gathered from these four course-embedded assessments typically once a year due to course rotation and given to the Program Coordinator. The Assessment Program Annual Update Form submitted to the university each fall reveals students are consistently meeting or exceeding expectations set by the C&I program on these four measures.

2) **Comprehensive examination.** In the C&I program area, completion of the master's project satisfies the comprehensive examination requirement. The program set a target that at least 90% of students will meet or exceed standards on rubrics for the master's project related to the following program outcomes: identify best (research-based) practices in curriculum and instruction (Program Outcome #2), support positions on issues in curriculum and instruction with scholarly literature (Program Outcome #3), demonstrate effective communication skills orally and in writing (Program Outcome #4), and synthesize principles from course work in a master's project (Program Outcome #8). The Assessment Program Annual Update Forms submitted to the university reveal that 100% of students met or exceeded the target during the review cycle.

3) **Student surveys.** A survey of students is conducted during the master's project class (TLCI 598) to collect feedback from students before they graduate from the program. The students complete a survey containing Likert-scale items focused on the following topics: program goals, professionalism, advising, course quality and availability, learning environment, and overall reaction (1 high dissatisfied to 6 highly satisfied). Overall, mean responses in all six topic areas consistently range between 5 and 6 (satisfied/highly satisfied). The open-ended question at the end of the survey asks program completers to make suggestions for improvements. The most common suggestions include more consistency with regard to quality of instruction from professors/instructors/adjuncts, more courses offered at NIU satellite campuses, more consistency in advisor support, overlap of content between courses, and more courses on instructional delivery and curriculum development. Many of these suggestions relate to the large turnover in faculty due to retirements/other job opportunities (n=9) that has directly impacted course offerings, advisor reassignments, and overlap of content in courses. In response, program-area faculty have created a handbook for the M.S.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction degree that contains information about the program, advising, course offerings, and completing the degree. Additionally, faculty are reworking course outlines. Feedback from program completers will continue to be monitored for areas of concern.

4) **Post-graduation surveys.** The NIU Alumni Survey provides data from the program's graduates about their perceptions of program effectiveness in enhancing their professional development as educators. Data indicates graduates of the program responded positively in terms of satisfaction.

3. **Evaluation timelines, responsibilities, and processes as related to program goals are summarized in the table below:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Person(s)</th>
<th>Program Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course-embedded measures</td>
<td>Ongoing course assessments; regular</td>
<td>Faculty, Program Coordinator,</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revision of adopted course outlines</td>
<td>Department/College Curriculum Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive examination</td>
<td>Annual review and analysis of pass rates and performance</td>
<td>Faculty, Administrative Assistant, Graduate School</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student surveys</td>
<td>Conducted at the end of TLCLI 598, master's project class</td>
<td>Faculty, Program Coordinator</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation surveys</td>
<td>Conducted annually</td>
<td>Chair, Institutional Research</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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