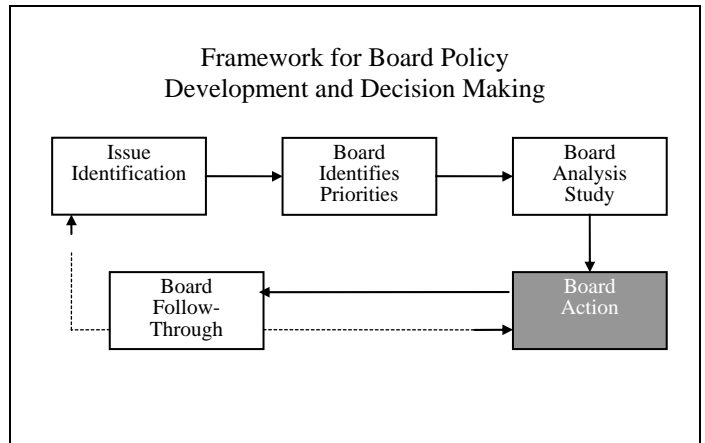


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

November 17, 2004



**Agenda Item:**

University of Northern Iowa’s Practitioner Preparation Program

**Iowa Goal:**

3. Iowans will pursue higher education that results in an improved quality of life supported by better economic opportunities through high skill employment.

**Equity Impact Statement:**

These rules support the improvement of instructional practices and strengthen the quality of educator preparation and professional development programs to give educators at all levels the skills they need to improve teaching and learning.

**Presenter:**

Jackie Crawford, Administrative Consultant  
Practitioner Preparation  
Division of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

**Attachments:**

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**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the State Board approve the University of Northern Iowa’s practitioner preparation programs through the 2009-10 academic year.

**Background:**

Iowa Code 282—14.102(272) grants authority to the state board of education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. The University of Northern Iowa met the program approval standards as approved by the state board.

**Recommended for Continuing Approval  
of  
University of Northern Iowa**

**November 17, 2004**

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is located in Cedar Falls, and is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The university has 13,441 undergraduate and graduate students, and the School of Education recommends approximately 720 graduates for Iowa licenses per year. This makes UNI the largest practitioner preparation program in the state.

A review team comprised of trained educators conducted a site visit on the UNI campus. Team activities included: a review of the institutional report; a review of many document exhibits; interviews with faculty, students, administrators, support staff, graduates, and area practitioners; visits to college classes and area schools; and in-depth team meetings. At the conclusion of the visit, the team found much to praise and areas that have benefited from additional attention.

**Strengths:**

- 1) This institution has truly outstanding faculty and many exemplary programs.
- 2) The institution's conceptual framework provides the foundation and a common thread for all that the program does. It is clear that UNI understands the importance of the framework, and that they have been working on it for some time. Many stakeholders reported that they were actively involved in the creation of the framework. This process was enhanced by Dr. Rori Carson's in-depth knowledge of the importance of the conceptual framework as well as her knowledge of standards and performance based education.
- 3) Students have an opportunity to participate in a variety of field experiences. The Malcolm Price Lab (MPL) School utilizes research-based, best practices, and as such, it provides an excellent field based placement for students.
- 4) The data management system that is in progress will be a strong asset when it is complete.
- 5) Dean Cornett brings fresh ideas and insights relative to the unique strengths and challenges for the program.
- 6) UNI enjoys a long standing reputation for excellence in teacher education.
- 7) Technology services and staff are excellent.
- 8) High quality facilities provide a wonderful environment for students. The IRTS Center and the youth library collection are truly remarkable.
- 9) Teacher preparation is a high priority at UNI.

- 10) Students benefit from an excellent preparation in gathering assessment data and using it to inform instruction.
- 11) The student teaching cadre mentoring program is outstanding and provides significant support to student teachers.

UNI faculty are to be commended for their many contributions in the preparation of So many Iowa teachers.

**Concerns:**

- 1) A serious concern relative to governance, collaboration, and communication across campus was identified; this concern had been identified during previous site visits. The governance structure was organized such that key people did not have the authority to ensure that policies and practices were fully implemented and/or followed. Various units within the institution operated as “silos,” and important collaboration and communication was not occurring. Since the visit, the college has undergone a major restructuring effort. The emerging structure appears to be much more efficient and effective with a greater likelihood for collaboration and communication across colleges and departments. UNI is to be commended for their strong efforts in this area.
- 2) Another ongoing concern was related to the Human Relations course. For years this course has been taken concurrently with student teaching. As a result, students were not student teaching on a full time basis as required in the rules and there was considerable unevenness in the course given that there were so many instructors teaching the course at the multiple sites. Since the site visit, the institution has changed this approach, and Human Relations is now taken prior to student teaching.
- 3) There was limited information on graduate programs available at the time of the site visit. Since the visit, additional information has been provided. Ongoing concerns about the graduate programs are that the governance structure has not been effective in this area and that the programs do not receive adequate funds. The changes in the governance structure should have a positive impact on the graduate programs. The next state program evaluation team will expect to see that adequate resources support the graduate level programs or that the scope of the programs has been reduced. Quality graduate programming cannot be provided with the current resources allotted.
- 4) Student teachers were regularly supervised by part-time faculty who did not have the appropriate preparation or experience. Changes have been made to ensure that student teachers are properly supervised.
- 5) The college has not gathered evaluation data consistently from students, program graduates, or principals. Another rich source of input is an institutional advisory council; UNI has not had such a council for the past ten years. The institution needs to establish an advisory council and gather evaluation data in a systematic manner in order to be in compliance and more importantly to guide program improvements.
- 6) Some faculty members had not completed the required 40 hours of team

teaching. All faculty are now in compliance or in the process of completing the remaining hours.

- 7) UNI needs to work closely with the Malcolm Price Lab (PLS) School to ensure ongoing collaboration, communication, and oversight. Given that the Lab School does not function the same way as other schools, it is very important that there is a close relationship with the School of Education.
- 8) Recent budget cuts have resulted in a significant loss of clerical support and faculty. Once the budget situation improves, it will be important to restore adequate funding to the program.
- 9) As with all Iowa institutions, UNI is continuing to implement and refine a data collection and management system for the performance based assessment approach.

The UNI faculty have worked extremely hard to respond to the Site Visit Report in a very professional manner. The institution followed up the visit with an extensive rejoinder and the provision of a great deal of information. Long term plans have been developed and short term changes have been made. As a result, the University of Northern Iowa Practitioner Preparation Programs are now recommended for full approval by the State Board of Education.