

Focus Group Report, 2018
Shira Lubliner Ed.D.

The results of the 2017 Commission on Teacher Credentialing Completer Survey were disappointing in terms of comparison of CSUEB graduates' responses to those of graduates from other programs. We were

Classroom Management Course

Candidates expressed appreciation of the classroom management course and wished that they had more opportunities to talk about management issues and other teaching-related issues.

“Best class – classroom management, got most out of it, I can control my classroom, the teaching will follow, that should have continued.”

“Management class was excellent – this was an exception, the homework actually was useful.”

(When I) encounter an issue in student teaching I look forward to coming to class. To talk to someone in my cohort would be nice, more structured time to do that to reflect on our Student Teaching experiences together.”

“(I’d like) Having time to talk about classroom management, or issues in classroom, issues in teaching like burnout, shootings, not covered. “

“Wish we had seminars where we could go and ask questions of professors, get advice, it would be for any of our classes, subject area specific and not.”

PACT Preparation

Candidates were critical of PACT preparation, and failed to see PACT as the integration of coursework and fieldwork that it is intended to be. Candidates felt that PACT classes were too big, often poorly timed and would have been more effective had the Educational Philosophy course been more closely related to PACT

Candidates expressed frustration with master teachers who had little to no understanding of PACT, as the following comments illustrate:

“(It would have been) nice to have master teachers be familiar with PACT, some are veteran teachers and they don’t know how much goes into PACT. I liked pact seminar – teacher gave use a calendar of when we should have things due by.”

“Master teachers familiar with PACT knowing how important it is, don’t have a lot of support when I send out my video forms, master teacher didn’t know how this would be taken. It’s stressful because they don’t know that it’s important.”

Out-of-Date Courses

A number of criticisms involved courses such as Educational Technology that were perceived as out of date.

“I would like more resources for technology and apps, we had a dated course, would have been nice to see what’s going on right now, more current.”

“I think , for psych specifically... it would have been helpful to talk about that (in person

“A lot of classes where we are doing superfluous work just to get credits, quite a few

“When I was a student teacher, my master teacher had no idea what to expect/requirements”

Supervisors

Two Year Option

When asked whether they would have been interested in a two-year option, candidates were generally dismissive of the idea as these numbers indicate (number of candidates who might have considered a two-year option):

Ogden Section	2
Mogilefsky Section	0
McNamara Section	0
Korb Section	5
Sawyer Section	3
Moore Section	4
Scott Section	0

Numerous candidates offered comments such as the following:

“The strength of one-year program - condenses all we need into a year, academically challenging, but gets it over with in 1 year instead of 2 years.”

Content Literacy Modules

A final item was added to the focus group questions, inquiring about candidates’ experience with Content Literacy Modules. A majority of the candidates were only marginally aware of these assignments, suggesting the importance of emphasizing Content Literacy Modules before the accreditation visit.

Conclusion

The focus group data provide evidence that the dissatisfaction documented on the 2017 CTC Completer Survey continues to be a problem with current CSUEB credential candidates. Candidates’ comments suggest that the CSUEB Credential Program falls short when it comes to helping them integrate and apply major ideas developed through program coursework into their fieldwork. The following are suggestions for strengthening coursework, based on candidate focus group responses:

- Ensure that faculty members understand

- Design on-line courses with opportunities for interaction and clear application to field work.
- Revise PACT/edTPA preparation, providing candidates with small group discussion and the opportunity to work on components of the assessment (within appropriate guidelines).
- Provide candidates with regular teaching seminars where they have the opportunity to talk about their placements, with a particular emphasis on integrating coursework and fieldwork.

The following are suggestions for strengthening candidates' field work experiences:

- Make sure that all candidates enter fieldwork placements in a timely manner.
- Carefully select and train supervisors, ensuring that their requirements of the candidates are uniform.
- Require supervisors to meet each master teacher at the beginning of the placement, explaining the credential program requirements and what candidates will be expected to do.
- Carefully select master teachers and provide candidates with the opportunity to evaluate them.
- Do not rehire ineffective master teachers.
- Send a thank you note and small gift (if budget permits) to master teachers at the end of the placement.
- Make a concerted effort to hire CSUEB graduates as master teachers once they have acquired sufficient teaching experience. Our own graduates bring an understanding of