



Teacher Education Accreditation Council

October 9, 2012

TO: Mark LaCelle-Peterson, President, Teacher Education Accreditation Council

FROM: James Shuman, Accreditation Panel Chair

RE: TEAC Accreditation Panel Recommendation for Alma College Teacher Education Program

On September 21, 2012, the TEAC Accreditation Panel met in Philadelphia, PA at the Doubletree Hotel to consider the *Inquiry Brief* submitted by Alma College for accreditation of its Teacher Education Program.

Members of the TEAC Accreditation Panel participating in the deliberation and making this recommendation included:

- Denise Gelberg, Teacher (retired), South Hill School, Ithaca City School District, and Independent Scholar, Ithaca, NY
- Mara B. Huber, Special Assistant to the President for Educational Initiatives, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY
- James Shuman, Chair, Department of Education, and Coordinator, Graduate Program in General Studies in Education, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY
- Louise Wilson, Chair, Education Department, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN
- Joseph Lubig, Associate Professor, School of Education, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI (non-voting)

Mark Seals and Nicola Findley, representing the Alma College Teacher Education Program, observed the deliberations and answered questions from the Panel about the program's case for accreditation.

TEAC staff members Diana Rigden and Caroline McDowell, as well as Kaaryn Keller of CAEP and Thomas Bell (by phone) of the Michigan Department of Education, also observed the Panel's deliberations.

1. Recommendation. The Accreditation Panel reviewed the *Inquiry Brief*, the Audit Report, the Case Analysis and confirmed by a vote of four (4) in favor and zero (0) opposed, with zero (0) abstaining, to forward the following recommendation to the TEAC Accreditation Committee:

Alma College should be granted recommended accreditation seven years, with the stipulation specified below, for its Teacher Education Program.

2. Weaknesses.

None

3. Stipulations.

Stipulation in 2.2:

Data from local instruments are not collected or analyzed in a consistent way. The program has not yet integrated its local assessments with regard to candidate learning. It does not have a verifiable rationale for investigating and establishing reliability and validity of its assessments as they relate to individual candidates and the program's claims.

As indicated by the language in the stipulation, many sources of data available to the Alma College faculty were untapped in their *Inquiry Brief*, and they did not drill down to the individual candidate level in researching outcomes. As a consequence, the faculty is currently hampered in its ability to make decisions and programmatic improvements until it has a more comprehensive system for analyzing data. The TEAC Audit Team did much of this analysis work during its visit, discovering additional information of use to the faculty. The Alma College faculty has acknowledged the work of the Audit team and recognizes how this level of information can help them to revise their own assessment systems (Component 2.2). This will help the faculty to see the larger picture of its students' learning rather than merely focusing on their students as individuals.

4. Justification for the accreditation status recommendation. In reaching this conclusion and recommendation, the Accreditation Panel evaluated the Alma College Teacher Education Program *Inquiry Brief* and Audit Report and assessed whether the evidence presented in the *Brief* satisfied TEAC's requirements for accreditation as outlined in TEAC's *Guide to Accreditation*.

Overall, the Alma College Teacher Education Program has received very high marks in the State of Michigan's Teacher Preparation Institution Ratings (TPI), indicating that its students' MTTC test scores and the ratings by its supervisors and cooperating teachers are very solid. In addition, the faculty knows its students well, and the college has the capacity and commitment to operate a successful program of teacher education.

5. Feedback about the program's performance with respect to student achievement.

Section §602.17(f) of the U.S. Department of Education's recognition of accreditors regulations requires that each accreditor recognized by the Secretary of Education, as TEAC is, provide the program with a detailed written report that assesses—

- (1) *The institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards, including areas needing improvement; and*
- (2) *The institution's or program's performance with respect to student achievement.*

TEAC complies with the first requirement through the citation of weaknesses and stipulations below as well as its recommendation for an accreditation status.

TEAC complies with the second requirement with the TEAC Case Analysis, previously sent to the program, that gave a detailed account of the evidence in the *Brief* and audit report that was consistent and inconsistent with the program claims of student achievement in the areas of subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and caring teaching skill professional

knowledge and the embedded themes of learning to learn, multicultural understanding and technology, as well as any alternate accounts of the evidence.

TEAC also conducts an independent survey of the students, faculty and cooperating teachers with regard to their assessment of the adequacy of the program students' understanding of the topics above. The results of these surveys were provided to the program in the TEAC Audit Report.