**Teacher Preparation Task Force**

In response to recent recommendations to improve teacher preparation in Kentucky (Vanguard Project), the COEHS convened a task force to examine the Vanguard recommendations, as well as recommendations from other organizations (e.g., CCSSO, AACTE, CAEP), concerning the preparation of teachers. The task force was given the charge to examine current expectations and practices for teacher preparation at Northern Kentucky University and to make recommendations to the Teacher Education faculty in three areas: (1) admissions standards, (2) content knowledge and pedagogy, and (3) field and clinical experience. The task force included representation from COEHS, A&S, and PK-12.

**Admission Standards Recommendations**

**CAEP Standard 3: CANDIDATE QUALITY, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTIVITY**

***The provider demonstrates that the quality of candidates is a continuing and purposeful part of its responsibility from recruitment, at admission, through the progression of courses and clinical experiences, and to decisions that completers are prepared to teach effectively and are recommended for certification. The provider demonstrates that development of candidate quality is the goal of educator preparation in all phases of the program. This process is ultimately determined by a program’s meeting of Standard 4.***

The task force makes the following recommendations for faculty consideration. These recommendations are made with several guiding principles in mind. When determining the quality of candidates, admission to the teacher preparation program should

* Be based on multiple sources of data that include both academic and non-academic measures
* Include input from university faculty and practitioners
* Examine a candidate’s potential to be an effective educator, not expect a fully-developed professional educator at the time of admission
* Provide a mechanism to provide feedback to candidates who are deferred admission
* Realize that not all applicants should, or will, be granted admission to the teacher preparation program
* Meet the minimum standards required by the Kentucky EPSB while increasing the overall quality of candidates admitted to the teacher preparation program.

***Dispositions Recommendations***

* The admissions process should include a personal interview.

*Ideas to consider:*

* + Conducted by teams of university faculty and PK-12 teachers/administrators with PK-12 partners possibly taking the lead
  + Patterned after a professional job interview, possibly off site (i.e., the Co-Op)
  + Consider group interviews to examine interaction among candidates
  + Use to assess verbal communication
  + Interview team makes a recommendation to admit or not admit based on agreed upon criteria; a third option could be to admit with conditions that would include a professional development plan
* Assess candidates’ interactions with PK-12 students.

*Ideas to consider:*

* + Develop a course, or embed experiences into an existing course, that would allow candidates to demonstrate positive interaction with PK-12 students (i.e., tutoring, mentoring)
  + Allow students’ experiences to be at multiple grade levels for the purpose of exploring teaching at various levels
  + Opportunities could include some hours/ experiences in after school programs
  + Offer a dual credit course option at area high schools taught by NKU faculty and/or properly credentialed teachers
  + Include opportunities for candidates’ self-reflection and university/ PK-12 faculty feedback to candidates about their potential career in teaching
  + Embed opportunities to discuss and assess common dispositional challenges (e.g., common sense; judgment; proper use of social media; respect for others; codes of ethics)
* Add a dispositional question to the admissions application.

*Ideas to consider:*

* + Make this question an on-demand writing prompt completed prior to the admissions interview
* Review and revise the current dispositions checklist.

*Ideas to consider:*

* + Focus on professionalism at the admissions level. How do we measure this for admissions? Could we use the same terminology used in the PGES evaluation?
  + Once revised and updated, provide training on the use of the checklist for all constituents who will use the form.

***Skills Recommendations:***

* Continue to assess the 4-C’s as required by the EPSB (communication, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration). These are currently assessed through a combination of experiences and grades in specified courses; although, this could be enhanced or changed.
* Continue to assess basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills through the Praxis I exam (Praxis CORE) using the current EPSB cut scores.
* Assess candidates’ communication skills through the personal interview and on-demand writing prompt described in “Dispositions.”
* Develop a system to “flag” students who may have deficiencies at admission and prepare an action plan for improvement and growth. This can occur at any stage of the teacher preparation program – admission, Pro 1, Pro 2, Pro 3, or clinical experience. The program must determine who will develop and monitor the plan (e.g., admissions/interview team, program team).

***Knowledge Recommendations:***

* Continue to use the current admissions requirements of 2.75 GPA and Praxis I cut scores. The most recent change of admissions requirements by the EPSB have resulted in a loss of 80-100 candidates in fall/spring admissions. The new Praxis CORE test will be implemented in the fall, and it is uncertain what impact this will have. In addition, discussions are ongoing at the EPSB about increasing the GPA and Praxis I cut scores. The task force recommends waiting for new recommendations by the EPSB.