

Benedictine Education Advisory Committee
Spring Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2011, 5:30 p.m.

Present: Dian Henderson, Chuck Osborn, Matthew Ramsey, Danielle Hanson, Sue Scalard, Pam Robinson, Emily Enna, Karla Liebham, Jim Krone, Noel Rueb, Jill Rippee, Nicole Honeyell, Tim Beying, Robert Mueller, Dr. Eric Punswick, Katelan Cronin, Kathy Scott

Absent: Cheryl Reding, Jane Bennett, Erin McKelvy-Patterson, Chad Bilderback, Brandan Giltner, Lindsey Hansen, Dr. Kelly Harris, Kathy Hines, Monika King, Lottie Lee, Dr. David Myers, Dr. Susan Myers, Dr. Kathy O'Hara, Maggie Ruppert, Rick Weber

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chuck welcomed all those in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting. Those in attendance then introduced themselves and stated their occupation and connection to Benedictine.

2. DIVERSITY INITIATIVES (DIAN)

Dian presented an informational handout titled “The Promise of Early College” from *Education Week*, which re-enforced the Education Department’s position that low-income, diverse high school students are more likely to attend college if given the opportunity to experience college classes while they are in high school. She explained that the department is held accountable to state standards that require diversity in both the faculty and student population, and that the department had been discussing for some time how to attract more students from diverse backgrounds to the Education field.

After approaching Atchison Public Schools and talking to administrators at Atchison High School and the Benedictine College Subcommittee on Diversity, an Introduction to Education course was piloted with Atchison High School junior and senior students during the Fall 2010 semester. Matt Ramsey and Dian Henderson presented the program at an assembly at the high school and several students showed an interest in the program by taking the flyers that were presented. The application process for the class required that the students fill out an application, write an essay, and get recommendations from high school teachers. Ten students applied, five started the course, and three completed the course. One of the students dropped out because he was an athlete and couldn’t keep up with the work, and another because he was getting behind on his high school class work.

Classes were held on Monday evenings at the college and each student was also required to assist a teacher at Atchison High School or Atchison Elementary School as a teacher aide during the school day. Classes were designed so that Dian, Matt, and Jane Bennett taught sections based on their expertise. Each week students were given a writing assignment to complete before the next class period, which they then discussed with a cadre of Benedictine College students after class each week. This discussion group met in different areas of campus, such as the Student Union, Haverty Center, Legacy Apartments, and Ferrell Hall to give the students the feel of the campus. The Benedictine students that participated in the discussion groups loved working with the high school students, and Dian thinks the high school students enjoyed it also.

Overall, Dian thinks that the course went well. She thinks it would be ideal if it could be taught at Atchison High School during the day. The department does plan to offer the class again for the students at Atchison High School in the fall. There has been some discussion with Eric Punswick, Associate Superintendent of Leavenworth Public Schools, regarding offering the class for students from Leavenworth.

Students that participated last fall received three college credits for the Intro to Education course and field experience. If these students were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunches in the district, the college offered them free tuition for the course; otherwise, they paid a reduced fee of \$30 per credit hour.

Matt Ramsey said it was a shock to him during the first few class periods at how the students behaved compared to college students. He felt that they just weren't mature enough for the environment. By the end of the course, that had changed considerably. Dian said again that the biggest barrier was having the class on campus, but that she hopes to have it at Atchison High School next fall and bring them on campus for other activities.

Dani Hanson, one of the Benedictine students that helped with the discussion groups, said that she felt it was a great experience to get to know the high school students. She felt that it was beneficial to the students to see a bit of what college life is like.

Katelan Cronin suggested the 90-minute period after early dismissal on Wednesdays when Atchison High athletes have free time might be a good time to consider for next fall's class. Dian said they will be meeting with AHS administrators and will consider that.

Dian advised the committee that the second area that the department discussed with Atchison High School administrators and members of the Diversity Sub-committee was the problem that first generation college students have with figuring out the application process for getting to college and what college life is like after they get there. Their parents aren't much help to the students because they are unfamiliar with the process themselves. The department created a program, which Dani Hanson piloted with five Atchison High students last spring, to help them learn this.

Dani Hanson explained that after piloting the program in the spring with five students, she decided to offer the full program to all junior and senior students, which started in the fall with a seminar series. Topics included the application and scholarship process and what to look for in a campus, which were presented by Pete Helgesen, Dean of Enrollment Management. Benedictine faculty members also presented information about the academic program they run and Benedictine students talked about their field of study and their college experiences. The seminar series was presented on Wednesday afternoons right after early dismissal and was attended by an average of 6-7 students.

Dani explained that she also developed a Mentoring Program between the Atchison High School and Benedictine students. During the first seminar, high school students were allowed to fill out an application if they were interested in having a Benedictine student as a mentor. She got a great response from Benedictine students that were interested in mentoring and she paired them

up with a high school student with a common interest (field of study, extracurricular interest, etc.). Her goal was for the high school students to see college students and how they enjoy college life. This was also a support system for first generation college students as the Benedictine students helped their mentees fill out applications, the FAFSA, and scholarship essays. Atchison High students were also able to attend a basketball game while on campus. She has plans to do that again this semester. Dian stressed that this is not an attempt to recruit the students to Benedictine, but simply to recruit them to college. One incentive she offered the students was that if they attended three of the seminars, they were allowed to attend a full Raven Day to meet with professors and attend classes.

Dian referred to information in the article she passed out earlier in the meeting, which states that in 2009, 89% of first-generation college students left college before earning a degree. With the scholarship and grant money that is available, it is still possible to go to college if there is a financial need and that was stressed to the students that attended these seminars.

Robert Mueller, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Atchison Public Schools, commented that he thinks this is a great program and asked Dani if she had any ideas on why the number of students attending was low. Dani is sure that communication was a major factor because it was difficult to get everyone from the college and the high school lined up for each seminar in a timely manner. She thinks that with more exposure the program would grow. Dian thinks it would be nice to have a contact person at Atchison High School, other than an administrator, that could be a 'go-to' person for communication. Robert Mueller suggested that a counselor could act in this role. Dani will be presenting this project at the college's Discovery Day.

Noel Rueb, Atchison Elementary School Principal, suggested communication with parents is essential to get the numbers up. Robert Mueller suggested having a Benedictine representative present at enrollment and Parent Teacher Conferences. Robert Mueller complimented the work that is being done on this program and thanked Dani and the department for their efforts.

Nicole Honeywell suggested that the teachers be informed about the program so they can talk to their students. Dian said that a meeting was attempted, but it didn't happen because of a communication problem. Dani said an e-mail did go out to Atchison High School teachers informing them about the program.

Jim Krone, Atchison Middle School Principal, suggested that since the college already has a presence at the middle school with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program, some of this information should even start at the middle school level.

Dian explained how the students in her Ed, 313, School as Community Field Experience, have begun working at the Atchison Alternative School this year in order to get them some experience working with middle and high school students, as well as the elementary students that they work with at the Boys and Girls Club. She said the students enjoy the experience of working with the teachers at the Alternative School, particularly Sylvia Reynolds, as well as the students. These students are then required to do a project that ties at least three different community groups together.

Noel Rueb suggested that if Dian wants this class to work with businesses in the community, she could send information out through a newsletter that is produced by the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce.

Dian thanked everyone for their suggestions and feedback on the diversity initiatives.

3. NEW M.Ed. PROGRAM STARTUP (DIAN)

Dian explained that Cheryl was not able to attend the meeting and presented information on the proposed program of study for the new Master of Arts in Education Program, which will begin in the fall, as well as the MASL Program. The M.Ed Program, as presented, will meet the standards for the Kansas Teacher Leader endorsement. Some of the classes for the MASL and M.Ed. will be offered together and others will be classes offered for each separate program. The MASL Program has been shortened up to a two-year program, while keeping the rigor in the program. Dian explained the handout and that some of the classes now offered are hybrid classes.

Dian asked everyone to pass information about the new M.Ed. Program to teachers that might be interested as the department would like to have a good cohort from the area starting fall classes. Classes will start here this fall and the next cohort will start in Roeland Park in a new, better location than the previous building.

Robert Mueller asked that information regarding the program be given to him to be passed out to USD 409 teachers. Tim Beying asked for materials also, so Dian said she would make sure that all administrators attending would have materials to present to their teachers.

4. SpEd LICENSURE - New Program for Returning Teachers (Matt)

Matt Ramsey explained to the committee that after having several inquiries from regular education teachers that were interested in adding a Special Education endorsement to their license, he developed a program where a practicing professional can return to school and in 2 ½ years receive a license in Special Education. Students are required to take hybrid courses, along with some traditional evening courses. The 10 credit hour student teaching experience is then split over two semesters. Matt is currently piloting this program with two students, one of whom is now doing her student teaching because of previous credits earned. This student had looked at another college, which would have required her to be in a Masters Program. She had no desire to start that, but wanted to do something quickly and efficiently. Matt thinks this will be of interest to some teachers that have lost their Elementary teaching position but will be able to find a position teaching Special Education.

Sue Scalard asked whether these students would be allowed to do the Special Ed student teaching in another location if they are not able to do so in the school they are currently in. Matt said they would try to find a placement during the summer semester.

Katelan Cronin questioned the 2 ½ year timetable. Matt said it depends on what classes they have already taken when they apply. In all Kansas cases, they will have had Psychology of Individuals with Exceptionalities, so that cuts their requirement down. Two and a half years would be the maximum time requirement.

5. NCATE PREPARATIONS (Chuck)

Chuck Osborn explained to the committee that one of the two phases of the accreditation cycle which members of the department are currently working on includes the KSDE Program Review which is due to be submitted by March 1, 2012. The data will include three years of documentation to prove that our Education students are making good progress. The second phase of the cycle will be the NCATE onsite visit, which is tentatively set for October of 2013. During this time a team of 7 or 8 people will visit the college onsite for five days and he will ask school administrators and the committee to come in at that time to visit with the team concerning our students and their experiences with the department.

The second area that Chuck informed the committee about was the job placement of the 2009-10 student teachers, which was 85%. Normally he wouldn't feel that was a good number, but with the job market being in the situation it is in, he thought that was great. He hopes we'll be able to do as well with this year's candidates. He said what has helped is that the Catholic schools have hired a lot of the students because they have a high regard for the students from the college.

6. EDUCATION PROGRAM NUMBERS (CHUCK)

Chuck informed the committee that there has been a huge influx of students to the Education Department. He gave Matt Ramsey some of the credit for that for his influence in tripling the number of students who are majoring in Special Education. He noted that there are 35 student teachers this semester, which is six more than he can remember ever having at one time in the eighteen years he's been teaching at Benedictine. For the Spring of 2012, there are 43 student teachers projected and 70 for the Spring of 2013.

7. Ed 201 INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION FIELD EXPERIENCE (JANIE)

In Janie's absence from the meeting, Matt explained to the committee that generally 65 students take the Introduction to Education class each semester, which has an accompanying field experience. At department meetings a year ago, it was determined that the 20 hr. field experience requirement for that many students was overwhelming the schools in this area. Beginning with last fall, students in this course are now asked to spend one full day in each of two different field experiences at different grade levels in their hometown during their college break. Some students still require placement in local schools, but this has greatly reduced the number of students completing their field experiences in local schools.

Dian added that she feels that the experience in the local classroom can be used more wisely with students from methods classes who are actually teaching, rather than the introduction class, which is more observation.

Karla Liebham, Associate Superintendent for the Archdiocese of KC in Kansas Catholic Schools, asked how far out student teachers are placed to teach. Chuck said they are not usually placed more than 30 miles out, but he will place them further out if they are being placed into a Catholic school. Chuck asked for suggestions from anyone so that the department does not wear out its welcome with placing too many students at local schools. Karla offered to help place students in the Catholic schools in order to prevent placing them in the same schools as the Rochurst and Avila college students. Sue Scalard suggested placing students at St. Francis

School in St. Joseph because it's only a few miles further than St. James, where she is the principal.

Noel Rueb said he would always welcome student teachers from Benedictine because he was given the opportunity when he was in that position. Jim Krone said he will continue to find as many placements as he can for student teachers. Dian expressed her appreciation for the teachers and administrators being so welcoming and easy to work with.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Dian asked for suggestions from the committee for what the Education Department could be doing better in preparing the students. She mentioned that three years ago the committee had suggested more technology training, which resulted in the purchase of two Smart Boards for classroom training. The college is exploring a new type of Smart Board for the new Academic Building that makes a Smart Board out of a wall with the use of a projector. Matt Ramsey said that in his supervision of student teachers in the classroom, it seems that they are using the Smart Boards effortlessly in their lessons. Noel Rueb agreed with Matt's remark and is surprised at how quickly they grab onto the concepts and how to utilize them to incorporate them into their lesson plans.

Noel Rueb has a problem with the Student Teaching Evaluation line item in Outcome 6 that states that the student teacher must include the local community in his or her teaching. He has made some suggestions in the past, but sometimes doesn't know how to suggest students could include the local community to help their evaluation in that area. Chuck said he will specifically address this outcome item in the block course in the future.

Eric Punswick said that he interviewed several Benedictine students yesterday and he doesn't see any deficiencies in the students he interviewed. The students were able to articulate why they want to become a teacher and are able to give relevant examples when they interview.

Sue Scalard said she sees a real willingness from the young teachers to help with the students that are having various issues. Some of the younger teachers are more willing to help than the established teachers. Sue said the Benedictine students are on fire with their faith and that is important in her position.

Dian suggested that Matt Ramsey tell the committee about the block course he will be offering in the fall. Matt explained that he designed the course based on the need to bring more special education experience into regular educators' lives. The course, Differentiated Instruction, focuses through three models – identifying learning styles of students, Differentiated Instruction as a big picture, and the Universal Design for Learning. The course was offered last fall as a night class, but will be required for all students as part of their block courses beginning next semester.

Sue Scalard said the diocese is focusing on how to teach their teachers through professional development to offer Differentiated Instruction. Matt said he would be running the course through the Graduate Studies Committee this summer so that he can offer it as a graduate course.

Tim Beying asked if the students that take this course would have the ability to diagnose individual student's learning issues and needs. Matt explained that through a project that the students are required to do in the class, students must pick a grade level that they are interested in teaching and they must research and come up with a means of identifying learning styles and issues for students in that grade level. He explained that every year teachers should be doing those things in the first hours they have a class. Tim Beying thinks students that have the Differentiated Instruction experience can be a leader for teachers who have been there for a while and don't have the experience.

Dian thanked everyone for all the work they do for the department.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.