



AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Clinical & Professional Studies



Comprehensive Program Report
M.Ed. Special Education
Learning Disabilities

A. Mission

1. Department Mission and Relation to the University and System Missions

The Department of Clinical and Professional Studies faculty and their Advisory Committee members share a fundamental belief that candidates in Special Education should possess knowledge, skills, and dispositions firmly based in the INTASC principles but that are conceived in terms of the special professional services they provide. The specific advanced level knowledge, skills, and dispositions prepare candidates to pursue understanding and live out the implications of that understanding as they serve students, parents, colleagues, and the community in their professional lives. Thus, program candidates develop the characteristics of the department's conceptual framework broad descriptors through matriculation in the department programs. They become graduates who are:

I. Learned-Scholarly Professionals who are Knowledgeable-Ethical-Collegial

II. Democratic Professional who are Advocates and Change Agents

III. Self-Actualizing Professionals who are Role Models and Meaning-Makers

The department's mission is congruent in many ways with the Mission of Augusta State University. The mission and beliefs of the Department articulates its commitment to excellence in teaching, advancement of knowledge, and enrichment of the community. As stated in the University mission, we are, "...the principal source of training for the area's [special education] teachers" (Augusta State University Mission Statement, 2004), as well as that of school and community counselors and educational leaders.

The department is committed to diversity, scholarship, teaching and learning, and the opportunity to be of service to our students, our colleagues, and our community. This is demonstrated intentionally by faculty. We address diversity in every course, we challenge students through rigorous courses involving research and scholarly activities, and students are assessed on competencies that translate into practical application in the schools. Every course has a field experience that involves the community in some way, whether in the schools or in human services agencies. The field experiences provide an opportunity for our students, both graduate and undergraduate, to learn and apply their knowledge in an authentic setting. Technology is infused into every course. As stated in the University System Mission Statement, the department is striving to "create a more educated [student], well prepared for a global, technological society, by providing first-rate undergraduate and graduate education, leading-edge research, and committed public service." (University System of Georgia Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement, 2004).

Advisory committees for each program, comprised of community members and other stakeholders, meet regularly and provide advice, information on program evaluation, and support. This supports the University's mission of "assessing...performance by evaluating its stewardship of resources, responsiveness to area needs, involvement with its community, the response of the public it serves, and, most importantly, the success of the students it educates." (Augusta State University Mission Statement).

The Department of Clinical and Professional Studies offers one Baccalaureate program (Bachelor of Science in Education in Interrelated Special Education), six Master of Education programs (Interrelated Special Education, Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Educational Leadership, and Counselor Education) and one Education Specialist program (Educational Leadership) in support of this mission. The department supports its own mission as well as that of the university and system through the offering of service courses in the core curriculum of all undergraduate (EDUC 2101, 2102, SPED 2000) and graduate students (SPED 2000, EDUC 6021, 6040. and 6021) in the College of Education.

A.2. Needs of Students

Courses and programs are designed to accommodate the various needs of our students. The availability of graduate and undergraduate programs on-line, and nationally advertised abbreviated master's degree programs have created an additional charge to be responsive to students. Therefore, the needs of students guide the timing and sequence of all course offerings. For example, because the majority of our graduate students are non-traditional students, already teaching or employed in other full-time positions. Graduate courses are offered only in the evening, except in the summer during the school districts' summer vacation. The sequence of courses is arranged so that students may complete their degrees in the shortest amount of time possible. With few exceptions, the field experience assignments required in every course may be completed in the school where the student is teaching. If a student is not teaching, is unemployed or is employed in a position outside of the schools, arrangements are made for the field experience to be completed in a time period and in a location that best fits into his or her schedule. Field experience assignments may be arranged in neighboring counties for students who do not live in the Augusta area.

Teachers who enter the teaching profession with Bachelor degrees in fields unrelated to education may take an alternative route to enter the degree program. A series of pre-requisite courses has been designed to provide these candidates with the basic courses needed for every area of certification (the teaching of reading, instructional technology, and a course in the teaching of students with disabilities in the general education classroom). Upon completion of these courses and after meeting all regular requirements for admission to graduate school, a candidate may apply to graduate programs. The candidate may then complete the graduate program in special education while teaching. Some may choose to enroll in the Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) and receive support services from the Central Savannah River Area Region Educational Services Agency (CSRA RESA). TAPP is entirely a separate entity from our programs, but each year we receive a cohort of special education of participating post baccalaureate and graduate students.

The graduate degree in Learning Disabilities is designed to build on previous course work and clinical and field experiences. The program of study has specialized objectives designed to extend and enrich the knowledge base, understanding, and pedagogical repertoire of the student. The program provides students the opportunity for using critical thinking and analytical abilities so that as graduates they can question and create new curricular programs, contribute to the professional knowledge base by relating classroom practices to research, extend best practice, and offer collaborative assistance to colleagues.

A.3. Demand for Graduates

Increasing demands by school districts and increased awareness of students of the marketability of these degrees are likely responsible for the increase in student enrollment and requests for special educators.

The Council for Learning Disabilities states that "Special Education continues to suffer from chronic and persistent teacher shortages. For example, in 2000-2001, nearly 53,000 special education teachers, 12% of the teaching force, were less than fully certified, affecting more than 800,000 students with disabilities. In addition, many school districts actually lose special education teachers as the school year progresses, particularly in urban and rural areas. ... traditional sources of teacher supply, college and university preparation programs, have been unable to meet the growing demand for special education teachers..."

Source: Council for Learning Disabilities

<http://www.cldinternational.org/c/@dgt5zfcgkzx8./Pages/home.html> (Retrieved 4/9/04)

According to The Department of Labor (2004) employment of special education teachers is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. Additional positions will be created by continued increases in the number of special education students needing services, by legislation emphasizing training and employment for individuals with disabilities, and by educational reforms requiring higher standards for graduation. The need to replace special education teachers who switch to general education, change careers altogether, or retire will lead to additional job openings. At the same time, many school districts report shortages of qualified teachers. As a result, special education teachers should have excellent job prospects. Student populations, in general, also are expected to increase significantly in several States in the West and South, resulting in increased demand for special education teachers in those regions. The number of students requiring special education services has grown steadily in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue. Finally, more parents are expected to seek special services for those of their children who have difficulty meeting the new, higher standards required of students. Learning disabilities will continue to be identified and diagnosed at earlier ages. As more medically fragile infants survive, the number of children with disabilities, or at risk for them, is growing exponentially. In addition, a growing number of children are being diagnosed at an early age with emotional and behavioral disorders. Because of the location of the Medical College of Georgia and the Children's Medical Center in Augusta, there is also a larger population of students with disabilities whose families choose to remain in the area. In addition, job opportunities may be better in certain specialties—such as emotional and behavioral disorders—because of increases in the enrollment of special education students classified under those categories. Georgia and the CSRA in particular, have a shortage of special education teachers, as noted by the number of requests for special education graduates directed to the department.

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2004-05 Edition, Teachers—Special Education , on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos070.htm> (retrieved March 27, 2004).

B. Teaching, Learning, Research and Scholarship, and Service

B.1. Students

B.1.a. Majors and Graduates

Because Special Education is a critical needs field, a large number of students are enrolled. However, the way that post baccalaureate students are tracked through the system as undergraduates, the data doesn't accurately represent the number of students pursuing special education graduate degrees. Since fall of 2001 there have been 43 graduate students enrolled in the Learning Disabilities program (*Exhibit 1*). This data set represents only the number who have actually been admitted to the graduate program. The number who have actually received degrees is 6 (*Exhibit 2*), but it must be noted that there will be 5 students who will graduate in spring of 2004, nearly the number as the previous two years combined. A second set of data is included that represents the number of students majoring in Learning Disabilities who have enrolled by semester.

Fall 2001 – 1

Spring 2002 – 4

Fall 2002 – 10

Spring 2003 – 13

Fall 2003 – 33

Spring 2004 – 33

(*Exhibit 3*)

The number of students enrolled in the graduate program has grown exponentially (from 1 to 33) since fall of 2001. One of the factors impacting the numbers of students pursuing a degree in Learning Disabilities is the current requirement for certification. The Professional Standards Commission has ruled that a person with a clear renewable certificate in any teaching field may take and pass the PRAXIS in another field and be fully certified. This new ruling has resulted in candidates either not declaring specific majors immediately, or taking all four prerequisite courses, plus the 3 graduate courses they are allowed before declaring a major and being admitted in a specific category.

There are currently 39 open applications for the program (*Exhibit 4*), none of which are program specific at this time. Prospective students contact advisors almost daily to learn more about the program.

B.1.b. Enrollments and Credit Hours

From fall of 2000, seats in Special Education graduate courses grew from 56 to a high of 141 in fall of 2003. Comparing like semesters, the seat number grew from 54 in spring 2001 to 120 in spring 2004, more than double (*Exhibit 5*). Generation of credit hours has increased at a fairly stable rate. Comparing like semesters, the credit hours grew from 162 in spring of 2001 to 381 in spring of 2004, again a significant increase (*Exhibit 6*). These data demonstrate the stability of the program as well as growth.

B.1.c. Student Needs and Learning Outcomes

The purposes and goals of Augusta State University dictate all course offerings. For example, one of its purposes is to provide quality graduate education programs that meet the needs of the citizens of the CSRA. Graduate programs in the Department of Clinical and Professional Studies, while adhering to national standards, are custom-designed and targeted for the needs of the non-traditional students served. A few courses are offered in non-traditional formats in order to accommodate students' needs and schedules. These courses are offered as one-week intensive workshops; enrollment is limited to graduate students with extensive teaching experience who are able to synthesize sizable amounts of information in short periods of time. These courses always focus on advances in instructional practices, so in-class time is spent engaging in strategies. Out-of-class time focuses on the scholarly grounding of the course content and demonstrated practices. Once the week-long class meetings have ended, students have additional time to reflect on, analyze, and synthesize information and insight as they create final products for evaluation and grades. Faculty meet individually with students during this post-workshop period.

Because these courses are not taught in the traditional time frame of a semester, there are no comparative data available to compare results of traditional and nontraditional delivery methods. However students taking these courses must fulfill all requirements for graduation (e.g., capstone courses, standard exams, etc.).

B.1.d. Success of Graduates

Praxis II results and reports from school districts are used to measure success in meeting student needs. All of our graduates took and successfully passed the PRAXIS II examination in their area of specialty. School districts report high levels of satisfaction with the graduates employed by them.

Exit interviews are done by the Office of Institutional Research. Since 2001, one hundred (100) percent of all graduates from the Special Education graduate program have successfully passed the PRAXIS II. (*Exhibit 7*). Currently there is not an exit interview process for special education.

B.2. Faculty and Staff

B.2.a. Faculty and Qualifications

In 1990 the Vice President for Academic Affairs established a standard procedure for establishing a packet of required documentation to assure that each time a new faculty member (full time, part-time, temporary, or adjunct) is employed, the new faculty member meets the minimum qualifications (from SACS, the University System of Georgia, and Augusta State University) for employment. This packet is accumulated by the department, then reviewed and verified by signature by the department chair, the appropriate dean, the VPAA, the Director of Institutional Research, the Vice President for Business and Student Services, and finally by the VPAA again, in whose office the packet is housed as the faculty member's permanent academic folder. Each of these offices attests to the fact that the documentation needed to satisfy that office's requirements is present. In the office of the VPAA, the Administrative Assistant to the VPAA reviews the documentation initially, and then the VPAA reviews it. The VPAA is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the packet of documentation.

Policies establishing the basis of the review and reporting and follow-up are provided in the *Faculty Manual*. All tenured faculty go through a post-tenure review every five years. Both the pre-tenure and post-tenure review processes provide for feedback and follow-up actions if deemed necessary. The Department of Clinical and Professional Studies currently has 11 full-time tenure-track positions, 3 in Educational Foundations, 3 in Educational Leadership, 3 in Special Education, and 2 in Counselor Education. All positions are currently filled. The Department has four assistant professors, 5 associate professors, and two full professors, Paulette Harris, Ed. D. and Lyle Smith, Ph.D. Dr. Harris also holds the Cree-Walker Chair of Professor of Education. All of the full time faculty except one, Ruth Yachan Evans, M.Ed., have doctoral degrees. Ms. Evans is A.B.D. and will receive her Ph.D. in Special Education in May 2004. Dr. Cadle, who has an Ed.D. in Special Education/Learning Disabilities, is the advisor and primary instructor for the program, teaching the area specific courses in LD. She also supervises the internship for candidates for the degree in Learning Disabilities. Dr. Alice Pollingue, Dr. Harris, and Ms. Evans also teach core courses in the program.

One member of the Educational Leadership faculty (Paulette P. Harris, Ed.D.) teaches a combination of courses in Special Education and Educational Leadership. The department also employs several part-time instructors (seven in fall of 2003, two of whom were assigned to special education.) All faculty meet regional SACS accreditation requirements (at least a master's degree and at least 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline), and with one exception, Counselor Education, meets the minimum national standard for the discipline. *Exhibit 8* shows the faculty by rank, sex, race degree, and tenure status. Part-time faculty are listed on *Exhibit 9*.

All full-time faculty are evaluated annually via the Faculty Role Model. The Faculty Role Model defines the criteria against which the performance of each faculty member is measured. The criteria within the three role categories (teaching, service, professional development and achievement) are consistent with the purpose and goals of the institution as defined in the university mission statement and strategic plan. In conjunction with the chair, faculty develop goals for the year based on the criteria. Faculty provide the chair with a copy of their goals each year and, at the end of the year, a

year-end report on the fulfillment of the goals. The flexibility of the Faculty Role Model provides opportunities for the chair and faculty member to address any identified problem areas in the annual evaluation of faculty via the allocation of weights to the three areas (teaching, service, professional development and achievement) and negotiated goals for the next year.

Part-time faculty are evaluated by the chairs after the first semester of teaching with subsequent evaluations at periodic intervals. In addition to the annual evaluations, untenured faculty are reviewed after completing two-and-a-half years of full-time service.

The specific teaching assignments are the responsibility of the department chair. The chair takes into account the number of preparations, whether the courses are undergraduate courses or graduate courses, team-teaching opportunities, other responsibilities and any other peculiar circumstances. A typical faculty load is 12 hours of teaching. Faculty in Special Education teach graduate and undergraduate courses. Although the number of students is an occasional consideration, this is usually not a problem because most classes have 20 to 25 students. As every course in the department generated 3 hours, it can be determined that in spring of 2004, the average class size was 22. The student to faculty ratio ranges from 18 in the 2001-2002 school year to 17 the next year and 21 in 2003-2004 (*Exhibit 10*), another evidence that the program is growing. The courses with lower student numbers typically require the professor to provide supervision in the schools (two or three visits per semester) or individual supervision of research and project development.

B.2.c Faculty Productivity and Cost

The departmental budget, while somewhat limited, provides for the needs of the program. Total salaries for fy2004 is \$177,746. The cost per credit hour is less than \$150, even though some senior members of the department are assigned to Special Education.

	Expenditures				
	BUDGET	Personal Services	Travel	Operating Supplies & Expenses	Total Expenditures
FY 2002	\$868,095	\$695,265	\$13,713	\$24,578	\$733,556.48
FY 2003	862,206	578,116.57	8,896.39	26,078.79	\$613,091.75
FY 2004	878,493				\$0.00

B.3. Facilities

B.3.a. Classroom facilities and Instructional Technology

Augusta State University is building a new facility (University Hall) which will open in fall 2004. This building will house the entire College of Education, including the Department of Clinical and Professional Studies. Classrooms will be equipped with state of the art technology, several computer labs and student study areas.

Table 3.1 New Classroom Resources

Building	Room	Capacity	Description
University Hall	131	49	Computer lab 24 hour
University Hall	162	24	Computer Lab GSAMs
University Hall	170	120	Lecture Room
University Hall	216	30	Classroom
University Hall	219	30	Classroom
University Hall	220	45	Classroom
University Hall	221	60	Classroom
University Hall	223	30	Teaching Computer
University Hall	224	60	Classroom
University Hall	234	28	Writing Lab
University Hall	239	30	Writing Classroom
University Hall	241	45	Larger Tablets
University Hall	242	48	Classroom
University Hall	243	48	Classroom
University Hall	245	30	Writing Classroom
University Hall	246	46	Chairs at Tables
University Hall	247	60	Tiered not fixed
University Hall	248	60	Tiered not fixed
University Hall	249	30	Classroom
University Hall	314	30	Classroom
University Hall	326	60	Classroom
University Hall	327	46	Chairs at Tables
University Hall	328	45	Large tablet arm chairs
University Hall	329	60	Classroom
University Hall	330	45	Classroom
University Hall	347	45	Large Tablet Arm Chairs
University Hall	348	48	Classroom
University Hall	349	48	Classroom
University Hall	350	48	Classroom
University Hall	352	45	Classroom
University Hall	353	46	Chairs at tables
University Hall	354	60	Tiered not fixed
University Hall	355	30	Chairs at tables
University Hall	356	46	Chairs at tables
University Hall	357	30	TD Teaching Lab-large tables
University Hall	381	30	Classroom

Our classrooms and classroom equipment conform to the standards and guidelines set forth by accrediting agencies that strongly support teachers creating new learning environments that are student centered, provide multi-sensory stimulation, incorporate multimedia presentations, encourage collaborative work through inquiry based information exchange, and promote critical thinking and informed decision making as applied to an authentic, real world context. M.Ed. students who are currently teaching in field need to experience the benefits of a physical environment that lends itself to gaining a greater understanding of designing educational settings that enable their

current and prospective students to achieve to high academic standards by engendering multiple intelligences in combination with constructivist learning practices.

Currently, the Department of Clinical and Professional Studies is using classrooms in eight buildings. The classrooms in Butler, Hardy, and Skinner Hall are adequate. Each room is equipped with an overhead projector, screen, chalkboards, and pencil sharpener. Washington Hall, New Science Building, and the classroom in the Christenberry Fieldhouse are in excellent condition. The condition of classroom equipment in these buildings is excellent, as well. Allgood Hall, a newly-constructed building, provides exceptional media services support. WolfvisonVZ-8 overhead projector, projection of Pentium 4 Gateway screen on-demand, laptop network connection, audio, and white boards are provided in each classroom. 35mm slide, video, and DVD services is also provided.

Media Services provides carts equipped with computers, internet hookups and video players upon faculty request. These portable technology stations are readily available and maintained in excellent condition. Media Services staff provides support services from the earliest morning class until 9:30 p.m.

A newly constructed Counselor Education Training Center (CETC) was opened in fall of 2003. This is a facility where counselors in training can complete their internships with clients from the community under the supervision of Counselor Education faculty. The CETC is equipped with state-of-the-art technology (video cameras and telephones in each counseling room), and observation windows for direct supervision of the interns. A seminar room is used as a classroom for small groups.

B.3.b. Computer Labs

The department has access to computer labs in Butler Hall, Allgood Hall, Skinner Hall, the New Science Building and the Reese Library. Students also have available to them an internet café in Butler Hall where the majority of classes are presently taught, and in Washington Hall.

University Hall, upon its opening in the fall of 2004, will be equipped with three computer labs, a 24 hour computer lab, a GSAMS computer lab, and a teaching computer lab. Graduate students are able to use their user id and password to log on to any networked computer on campus. Upon admission to ASU, each student receives an email address and web space used to establish and maintain an electronic portfolio designed to capture exemplars of assessments completed for course requirements during each student's course of study. The 24 hour computer lab enables students to work on projects at their own convenience. Georgia's Statewide Academic & Medical System (GSAMS) is one of the world's largest two-way interactive H.320 video networks, providing citizens throughout the state access to resources without the restrictions of time or distance. Approximately 400 sites ranging from elementary schools to rural hospitals have held more than 120,000 conferences since GSAMS' inception in 1992. Our teaching computer lab is specifically engineered to allow our Graduate students enrolled in EDTD 6011 to earn course credit for InTech training. EDTD 6011 focuses on advancing a learner's systematic, progressive migration to a student centered, technology empowered classroom. The central theme is integrating technology into the curriculum. All Georgia Technology Standards for Educators adopted from ISTE NETS Standards are embedded within the overall framework of the course and its various requirements.

Students and faculty may use the labs at their convenience, and faculty may reserve labs for instruction.

B.3.c. Faculty Offices and Departmental Equipment

Each faculty member has an individual office in the education suite in Butler Hall. Standard equipment for each office is three large bookshelves, two file cabinets, a desk, an office chair, two straight-backed chairs for guests, a telephone, and a computer system with a printer. The department shares a copy machine with the Department of Teacher Development. A Scantron machine, paper shredder, 3-hole punch and paper cutter are available upon request. In addition to the individual office space, an open office space is provided for the department secretary and student/graduate assistant(s). Two computers, telephones, and desks with office chairs are housed in this area. Three file cabinets contain student files and four overhead cabinets house department supplies.

B.3.d. Resources

Our current equipment and resources are adequate to support our mission although far from ideal. Because Clinical and Professional Studies, along with the rest of the University, has suffered budget reductions for the past several years, there are no extras available. However, our basic needs are being met. The Dean has generously supported special activities from a Foundations account. Outdated faculty computers and printers are being phased out over time. A record of the need for computer replacement is kept by the department secretary. End of the year funds are typically used to replace outdated workstations. Two or three faculty each year may receive updated equipment if funds permit.

Limited travel funds are divided equitably among faculty. Faculty Research and Development grants are available for faculty professional development and presentations and are granted by an oversight committee. Most applicants typically receive the funding they request (within reason, of course). Our efficient and thrifty department secretary has stretched our supply budget to the limit. The FY2004 budget falls short of (or just barely covers) expected expenses in several categories including copier maintenance, equipment replacement, supplies, and stipends for graduate assistants.. Paper is a huge expenditure. We are encouraging faculty to provide information to students and others in electronic format in order to reduce paper costs.

B.3.e. Non-Instructional Technical Support

Instructional Technology Services (ITS) provides outstanding technical support. Office workstations are repaired immediately upon report. Faculty and student help desks may be accessed by telephone and technicians are extremely knowledgeable and helpful. ITS staff have the capability of accessing and controlling an individual's computer and diagnosing the difficulty immediately. Students may call the helpdesk from school or home when accessing the ASU PIPELINE. Instruction on a variety of software programs are available to faculty and staff so that skills may be updated as software changes. A Faculty Development Institute provides grants for faculty to upgrade their technology skills. The grants typically include funding for software or hardware to enable the faculty member can implement a technology improvement plan.

The Training Triad is a collaborative effort among the trainers from Computer Services, Media Services, and Reese Library. It was formed to increase communication among the trainers, help reduce redundancies, share resources, and promote common interests. One recent effort on the part of the Training Triad has led to the establishment of the Faculty and Staff Training and Development Center located in Room 305 of Reese Library. This center is split into two areas, a training classroom designed for small-group training with state-of-the-art equipment, and a development area designed for trainer collaboration and one-on-one training with faculty or staff. The development

area, when completed, will include capabilities for video and graphic editing, and campus general software. Costs for the equipment, software, and renovations to the room have been shared among the Triad members.

A significant leader in Triad activities is Computer Service's Instructional Services section, whose sole mission is assisting faculty with pedagogically sound infusion of technology into the curriculum.

Media Services has an on-line instructional request form that faculty or students may use to request an instructional class. The instruction is coordinated by the Instructional Specialist. Media Services offers classes in scanning and Web design, introduction to PowerPoint, videotape editing, and Media Services orientation.

B.3.f. Library

The Reese Library provides excellent support to the department students and faculty. Staff are knowledgeable, helpful, and courteous. Materials placed on reserve by faculty are easily accessible to students. Students may request help with research, internet access, use of the databases, how to find materials in the stacks or any other information-gathering question, and will receive immediate assistance. A current subscription to Educational Resources Information Center (**ERIC**) documents on microfiche allows students and staff to conduct research in as much depth as desired. Current and archived serials are available in the stacks or on GALILEO, the online research service. Faculty are asked for input on materials on which to spend end of the year funds, if available. Media Services, a function of the Library, provides audio-visual equipment, a video library, and technical assistance to students and faculty. The Reese Library has provided the College of Education with books and serials totaling the following amounts:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Books</u>	<u>Serials</u>
2001/02	\$1192	\$36300
2002/03	500	45241
2003/04	7760	37395

(Source: Dr. William Nelson, Director, Reese Library)

B.3.g. Infrastructure

The mission of the Department of Clinical and Professional Studies and the M.Ed. in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities is enhanced by a number of support units at Augusta State University in addition to the Reese Library, Media Services and Instructional Technology Services mentioned above. The College of Education Curriculum Center provides reference and classroom educational materials to be checked out by students and faculty. The University Bookstore is extremely helpful and cooperative in ordering texts for students, as well as desk copies and software for faculty. Curriculum packets, prepared by faculty, are copied and packaged for distribution to students. The University Copy Center also prepares materials when large numbers of copies are necessary. The Department of Public Safety is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure that faculty and students have safe access to buildings, classrooms, offices, and their personal vehicles. The Office of the Dean of the College of Education oversees graduate admissions and processes applications for graduate school. The Director of Teacher Education and the Certification Officer assist students with undergraduate admissions to teacher education and certification issues, respectively. The Certification Officer also coordinates laboratory experiences in the schools for students enrolled in Foundations courses and the SPED 2000 course (Education of Students with

Disabilities in the General Education Classroom), required for the certification of all prospective educators in Georgia.

B.4 Curriculum

The institution has a clearly defined process for establishing, reviewing and evaluating curriculum. The process for the graduate curriculum and programs is the same as for the undergraduate curriculum and programs. Curriculum issues are first addressed within the department as a part of ongoing evaluative processes. Although anyone may propose curricular changes, major responsibility resides with the department chair. Each of the colleges has a curriculum committee to deal with matters pertinent to its curriculum. All proposed changes to a college's curriculum must be submitted to its curriculum committee. (In the College of Education, curricular matters in teacher education and other school personnel preparation programs must first be reviewed by the Teacher Education Council.) Any department or college possibly affected by the curriculum change must be consulted before the change is sent to the Academic Policies Committee. The Academic Policies Committee reviews curriculum changes from the colleges and forwards these to the University Council with the committee's recommendation.

The Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Learning Disabilities reflects the principles expressed in the Conceptual Framework of the Augusta State University College of Education. This program is designed to prepare competent special educators who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, motivation, and commitment to effectively meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students with Learning Disabilities. The knowledge base that encompasses the structure of the discipline is provided in three components. They are:

1. Educational core courses - Advanced Educational Psychology (EDUC 6140), Introduction to Educational Research (EDUC 6021), Instructional Technology Management (EDTD 6011), and Special Education Capstone (SPED 6205);
2. Special education core courses – Diagnostic Assessment and Legal Issues (SPED 6001), Behavior Management (SPED 6003); Facilitating Inclusive Instruction (SPED 6004);
3. Specialized core in Learning Disabilities – Characteristics of Students with Learning Disabilities (SPED 6101), Methods and Materials for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities (SPED 6102), and Internship in Learning Disabilities (SPED 6106).

One or two electives may also be chosen by the graduate students to complete the sequence of a minimum of 12 courses (or 36 semester hours).

The content of the courses and requirements reflect the conceptual framework principles, address the guidelines of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and comply with Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and Board of Regents (BOR) requirements. Skill development and application of knowledge are ensured through supervised field experiences at various grade levels throughout the program and by an intensive internship consisting of 150 field-based hours per semester. The internship component ranges from 3-6 semester hours according to the individual needs of each graduate student. An experienced teacher may need only 3 hours, while a student who has not yet taught may need 6 hours. A student's ability to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate instruction based on the needs of the learner is a vital skill addressed in this program and reflected in the conceptual framework, curriculum, and field experience requirements.

The mission of the M.Ed. program in Special Education with a concentration in Learning Disabilities is to prepare reflective, competent educators to effectively teach individuals with Learning Disabilities in a variety of settings. The program emphasizes the importance of working collaboratively with all professional and paraprofessionals involved in the educational process. The program is designed to prepare teachers to meet the diverse needs of the heterogeneous population of students with varying degrees of severity of the disability in grades K-12. The program reflects the knowledge base, pedagogy, field experience, quality education and high standards, ethics, and reflective teaching endorsed by NCATE/PSC, INTASC, BOR, CEC, and the College of Education and Department of Clinical and Professional Studies conceptual frameworks.

The content of the courses in Learning Disabilities is directed to the study of students with Learning Disabilities, their characteristics, and teaching strategies and methods designed to address their unique needs. Graduate students are required to teach from the Georgia Quality Curriculum, as the majority of K-12 students with Learning Disabilities can benefit from the general education curriculum with modifications and adaptations in the delivery of instruction.

The Master's degree program in Learning Disabilities at the initial certification level was originally developed to address a critical need to reduce the current shortage of professionally trained and certified teachers available to work with students identified with LD in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). This program was designed to prepare candidates to teach individuals with LD who are placed in a wide variety of educational settings commensurate with differing levels of need for support. These individuals represent various ages, developmental levels, cultures, and race-ethnic backgrounds. Throughout this program candidates participate in an interconnected set of experiences in which they have the opportunity to learn to effectively address the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and communicative needs of students with LD in a professional, ethical, and sensitive manner.

B.4.a Coherence

The ten INTASC principles are used as the College of Education Conceptual Framework basis for determining course and curriculum objectives and performance assessment indicators. In courses dealing with special education subject matter, the National Standards (NCATE and INTASC), standards from the learned society (Council for Exceptional Children), and Georgia Quality Core Curriculum standards in that content area are used as the framework for considering the skills and understandings to be addressed with P-12 students. Performance assessments in all courses and field experiences are grounded in these principles and standards. These assessments are used to ensure coherence among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment across a candidate's program. The Department of Clinical and Professional Studies, as part of the College of Education adheres to these principles and standards as well.

All courses in the Department have a commitment to diversity as a component with field experience designed to include these issues. The development of lesson plans and hands-on experiences in the field provide opportunities for the refinement of skills needed to plan for and assess the needs of diverse learners. Students are systematically tracked during their field experiences in an effort to provide a diversity of placements, both in terms of ethnicity and types of learners.

Realizing that today's rapid technological growth has had a tremendous effect on society, and in congruence with the College of Education beliefs, the Department is committed to prepare teachers for tomorrow's classrooms in addition to providing the skills to be immediately effective with

diverse learners. It is the Department's belief that teachers should assist students in pursuing their own inquiries; making use of technology to find, organize, and interpret information; and to become reflective and critical thinkers about information quality and sources. Teachers need to develop an attitude which embraces the use of technology, encourages them to take risk, and inspires them to become lifelong learners. The Department offers its candidates training under the Georgia Framework for Integrating Technology (InTech) model.

An integral part of the Special Education curriculum is the identification and implementation of assistive technology for students with disabilities. Assignments involving assistive technology are a component of every methods course and the internships in special education.

Faculty revised all syllabi to reflect the appropriate integration of technology into each course at all levels. In addition, technology is used in the field and is necessary for the completion of course and field requirements. The integration of technology is an expectation. Candidates choose the use of technology carefully in order to enhance pedagogy in the classroom and that there is a clear connection between the technology and the content to be mastered. Candidates produce a website portfolio during their first semester of enrollment that is centered on the conceptual framework. This electronic portfolio is enhanced each semester with artifacts produced in their courses.

The Department's conceptual framework provides the context for syllabi, course requirements, field requirements, the electronic portfolios, and the assessment system of the College of Education. All work, both in the classroom and in the field, are aligned with the conceptual framework, Georgia state standards, the quality core curriculum and subject specific national standards. All syllabi are indexed for the standards stated above.

The curriculum for the M.Ed. in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities (see appendix for the detailed listing of requirements and courses) is typical of most modern special education graduate programs in that it requires several specific foundational courses while allowing some flexibility through a choice of electives. This flexibility is necessary in order to prepare students to teach in a variety of settings and to work with individuals who have a disabilities ranging from mild to profound. This curriculum is different from other areas in special education in that it addresses functional as well as academic skills. Graduates majoring in Learning Disabilities have a knowledge base covering the various fields of special education as well as skills enabling them to teach students with mild disabilities in other areas.

All curricular offerings are clearly and accurately described in published materials. The *Augusta State University Catalog* contains a brief description of all courses offered for graduate credit. Each semester, a listing is published of course offerings, times, credits, instructors, and location for each course. The graduate curricular offerings at Augusta State University are directly related to the goals of the institution and to the degree program. In addition, the curriculum is specialized for the particular degree program being sought by the student.

In addition to the published catalog, the Department of Clinical and Professional Studies supplemented the published materials to inform students of graduate curricula. The Department publishes a Graduate Programs brochure as well as "track sheets", or programs of study documentation.

The stated objectives of a course are specified in the course syllabus. Included in each course syllabus are goals and requirements for the course as well as information that breaks down the

course content into instructional delivery segments. The methods of evaluation are also outlined in the course syllabus. Graduate course syllabi reveal that the university's graduate programs employ a variety of appropriate instructional methods, including lecture, class discussion, use of technology, research papers, case analyses, student presentations, group projects, outside speakers, one-on-one instruction, laboratory experiences, and media presentations.

B.4.b Currency

An 18-member Teacher Education Council, made up of individuals from programs within and outside the College of Education, was established to advise the Dean of Education on such matters as policies, evaluation, compliance with professional standards for program approval and accreditation, and changes in curriculum and programs. The council meets at least once a month. Members of the council also serve on council committees, including the Curriculum Committee, which considers all changes to admission, retention, exit, and program requirements for teacher education and other school personnel programs; and the Exceptions Committee, which considers all student appeals of admission, retention, and exit requirements for these programs. Special education programs have a representative on each of these committees.

Programs in education are reviewed regularly by professional accrediting agencies (NCATE) and/or the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The curricula for these programs are designed specifically to prepare students to enter their respective fields upon graduation and to meet certification requirements. Program faculty review their curricula regularly to ensure that curricular content reflects current trends and expectations in their fields. Feedback from the Special Education Advisory Council, special education directors, and recent graduates is used to improve course content.

Graduate programs are designed to extend and enrich the knowledge base, understandings, and pedagogical repertoire of the candidate through a focus on analysis, evaluation, and synthesis levels of objectives. Candidates relate classroom experience to research and best practice, create new curricular and instructional programs, and offer collaborative assistance to colleagues.

The courses and related practicum and field experiences required by teacher preparation programs are based on standards from state, regional, and national accrediting and professional bodies, best practice, and relevant research. All programs in the Teacher Education Unit require extensive field and clinical experiences in which students must demonstrate the ability to identify, assess, plan, implement, and evaluate appropriate content and instructional strategies with a diverse population of students. These experiences are conducted with the collaboration and supervision of both university and public school professional educators. The field experiences for candidates in the special education graduate programs are designed to provide opportunities to work directly with students with a disability in the candidate's area of specialty.

Each course in a program of study reflects in its syllabus the link between course objectives and standards derived from all sources relevant to that particular course. All programs of study are using the portfolio as an assessment tool in recognition of its power to give a more comprehensive picture of the content knowledge, skills, and dispositions required by a candidate's particular field of study.

All graduate programs incorporate research and methodology components into their curricula. Curricular content is attuned to current practice via several mechanisms, including alignment with professional associations and accreditation by external agencies. Programs are designed to extend

and enrich the knowledge base, understandings, and pedagogical repertoire of the candidate through a focus on analysis, evaluation, and synthesis levels of objectives. Candidates relate classroom experience to research and best practice, create new curricular and instructional programs, and offer collaborative assistance to colleagues.

B.4.c Course Sequencing, Frequency, and Enrollment Patterns

Schedule of major offerings depends on three major factors: a well-defined set of pre-requisite courses, a published three year schedule of proposed offerings, and student demand. All required courses for the degree in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities are offered at least yearly and electives in related content may be selected from general education courses or from the rotating cycle of special education electives, which can vary according to student demand. A three-year schedule of courses is attached. (*Exhibit 11*).

B.5 Other Learning Activities

B.5.a Advising

The Department of Clinical and Professional Studies strongly supports and encourages advising as an activity valuable to both students and faculty. Advising is included as a major instructional role of faculty in the Faculty Role Model Report completed annually by each faculty member. Because of the large number of persons interested in special education, Special Education faculty advise over 150 students per year. All full-time departmental faculty, including the Chair, serve as advisors so that the advising load is equally distributed.

Information useful to advisors and students (advisor/student assignments, programs of study, pre-requisite courses, graduation requirements, tentative 3-year course schedules) is posted on the Department website and is available in the department office. The department also cooperates (through the chair) with the Registrar's Office, the Office of Admissions, the Department of Teacher Development. Advisors volunteer for attendance at visitations and other events coordinated by the Career Center, share and disseminate information, and participate in other matters related to advising. Student satisfaction with advising is measured by the College of Education advisement survey. By University System policy all faculty members are also responsible for academic advising. Graduate students are evaluated throughout their tenure in each program in a variety of ways. After meeting specified requirements for a program, students petitioning for admission are evaluated for candidacy. Once a student is admitted, a graduate committee (major professor, etc.) at the department level guides a student through a program. When students petition for permission to undertake a thesis or to enroll in certain internship experiences, their major professor considers many factors to aid with the decision for the preferred option. Letter grades are issued in all classroom-based courses; these are typically based on many types of evaluations of course performance, including participation, tests, papers, and presentations. Students must pass a comprehensive oral or written examination.

Each program is responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining a system of academic advising of students. Students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance to a program, and faculty advisors are provided with information on their advisees. As stated earlier, Dr. Cadle advises the students in the M.Ed. in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities. Throughout their education at Augusta State University, students are encouraged to meet regularly with their advisors, who assist them in monitoring their academic progress. The BANNER system provides advisors with access to up-to-date student records and allows them to print current academic summary sheets at any time, and a special graduate student tracking data base, WADM 119, has been created. Only

full-time tenure-track faculty members serve as advisors to graduate students. The program is also responsible for orienting graduate students to their specific program.

B.5.b Tutoring

The Augusta State “Born to Read” Literacy Center is directed by one of our faculty members, Dr. Paulette Harris, and provides free tutoring for children and adults. Students in graduate and undergraduate special education programs, as well as those in the Teacher Development department, may satisfy part of the required field experiences (imbedded in each course) by tutoring children at the Center.

The Special Education program is often asked by parents of children with autism for the names of students who will participate in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs for their children. ABA is a one-on-one behavior modification program designed to improve the communications skills of children with autism.

A recent partnership with a grant from Richmond County, the Century 21 grant, will enable students to participate in additional tutoring activities in a web of inner city schools. The arrangements for this partnership, although approved at the Department and College of Education level, is still in the organizational stages, but is a promising opportunity for students in both graduate and undergraduate programs.

B.5.c Student Organizations and Clubs

Students are encouraged to join the student branches of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, Georgia Association of Educators and Council for Exceptional Children. As one of the portfolio requirements for graduation, candidates are required to provide evidence that they have joined a professional organization in special education. Because most of the graduate students are teaching, they understand the rationale for becoming members of these organizations.

There are two scholarships available to graduate students working toward degrees in special education, the Council for Exceptional Children Annette Watzlavik Memorial Scholarship, and the Renee Russo Memorial Scholarship. These are awarded annually, based on need, outstanding performance and demonstrated potential.

B.6 Research and Scholarship

Candidates for the M.Ed. in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities are required to review and analyze research articles throughout their program. In lieu of comprehensive examinations or a thesis, they must also develop and implement a research project in their school or lab environment.

The graduate research project is a part of the portfolio process and the culmination of the program of study leading to the Master of Education degree in Special Education. Through this project the candidate must demonstrate applied knowledge of special education issues and skill on competencies required by NCATE, PSC, BOR, CEC, and INTASC.

The project is based upon current research in the field of special education, and applied in a setting with special education students or teachers. The project should demonstrate at least one competency from each core course in the candidate’s program of study. Examples of topics include a professional development or instructional module on a current topic (behavior/classroom management, assistive technology, social skills instruction), an implementation and evaluation of an

in-depth curriculum package, development and implementation of a unique curriculum model, prototypical transitional planning model (early childhood to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to secondary, secondary to post-secondary), comprehensive planning model for inclusion/collaboration, determination of least restrictive setting for a student, or other approved topics.

The candidate researches the topic, and designs his or her own project. The project is implemented in a school setting with results evaluated and reported as part of the project. Candidates present their projects orally and in a multimedia format at the end of the semester to faculty, guests, and students. Oral and written communications skills and demeanor are rated. The disk containing the presentation is submitted to faculty for review.

B.6.a Faculty Productivity

A list of publications and a list of conference presentations by current special education faculty are included in the appendix. Many of the entries on the publication list appear in refereed research journals, and a large percentage of the presentations occurred at national or international meetings. This level of output is excellent in light of the teaching load of 12 hours per semester plus supervision of interns.

Departmental financial support for research and scholarship is limited to travel funds which must be shared with non-scholarly activities such as attending state regulatory meetings, and a limited library budget.

Since Augusta State University is primarily a teaching institution, and the requirements of education faculty included supervision of students in practica, apprenticeships, and internships off campus, it is even more remarkable. Faculty have become involved in school improvement projects through specific courses and grants.

The environment at Augusta State University supports and encourages scholarly interaction between faculty and students. This interaction occurs in the classroom, during advising, clinical experiences, internships, recitals, other formal gatherings, and informal campus contacts. All faculty are required to post office hours on their office doors and to include this information in their course syllabi so that students can know when to make an appointment. Faculty meet with students on an appointment or walk-in basis, depending on the circumstances. Faculty work very closely with students on assignments and on their research projects. Media Services provides workstations that promote collaborative projects, especially curriculum development between faculty and students. Many faculty and students collaborate on research, making presentations at professional meetings.

All graduate programs incorporate research and methodology components into their curricula. Curricular content is attuned to current practice via several mechanisms, including involvement with professional associations and accreditation by external agencies, when available.

Student research is integrated with graduate instruction through the following courses:

EDUC 6021 - Introduction to Educational Research
SPED 6205 – Capstone in Special Education

At Augusta State University, teaching is the single most important responsibility of the faculty. Each course and instructor is evaluated every fall and spring semester: in the fall using a campus-wide teaching evaluation instrument, and in the spring using that or other instruments in addition to the common instrument. The primary responsibility for evaluation of the curriculum resides in the departments.

Experimentation with methods to improve instruction is adequately supported and critically evaluated. Many faculty development programs are under way at any given time on campus. These are either provided by a department on campus, part of funded development activities, or off-campus programs that the faculty member has organized on his own. Given ASU's mission of instructional excellence and the rapidity with which instructional technologies are changing, the institution supports experimentation in instruction with collaborative training efforts. ASU's faculty also receive individualized training to improve the curriculum through technological innovation. The Training Triad is one source of such training.

The institution's Faculty Role Model evaluation system encourages all faculty to seek improvement in all areas of teaching, including instructional pedagogy. The Role Model contains both planning and evaluation functions designed to review the effectiveness of teaching methods. Faculty set goals in the three areas of teaching, faculty development, and service which may include goals specifically related to experimentation with methods to improve instruction. These goals are evaluated by both the faculty member and the department chair or dean as part of the faculty member's annual evaluation. Additionally, all courses are evaluated annually by students, including courses which include experimentation with methods to improve instruction.

B.6.b Level of Support

Experimentation with methods to improve instruction is adequately supported and critically evaluated. Many faculty development programs are under way at any given time on campus. These are either provided by a department on campus, part of funded development activities, or off-campus programs that the faculty member has organized on his own. Given ASU's mission of instructional excellence and the rapidity with which instructional technologies are changing, the institution supports experimentation in instruction with collaborative training efforts. ASU's faculty also receive individualized training to improve the curriculum through technological innovation. The Training Triad is one source of such training.

Protection of the faculty member from an inordinate number of external responsibilities is provided by a policy which requires faculty to have written approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs for any outside professional or other activity which could conceivably require time normally devoted to ASU responsibilities.

B.6.c Student Involvement

Students participate in professional organizations in their schools and at the University. All are involved in school activities where they teach. When asked, they participate in ASU activities, such as NCATE. There are several students on the Special Education Advisory Committee.

B.7 Service

B.7.a Contributions to the Mission

The faculty are involved in a variety of service activities. Service to students is the primary activity; all faculty are involved in advising and recruiting students for the program. Each of the faculty has presented in classes other than their own. All serve on University committees. Service to the community includes such activities as the Literacy Center, Golden Harvest Food Bank, Advisory Council for Early Intervention, providing staff development, and inservice presentations to school districts.

In Special Education, the faculty work with the CSRA RESA as they implement the Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). Teachers enrolled in TAPP may take a series of pre-requisite courses and apply for admission to the graduate program in any of the Special Education fields. Faculty advise the students and pull out the teachers majoring in special education during their initial staff development at RESA to provide training on issues specific to special education.

Individual members of the Clinical and Professional Studies faculty are engaged in numerous and a wide variety of service activities that support our mission. The vitae and annual departmental reports included in the appendix reveal faculty contributions toward excellence in teaching including participation in state-supported initiatives and collaborative school improvement projects with area school districts. Knowledge is advanced through these activities as well as through invitational opportunities including judging senior projects in Columbia County Schools. Service on community and regional boards or committees enriches the community, as does volunteering time for artistic or cultural endeavors. The faculty is also involved in many humanitarian efforts that promote humane values.

Experimentation with methods to improve instruction is adequately supported and critically evaluated. Many faculty development programs are under way at any given time on campus. These are either provided by a department on campus, part of funded development activities, or off-campus programs that the faculty member has organized on his own. Given ASU's mission of instructional excellence and the rapidity with which instructional technologies are changing, the institution supports experimentation in instruction with collaborative training efforts. ASU's faculty also receive individualized training to improve the curriculum through technological innovation. The Training Triad is one source of such training.

Committee memberships, student organization sponsorships, research, community service, etc., are often considered to be within the realm of faculty expectations. Although Augusta State University is not funded for research, a large number of the faculty desire to contribute to the production of knowledge and, thus, engage in research. Many feel an obligation to participate in the betterment of the local area and consult, conduct workshops, speak at local meetings, etc. The temptation is for a faculty member to be so interested in service that he or she becomes over-extended. The faculty member is protected from this over-extension in several ways. First and foremost, the Faculty Role Model (the Augusta State University version of faculty evaluation) allows the faculty member and the department chair to reach an agreement each year as to the responsibilities of that faculty member for the upcoming year and the extent to which those activities play a part in the overall evaluation of the faculty member. The chair and faculty member designate by mutual agreement the values to be placed on each of the three mandatory role model areas of teaching (45-70%), service (10-40%), and professional development and achievement (10-40%). If the faculty member attempts to take on too much in a given year, the department chair has the opportunity to counsel the faculty member at this point. This model allows the faculty member to assume other responsibilities beyond teaching and advising, but at the same time limits the other activities to the point where they do not interfere with the quality of teaching and advising. In addition, there are instances where the

additional activities are of sufficient importance and time commitment that a reduction in teaching load is warranted. At this point the academic deans are responsible for "reassigned" time for the faculty member. There is no set university policy regarding this issue; it is left to the discretion of the deans.

C. Summary

C.1 Quality of the Program

Throughout this review we have measured our program against the guidelines set by the National Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the learned societies. We find that, except in a few instances, such as number of faculty for the Counselor Education program, our programs, faculty, and facilities meet the standards or recommendations set by those bodies.

The Praxis Exam results summarized in section B.1, with a 100% pass rate, provide evidence that our students exhibit mastery of the subject and learning outcomes. The number of students is satisfactory and growing rapidly. With 39 students on the waiting list to be admitted, it is clear that our population is increasing. The primary evidence of this is the growth of students enrolled in the program from 1 in 2001 to 33 students in fall and spring of 2004. The number and quality of field experience assignments embedded in each course, the variety of course offerings, and the number of students enrolled in service courses are strengths in our programs. All courses are referenced to current national standards and to the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum. We do know, however, as a result of this review that we need to strengthen the manner in which we gather exit information and information on alumni. Our surveys need to address student outcomes, and a useful way to measure success of graduates must be developed.

Sections B.2, B.6, and B.7 give evidence for the quality of our faculty. Faculty qualifications, of course, meet system and regional (SACS) requirements. We have no data from other departments with which to compare numbers of publications or presentation, nor do we have any indication of how our workload (including advising, supervision of field experiences, and other service) compares with that at other institutions. An important strength of our faculty, not directly measurable, lies in its collegiality. University-wide collegiality was a hallmark of the latest SACS review, and educators historically have a reputation (probably due to the service nature of the discipline) of being more collegial than others. We believe that our department is one of the most collegial at ASU.

We are currently engaged in an NCATE review. For this process we have identified elements of each course that meets the four teaching and learning performance standards of NCATE. These have been placed in matrices by program areas (attached). The standards addressed are:

Standard I:	Candidate Skills, Knowledge, and Dispositions
Standard II:	Assessment Systems and Unit Evaluations
Standard III:	Field Experiences and Clinical Practices
Standard IV:	Diversity

The matrices demonstrate that courses are well-balanced in the performance standards, further evidence of the quality of the program.

C.2 Productivity of the Program

Section B.2 provides evidence that not only is the program productive but it is cost-effective. The numbers of graduates are substantial and growing, but our class sizes, service course load, faculty

salaries, and cost to the university per credit hour generated are not. We are producing more graduates each semester, and the demand is growing.

Beginning with Spring 2003, a record has been kept in the Dean's Office of graduate admissions, open applications to our programs. These files are attached and verify that the number of students enrolling in our programs is increasing. The roster of TAPP students who are seeking graduate degrees in Special Education is increasing in number. These students may or may not have already applied for admission to the graduate program, but, again, the numbers justify maintaining our program, and actually expanding it. The TAPP program in Special Education will be initiating a new cohort in July, bringing additional special education teachers into our program.

The M.Ed. in Special Education with a major in Learning Disabilities, a graduate program is a sequence of courses designed to prepare candidates for specialization in the area of teaching students with learning disabilities. This report has demonstrated the continuing viability and need for the program in the following areas.

1. Credit hour production in Special Education is 7.5 percent of all of the credit hours in the College of Education. With 74 enrolled in programs in Special Education, filling approximately 200 seats per semester, producing 500-600 credit hours, the program is continuing to be productive, sought after, and solid. The thirty-nine students on the waiting list for admissions and 33 students currently enrolled is evidence of this.
2. The graduates at the M.Ed. level in Learning Disabilities from Augusta State University become effective teachers as their success on the PRAXIS exam predicts. Typically, our graduates are already employed, but move up quickly from teaching positions to administration.
3. The focus of the program is clear and the educational goals are well-defined. Because of the efforts of the faculty to tailor the program to student needs, there are few programs that can compete. The competing online programs do not provide opportunities for internships. The rigor of the graduate research project and the imbedded field experiences in every course in the M.Ed. in Learning Disabilities are not duplicated in any program in the region.
4. The program is sound, internally and externally. It has a good reputation in the community and school districts readily hire the M.Ed. graduates. *Exhibit 12* demonstrates that a large percentage of the students in the College of Education are enrolled in courses in Clinical and Professional Studies.
5. Because of the number of special educators who will soon be eligible for retirement, and the growing need for capable candidates, the need to continue the program is easily demonstrated.
6. The quality of the faculty is high. As stated earlier, some of the most senior faculty in the department are teaching in the Learning Disabilities program. All have experience in schools, which allows them to be effective in developing courses and assignments for pragmatic application.

While the number of graduates in Learning Disabilities has not been consistently high, the number of candidates currently in the program is significant, and the number is growing. The program and Department have proposed that all graduate special education programs be combined under one diploma title, M.Ed. in Special Education. The proposal has been formally passed at the Department level, and is proceeding through the appropriate channels for approval. With this change, students could still concentrate on a particular area of exceptionality, and would be certifiable. This change

would accomplish two things. First, it would allow the University data to truly reflect the number of students working through the program. Second, it would provide students with more flexibility in determining their program concentration. School districts assign teachers to special education classrooms based on their needs at the moment. Candidates are often placed in one type of classroom one year, and switched to another area of exceptionality the next year. The current regulations allowing teachers with clear, renewable certificates to become certified in any teaching field upon passing the PRAXIS encourages teachers to take the shortest route in the area of disability in which they feel the most comfortable.

In conclusion, the M.Ed. program in Learning Disabilities is productive, viable, and of high quality, as documented in the previous pages and by the attached data. The proposed changes will make it even more so. It is requested that this information be strongly considered.

D. Exhibits

- D.1** Majors and minors in SPED
- D.2** Degrees awarded
- D.3** Students enrolled by major in SPED
- D.4** Open applications
- D.5** Credit hours generated
- D.6** Enrollment by number of seats
- D.7** PRAXIS II results
- D.8** Faculty demographics
- D.9** Part-time faculty demographics
- D.10** Student/Faculty Ratio
- D.11** Three-year schedule of courses
- D.12** Enrollment by Department

E. Appendix

- E.1** Department Budget
- E.2** Service Course Enrollment
- E.3** Listing of Courses and Requirements (programs of study)
- E.4** Faculty Publications, Presentations, and Awards
- E.5** Department Annual Reports
- E.6** Faculty Vitae

Augusta State University Mission Statement. Retrieved on March 26, 2004, from <http://www.aug.edu/mission.html>.

University of Georgia Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement. Retrieved on March 26, 2004, from <http://usg.edu/admin/regents/statements.html>.