Standard 6. Unit Governance and Resources

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

6.1 Unit Governance and Resources

How do the unit’s governance system and resources contribute to adequately preparing candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards? [maximum of three pages—10,000 characters]

The Dean of the College of Education and Human Services (Director of Teacher Education) and Assistant Director of Teacher Education (ADTE) are responsible for providing leadership to the Professional Education Unit (PEU) in preparation of candidates to meet professional, state and institutional standards. The Dean and ADTE oversee activities aimed at guaranteeing continuous improvement by identifying and articulating objectives with standards and program assessments. The unit and education faculty collaborate with P-12 practitioners in program design, delivery, and evaluation; covering service on committees; participating in advisory groups; overseeing curriculum redesign work; supervising teacher and administrator candidates; and participating in various professional development activities.

Colleagues involved in preparation of professional educators, school personnel, and other stakeholders recognize the University as a leader in the mission of educator preparation. The PEU’s leadership is enhanced by its central role, providing professional development through activities and semi-annual retreats. The ADTE, a member of the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science and Information Systems residing in the College of Arts and Sciences provides a link between stakeholders and units. The ADTE assists in implementing changes and carrying out plans put forth by the PEU to prepare high quality candidates by bringing critical information from state and national meetings. For example, the ADTE recently attended a training program with five colleagues so that she could help implement Co-teaching models among other faculty, teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and University supervisors. The ADTE is also leading this NCATE Continuous Improvement (CI) accreditation effort and meets weekly with CILT (Continuous Improvement Leadership Team) to ensure faculty, staff, teacher candidates and stakeholders are informed about state and federal policy changes and best practices.

In 2012, major changes in Northwest’s academic structure strengthened programming, governance, and resources of professional education. Nineteen academic departments were combined into eleven and the Family and Consumer Sciences department was eliminated. Within the College of Education and Human Services, the departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership were combined into Professional Education. Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance became the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Behavioral Sciences houses school counseling. All secondary content majors reside in departments throughout the College of Arts and Sciences and the Booth College of Business and Professional Studies. Such consolidation has benefitted the PEU by, for example, combining content areas like Geography into the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,
thereby making it more efficient to coordinate Social Science Education. Reorganized departments are led by Chairs whose responsibilities ensure program standards, the development of faculty, and communication with the PEU. Chairs are primarily responsible for overseeing departmental allocations of financial and human resources to ensure quality candidate preparation. While individual Chairs speak on behalf of faculty directly to the Deans and other administrators, the Chairs Council also serves with PEU leadership to communicate holistically and shape program success. Coordinators of large programs are provided release load time to assist in program direction and data reviews. Chairs and/or program coordinators are charged with reviewing data that relates to course outcomes, standardized exams and other assessments - formal and informal. The Chair and/or program coordinators also lead in reviewing, discussing, and making recommended changes based upon local, state and national standards to curriculum, course offerings, instruction, and assessments.

The Dean and ADTE rely on the expertise of additional leaders within the unit, including the Chairs, faculty, Assessment Coordinator (AC), Coordinator of Teacher Education Student Services (TESS), Directors of Field Experiences, Academic and Library Services, Northwest Regional Professional Development and Outreach, Center for Information Technology in Education, and the Certification Officer. This governance system allows continuous evaluation and improvement of processes and services in preparing candidates to meet professional, state and institution standards.

Regarding resource, Northwest’s strategic plan emphasizes the importance of educator preparation and programs within the unit are given access to a wide variety of resources (ex. 6.4.a.12 Strategic Plan Document). For example, even in the days of constrained University resources, the PEU has maintained and even grown the Phyllis and Richard Leet Family and Children Center and Horace Mann Laboratory School. Here the University ensures that teacher candidates gain experiences in newly remodeled areas, thereby providing candidates exposure to state-of-the-art classrooms and trainings throughout their program. Other resource commitments include the creation of the new AC position, the dedication of funding for the purchase of the Tk20 server and programming, and the addition of a new staff person hired to work in Kansas City Outreach Center as a Co-teaching Coordinator.

To ensure candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards they are given access to a variety of technologies and resources. Every undergraduate student receives a laptop computer during academic enrollment; thereby allowing students develop and store evidence of meeting standards through the Tk20 electronic assessment management system. Technology also assists students and faculty in creating/scoring the TWS. Advanced programs are aligned to standards and competencies and candidates demonstrate proficiencies through elements/standards displayed and scored in the Tk20 system. Additional resources may be accessed through Owens Library where students can find extensive database services, teaching materials, student aids, testing preparation, textbooks and resources. Children’s literature is available in the Horace Mann Library. To inform candidates and faculty of research-based practices, education tools, and technologies, Northwest provides training and professional development opportunities through book studies, trained experts, and RPDC offerings (Standard 5 ex. 5.4.g.3 RPDC Trainings Calendar). In 2013, the institution will inaugurate a university-wide Teaching and Learning Center where training sessions will be offered and attended by faculty and students; one recent
training session, for example, provided stakeholders instruction into the methods employed as part of the Cornell Note Taking system.

University, Unit Governance and Strategic Planning

Northwest is an institution committed to continuous improvement as evidenced by our regular review through internal and external processes based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Excellence in Missouri Foundation’s Missouri Quality Award, and Academic Quality Improvement Program. The PEU, from leadership to organizational structure (ex. 6.4.b.1 PEU Organizational Chart), provides evidence of strengths in training future educators and the quality of our faculty, staff and programs.

A new leadership team examines practices and processes related to the University and the Professional Education Unit. In 2009, Dr. John Jansinski became president. In 2010 Provost Dr. Doug Dunham was appointed, after serving five months as interim, and Dr. Joyce Piveral became Dean of the College of Education and Human Services. During these leadership changes the institution focused on listening and learning, analyzing systems and processes already in place, and assessing overall performance (ex. 6.4.b.3 Univ. Ad. And Governance Structure). The 2009-10 academic year included repositioning and preparing a key leadership team constructed to guide the institution—the Northwest Leadership and Strategic Planning Leadership Team (NLSPLT). Moreover, throughout this time the institution undertook proactive responses to statewide budgetary constraints.

During 2010-11 academic year, Northwest responded to information gathered during the previous year’s listening and learning focus by revising the institutions Vision, Mission and values statements. These were approved by University’s Board of Regents. Missouri’s Governor hosted a higher education summit during which he articulated four key goals, including: Student attainment, Academic program review, Collaborative efforts among postsecondary institutions, and Multiyear funding. This necessitated that the University conduct a comprehensive academic program review at the conclusion of which Northwest discontinued four baccalaureate degrees and one Master of Science program.

Required efforts to reduce budgets continued and the NLSPLT evolved into the Organizational Success Task Force (OSTF) in 2010. This team set the stage for addressing multiyear challenges (compensation mechanisms and maintenance and repair needs) as Northwest moved toward a systematic implementation of analytical emphases. University efforts to transform key systems included a campus-wide workshop for enhancing strategic finance measures, provided by the Association of Governing Boards (ex. 6.4.g.3 Univ. Financial Acad Analysis).

Northwest introduced a strategic map-2011-14: A Plan to Execute and Succeed in the 2011-12 academic year (ex. 6.4.a.1 Strategic Plan Document) which continued activities emphasizing ongoing budget analyses both short- and long-term. We identified six key performance indicators to report to the Board of Regents including enrollment numbers; rates of freshman success, graduation, and placement; private support; and our placement with the HLC’s Composite Financial Index. During this same time we also experienced a reduction in force in response to the pressure of challenging times.