

Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention

Transforming Teacher Education

Goals and Strategies

A Southern Arizona collaboration to redesign the preparation of teachers

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Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention

Goal

Establish a process for the recruitment, admission and retention of increased numbers of high-quality potential teachers, especially in high teacher demand areas.

Rationale*

At a time when educational quality tops the public's list of concerns, a serious teacher shortage exists in schools across the nation. Calculations based on student growth projections in Arizona indicate that the state will need about 6,880 new teachers each year to accommodate anticipated demand through 2005. The accuracy of this number will be affected by the conditions of Arizona's overall labor market, the actual number of Arizona-grown teachers who decide to enter Arizona classrooms, the actual number of in-migrating teachers who enter the classroom, the number of teachers who leave the profession or move out of state each year and teacher-student ratios (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2003).

Critical shortages exist in secondary education programs in mathematics, science, special education and bilingual education. Teachers are especially needed in the western and southern states as well as in low-income urban areas and remote rural areas. There is a huge gap in the pool of minority teachers compared to the size of schoolage minority student populations (Shaw, 1996). What exists is a homogeneous population of beginning teachers attempting to learn how to teach a heterogeneous population of students. Studies (Gomez, 1994) have shown that the typical candidate for teacher education is a white, AngloSaxon, lower or middleclass female who has grown up in a suburban or rural area and attended a local college or university. She hopes to teach average, middleclass children in a community similar to the one in which she grew up. Some states are making special efforts to expand the pool of male and minority teachers and develop strategies to encourage quality teachers in districts with high demand (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

According to the 2003 Morrison Institute report "Is There A Teacher Shortage?," even in those areas of Arizona where supply is adequate to meet the demand for teachers, "the data show that teachers are not applying for positions generally perceived to be difficult, either because of their

This is a 2003 update of the work of the Professional Preparation Board. The Board's original report is also online.

locations or because of characteristics of the student population."

The American Council on Education (1999) supports colleges and universities to intensify their efforts to recruit into the teaching profession the ablest of America's college students and to set high standards for admission into teacher education programs. The Alliance for Equity in Higher Education is a coalition of minority-serving institutions (MSIs) that includes the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. The MSIs are attempting to increase the number of students entering teaching careers. Already, MSIs have produced 8% of all teacher education bachelor's degrees but awarded 46% of those earned by African American students, 49% of those earned by Hispanic students, and 12% of those earned by American Indian students (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

The recruitment of a broader gender and ethnic mix of beginning teachers may be difficult. Some minority students' negative school experiences and poor salaries are factors in their decision to forego teaching as a career. Low interest and resistance in teaching among Asian American students are due to intense pressure from parents to strive for positions perceived as having higher status (Gordon, 2000).

Arizona teacher salaries are below the national average, a factor worth noting because the recruitment incentive of most interest to teachers was increased salaries (76%) (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2003). In 2001-2002, Arizona's average teacher salary was \$39,973, while the national average was \$44,499 (National Education Association, 2002). Teacher shortages are much rarer in states and districts with proactive teacher recruitment policies. Other useful recruitment strategies include equalizing and increasing beginning teacher salaries while raising licensing standards, state scholarships for preparation, midcareer recruitment (such as Teach for Tucson in the UA College of Education), reciprocal licensing agreements and profitable pensions, incentives to enter teaching, expanding teacher education programs in highneed fields and providing incentives for community college/college pathways that prepare para-professionals for certification (Education Commission of the States, 2000).

*Text updated from the original, stated in *Bold New Directions* 2001, to reflect new studies.

Progress 2000-2003

- *Developed a teacher profile for the College of Education that satisfies Arizona teacher standards and describes the specific knowledge, skill base and professional attitudes and behaviors expected of future teachers. The profile is used as part of the final assessment of teacher-candidate competency.
- *Identified key assessment instruments for the College of Education and other colleges involved in teacher preparation based on the teacher profile or other competency models to help gauge student progress.
- *Identified specific national teacher standards and board certification standards for teacher preparation programs based in the College of Education and investigated opportunities of obtaining certification of University of Arizona teacher preparation programs through a national accreditation body.
- Reviewed UA faculty evaluation systems to assess opportunities for adding incentives for faculty involvement in community and school-based outreach activities and for service to educational policy groups.
- *Developed a plan to establish a data unit within the College of Education to identify, collect, interpret and use data to inform improvements in recruitment and retention of future teachers and in their preparation as highly competent educators. Though developed in 2001, fiscal and other concerns have delayed implementation.

Strategies for 2004-2005

- *Review and modify as needed the teacher profile that describes the specific knowledge, skill base and professional attitudes and behaviors which graduates will exhibit on completion of the teacher education course of study and during the induction period.
- *Establish a data unit to identify, collect, interpret and use data to inform improvements in teacher education.
- Implement a comprehensive faculty evaluation system which considers differentiated staffing and opportunities for the professional development of college faculty. Facilitate and make recommendations regarding the development of a flexible (variable-weight) faculty-reward system for workload and promotion and tenure considerations that includes potential recognition for exemplary research, teaching and fieldwork with local K-12 school systems.

*These efforts also help meet the goal for recruitment, admissions and retention.

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