Goal: Increase the inclusion of P-12 educators in the development and refinement of the assessment system.

Continuous Improvement: Plans for more consistent inclusion of the P-12 community in assessment system development were delayed due to the resignation of the person responsible for this. The unit is currently in the process of hiring a Field Experience Specialist who will work with faculty and students in educator licensure programs as well as teachers and administrators in partnership schools to ensure that candidates meet all of the state and national accreditation requirements for quality and diverse field experiences. This person will be responsible for developing, facilitating and enhancing collaborations with partnership schools and to work toward meaningful inclusion of the P-12 community in assessment system development, implementation and review.

Goal: Program faculty will review and use focal assessment and unit evaluation data to improve their programs more regularly and systematically.

Continuous Improvement: The unit hired an Assessment Data Specialist who has the following responsibilities related to all initial and advanced programs in the unit: a) manages the online database and assessment system and works with others to ensure the most efficient use of the system for each program; b) ensures that all assessments and surveys are completed on time; c) prepares assessment, candidate and supervising practitioner data reports for program and unit use; d) prepares additional reports related to program and unit operations such as practicum demographics reports; e) facilitates the use of data for program and unit improvement; and f) ensures the tracking of candidates in the advanced, non-licensure programs for teachers.

Data indicated that some programs were not ensuring the timely completion of their focal assessments on a consistent basis each year. The unit instituted a new policy which ties candidate licensure endorsement to faculty completion of program focal assessments. If focal assessments are incomplete, candidates cannot be endorsed for licensure by the Educator Licensure Officer.

The unit continues to collect Program Data Response forms annually to document data based changes. The unit continues regular, ongoing new candidate licensure orientation sessions and ongoing email updates regarding program requirements and transition points. We continue to work on implementation of more efficient and consistent processes across the unit based on data from the assessments, surveys and external data gathering. For example, when it was difficult to get employers to complete surveys regarding our graduates, we conducted face-to-face or telephone interviews with them to gather feedback on our programs and the unit. The interviews were informative and will be continued on the 5-7 year timeline outlined in our unit assessment system. When our unit level data informed us that information disseminated through the Educator Licensure Advisory Council (ELAC) wasn’t getting back to program faculty consistently, we began to hold annual meetings with program faculty to ensure that all program
faculty understood the unit operations, licensure processes and were consistently communicating with the administrative team about program changes and operations at the program level.

The Evaluation Committee continues to meet annually to review data and recommends changes to the ELAC and the SOE Administrative Team. Data reports from this committee and recommendations are disseminated to programs through the ELAC and also through the program level meetings.

**Goal:** The unit, including the TECS department, will move toward “Target” level on NCATE, Standard 2 – Assessment System and Unit Evaluation.

This standard includes three elements, each with a rubric outlining specific criteria that must be met at three levels – “Unacceptable”; “Acceptable”; and “Target”.

Standard Element 2a. Assessment System

Standard Element 2b. Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation

Standard Element 2c. Use of Data for Program Improvement

**Continuous Improvement:** Upon recommendation from the Unit Evaluation Committee, the Educator Licensure Advisory Council, made up of representatives of all unit licensure programs, agreed to choose Standard 2, Element 2b – Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation as the first priority for moving to Target level.

The indicators for Target Level 2b and our progress on is as follows:

2b. 1. “The unit’s assessment system provides regular and comprehensive data on program quality, unit operations, and candidate performance at each stage of its programs, extending into the first years of completers’ practice.”

The Unit Assessment System (UAS) plan was developed in 2003-2004 and was being implemented for our last NCATE/STATE visit in 2008. We have been refining, adding, changing our processes as the assessments have been implemented and offered data for analysis. Several programs have revised their 5-8 focal assessments and rubrics when they found the data did not offer what they had hoped for. This is an ongoing process as new faculty have been hired and bring new ideas and new assessment processes. Data reports demonstrated that it was impossible in some programs to make clear recommendations for improvement on some standards indicators, due to the fact that, across the unit and sometimes within programs, there was no common rating scale.

Subsequently, the Unit Evaluation Committee recommended and ELAC members agreed that the unit develop a common rating scale that will be used across all focal assessments in the unit. ELAC recommended that the first step is to implement common rating scales across all program level focal assessments and then ensure commonality in ratings across the unit. Over the past two years, common rating scales have been developed in the majority of programs and indeed, a whole new assessment system was developed for two programs that previously had disjointed
and disconnected assessments. It is clear that faculty are becoming more familiar with the process of ongoing assessment, rubric and rating scale development. Some are becoming adept at using data to inform programs, however, work still needs to be done in this area. Now that the assessments and survey processes are in place across the unit, the Unit Evaluation Committee has moved from a committee focused on development and implementation of assessments, surveys and external data reports to a committee focused on analysis of continuous data reports and making recommendations for improvements in the areas of unit operations, program quality and improving candidate performance.

The Unit Evaluation Committee and ELAC developed the Unit Assessment System that is well outlined and documented. The next goal is to develop a Handbook for Assessment and Unit Operations which will include matrices. The handbook will outline the unit’s assessment processes and unit operations more clearly and transparently and allow for more effective monitoring of all aspects of unit operations (e.g., governance, budgets, planning, etc.).

To date, it has been difficult to track where our graduates are employed and the state has been unable to provide the information. This year, however, the state has completed a data system and will send aggregated data to the unit regarding numbers of candidates by program and the schools they are hired in. Due to confidentiality issues, the state will not be providing names of individuals. Many of our graduates come from out of state and leave the state upon completion of their licensure and degree making it difficult to tracking candidates into their first three years of employment. This remains a challenge we will be working with as we move forward.

2b.2. “Assessment data from candidates, graduates, faculty and other members of the professional community are based on multiples assessments from both internal and external sources that are systematically collected as candidates progress through programs.”

Our unit assessment system calls for program specific focal assessments which provide the foundation of the system and provide flexibility for programs to meet their particular subject area standards. It is important to note there are commonalities that exist across all assessments that bind them into a cohesive unit system. The major commonalities are: a) most assessments are course and experientially embedded and aligned with the conceptual framework, allowing for assessment in action and context; b) most assessments are performance-based, reviewed and revised in an ongoing manner to ensure they are meeting the intentions of the assessors; c) unit, state and national standards are aligned to the scoring guides and programs work to ensure assessed objectives are clearly delineated; d) assessment results are accessible online in real time to candidates, faculty members, advisors and administrators; e) candidates see their transition point requirements via the online system to stay aware of the requirements. Many of these assessments are completed by members of the professional community such as cooperating teachers and teachers who serve in a practicum supervisory capacity.

The unit assessment system calls for a series of surveys to gather information from candidates, supervising practitioners, alumni and employers. The Data Specialist implements the surveys on a set time schedule. At the end of each semester, the surveys are administered through UMass-Tk20 to candidates and supervising practitioners. Due to the fact we had difficulty collecting
survey data from employers and alumni every five to seven years as called for in our UAS, we have converted to a face-to-face interview process for employers and alumni to gather feedback on our candidates preparation. All available survey data are compiled into a report at the end of each spring semester for discussion at the fall ELAC meetings.

Faculty are evaluated through University Student Response to Instruction (SRTI) course evaluations that faculty utilize to gain feedback on their courses. Faculty members also submit an Annual Faculty Report regarding research, teaching, and service activities. The university and tenured faculty provide external review for accountability through a post-tenure review system - Periodic Multi-Year Review of faculty.

The unit follows a standard timeline for creating external UMA reports. The timeline can been seen in our Unit Assessment System document that outlines the details of the system. External evaluation occurs through National Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs) recognized by NCATE and through the State review process for those programs that do not have a SPA affiliated with NCATE. The unit participates in Federal Title II Reporting, the U.S. News and World Report Survey, and in the annual AACTE Professional Education Data System reporting.

2b.3. “These data are disaggregated by program when candidates are in alternate route, off-campus, and distance learning programs.”

Although our secondary subject area programs have different delivery pathways, the approved programs remain the same. If pathways have enough candidates, data are disaggregated by pathway.

2.b.4. “These data are regularly and systematically compiled, aggregated, summarized, analyzed and reported publicly for the purpose of improving candidate performance, program quality and unit operations.”

In line with NCATE requirements, the unit uses multiple methods to gather data on the quality of operations from multiple sources such as candidates, alumni, supervising practitioners, program supervisors, principals and superintendents. Data are generated from a combination of qualitative and quantitative reports that inform unit and program operations. On an annual basis, the Unit Assessment Committee reviews aggregated data generated from the internal program FAs, unit assessments, surveys, and data from external reports such as annual reporting to the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education Professional Data System (AACTE-PEDS) and annual state reports. The reports and discussions that emerge from these multiple efforts facilitate evidence based decisions about operations such as advising, management of field experiences, candidate recruitment and assessment, alumni connections, and other resource investments. The synthesized data inform program faculty as they make decisions about the best ways to refine and build the unit’s programs. The UAC makes recommendations to the SOE Leadership Team, the NCATE Steering Committee and the programs through ELAC with information on unit and program operations. The collaborative efforts inform the unit on how best to manage and build its programs and the unit.

The unit is in the process of developing a plan for public reporting of data. The state is
developing institutional and program profiles with this goal as well, therefore, in order to not duplicate data and information, we are awaiting the unveiling of the state data reports to which we will link and add additional data as necessary.

2.b.5. “The unit has a system for effectively maintaining records of formal candidate complaints and their resolution.”

As noted in our last NCATE review, the unit does have such a system and we do not see a need to change it at this time.

2.b.6. “The unit is developing and testing different information technologies to improve its assessment system.”

We continue to explore alternatives to Tk20, our online assessment and database system, however, it is working well for our purposes and to date we have not found an adequate replacement that has the complexity that Tk20 has. The provider is constantly updating and improving the system and is responsive to changing it according to our changing needs. The new Data Specialist is highly skilled in technology and continues to work with the system to ensure it is being used in the most effective manner possible for our needs.