

SECTION II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Caring, Competent and Committed: Informed Professionals Promoting Student Success and Excellent Practice in Education is the foundational theme that guides the work of the Professional Education Unit (PEU) at Salisbury University. This conceptual theme of the Framework is basic and straightforward. It defines our mission and is easily understood by all stakeholders: teacher candidates; prospective teacher candidates; Unit faculty; potential employers of our graduates; professional associations and accrediting agencies; and the community at large. Within the context of this conceptual theme are four performance themes with accompanying learner expectations: **Informed and Reflective Pedagogy; Enhanced Student Learning; Scholarship; and Collaboration.**

The [Conceptual Framework of the PEU](#) and the themes of Caring, Competent and Committed are aligned closely with the mission statement of the University which reads:

“Salisbury University’s mission is to cultivate and sustain a superior, student-centered learning community where students, faculty and staff are viewed as both teachers and learners, and where a commitment to excellence permeates all aspects of University life. We recruit exceptional and diverse faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students and support them as they work together to reach the University’s goals. Serving Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region, we are concerned participants in responding to the educational, economic, cultural and social needs of our community and believe that service is a vital component of civic life. Our highest purpose is to empower our students with the knowledge, skills and core values that contribute to life-long learning and active citizenship in a democratic society and interdependent world.”

The university mission speaks specifically to a commitment to excellence as well as to concerned participants and the vital component of service. The highest purpose of SU is to empower our students with knowledge, skills and core values that contribute to lifelong learning and active citizenship.

Currently a vibrant multifaceted university with four endowed schools, Salisbury University was first, and is foremost, an institution dedicated to educating informed and reflective teachers. This commitment to teacher education is understood by the University’s academic administration as well as by the deans and faculty of the three other endowed schools. Salisbury University takes considerable pride in the close collaboration across the campus community in producing caring, competent and committed educators.

Salisbury University and the Professional Education Unit educate teacher candidates who teach in all twenty three counties in Maryland and the city of Baltimore, as well as in numerous other states. However, the PEU is particularly cognizant of its role in the nine county area of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Salisbury University is one of only three, four year institutions on the Shore and the only University to graduate a significant number of teacher candidates in elementary education, early childhood education and several major areas of secondary education. Salisbury University provides the most extensive programs on the Eastern Shore for continuing education. Consequently the PEU views its role as educating an excellent corps of teachers, both for initial certification and continuing certification, as well as to engage in scholarship and the application of scholarship for the enhancement of education in local P-12 schools and beyond.

Faculty in the Professional Education Unit strive to engage teacher candidates and teachers in learning experiences that are dynamic and focused. University faculty strive to teach and reflect on their teaching in ways that model for candidates excellence in content and pedagogy that can be transferred to the P-12 school setting. The PEU faculty draws heavily on construction theory, both the historical and contemporary theories that incorporate a deep content knowledge base used to learn new concepts and processes. This is accompanied by a strong focus on self reflection and metacognition, as well as attention to informed teaching practices based on continuous learner assessments and quality research findings.

Performance expectations in the Conceptual Framework are aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); the Maryland Standards for Professional Development Schools, the Maryland Teacher Technology Standards (MTTS) and standards of Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs) where appropriate.

Candidates are regularly assessed via the Professional Education Unit's Assessment System which is modeled after the Salisbury University Assessment System developed in 2000 using the Nichols model. (See university website: Institutional Research, Assessment and Accountability at <http://www.salisbury.edu/iara/>) A Unit Assessment Committee was appointed by the Dean of the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies in Fall 2002. The charge to the Assessment Committee was to revise the previous assessment system designed for the 1999 NCATE/MSDE visit and to align with revised NCATE and SPA standards. The assessment system includes five major components: goals, learner/operation outcomes, learner/operation benchmarks, results (data), and the analysis of results for candidate and program monitoring as well as for programmatic change.

The Unit Conceptual Framework, first drafted in 1997, was accepted by the faculty as a working document in November 1997. Education faculty and other unit faculty from the Henson School of Science and Technology and the Fulton School of Arts and Sciences reviewed the document during the 1998 year, which resulted in significant revisions. In preparing for the initial NCATE/MSDE Review in 1999, Department and Unit faculty incorporated the Conceptual Framework into their thinking and syllabi. The 1999 Conceptual Framework was to guide the Professional Education Unit (PEU) for the next several years. The Conceptual Framework of 1999 guided the PEU in major curriculum reform, with its underlying theme of a Tradition of Caring and specific themes of: Student Learning, Scholarship, Informed and Reflective Practice, and Professional Collaboration and Development. The Conceptual Framework guided course delivery and candidates' performance outcomes for classes and internships as well as providing a theme for the prestigious Riall Lecture series in which nationally recognized educational scholars are invited to campus twice each year to meet with faculty and teacher candidates. (See a complete listing of Riall speakers in Standard 5 Table 5.7.1.)

With the advent of the **No Child Left Behind** legislation (2001) and a renewed focus on research based practices in education, a significant review of the Conceptual Framework was undertaken beginning in 2003. This study served to highlight even more the Conceptual Framework of 1999. The Framework went through multiple revisions. In addition to updating the content of the document and accompanying references, the document was edited for the name change of the university from *Salisbury State University* to *Salisbury University* as well as editing for new terminology consistent with the *Maryland Redesign of Teacher Education and Professional Development School Standards*.

Much of the discussion centered on the underlying theme of a *Tradition of Caring* as well as the four specific themes. Ultimately the original four themes were retained, but modified and reordered. The original theme of *Informed and Reflective Practice* is now *Informed and Reflective Pedagogy*. *A Focus on Student Learning* is now *Enhanced Student Learning*. *Professional Development and Collaboration* is now *Collaboration*. A fourth theme of *Scholarship* remains, with a rewriting of supportive text to better reflect the priorities and definition of scholarship as reflected by the University and the PEU. In each case learning

outcomes for the four themes were realigned and clarified. *A Tradition of Caring: Informed Professionals Promoting Student Success and Excellent Practice* was expanded to the new theme of ***Caring Competent and Committed: Informed Professionals Promoting Student Success and Excellent Practice in Education.***

Additional revisions included the restructuring of tables that align the Conceptual Framework to professional association standards and Maryland State Department of Education standards. The Maryland Essential Dimensions of Teaching were deleted in favor of the INTASC standards, as were the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. (ISSLIC) standards. Standards for Maryland Professional Development Schools and the Maryland Teacher Technology Standards (MTTS) were added and aligned.

In summary, the basic tenor and focus of the original conceptual Framework of 1999 remains intact. The revised and current Conceptual Framework of 2004-05 has been updated to reflect current thinking and research, as well as to reflect the Maryland Redesign of Teacher Education, PDS standards and Maryland Teacher Technology Standards.

SHARED VISION

The Professional Education Unit at Salisbury University enjoys a close working relationship with Deans and faculty of the Henson School of Science and the Fulton School of Arts and Science. The 1999 Conceptual Framework was well understood by the university community. The revised Conceptual Framework has been shared and discussed at Regional Professional Development Schools meetings and conferences which include representative personnel from P-12 districts. Discussion of the revisions to the Conceptual Framework were an agenda item at meetings over a two year period of the Professional Education Unit, which are attended by faculty from the Henson School and the Fulton School. Various faculty provided specific suggestions which were reflected in multiple rewrites of the Framework.

COHERENCE

The [Conceptual Framework](#) serves to link all parts of the Unit, including both undergraduate and advanced programs. The Conceptual Framework is evidenced in:

- A basis for discussion in program planning and revision.
- A guide to the development and enhancement of the PDS partnership.
- A basis for assessment of teacher candidates and program completers with an emphasis on informed pedagogy and reflection, scholarship, enhanced student learning and collaboration.
- A continuous reminder to both faculty and candidates of their responsibility as professional educators in terms of academic strength, professional competence and a tenor of caring and commitment to the profession and the community at large.
- A lens through which candidates and faculty can view their own performance for both self and peer evaluation.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS AND DISPOSITIONS

The [Conceptual Framework](#) articulates that teachers must be caring, competent and committed. Informed and reflective practice requires a body of knowledge of both content and pedagogy. Increasingly teacher candidates at SU are asked not only to assess their own performance, but to assess the impact of their performance on student learning. In other words, the quality of teaching directly impacts the quality of student learning.

SU focuses strongly on the dispositions of: respect for students and student diversity; advocates for fairness and social justice; and a tone of curiosity and inquiry, honesty, initiative, dependability, professional interaction, collaboration, and a tenor of continuous professional development.

The Unit reaches outside our immediate community for guidance and vision on issues of professional commitment and dispositions. Twice a year, nationally recognized scholars of education are invited to campus to meet with teacher candidates and give a major lecture to the campus wide community and the community at large through the prestigious Riall Lecture Series. Teacher candidates are required to attend the lecture series and respond critically to the lectures through class assignments and discussions. Recent lecturers since 2000 include: Maxine Green, Herb Kohl, Alfie Kohn, Jonathon Kozol, Luis Acosta, Nell Noddings, Erin Gruwell and Linda Darling-Hammond. The common thread woven through all of these lectures is a sense of caring, competence and commitment to the education profession and the larger society.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The concept of diversity is woven throughout the themes of the Conceptual Framework. The Unit's commitment to diversity should be placed in the context of the University's commitment to diversity. Diversity is one of six major goals of the University's core values; the others being excellence, student-centeredness, learning, community and civic engagement. President Janet Dudley-Eshbach has singled out diversity as a major priority and initiative at SU. SU seeks to recruit and retain diverse faculty and students. The percentage of minority students at SU has risen to nearly 15%, admittedly a modest number. Located in a rural area away from any major urban centers, SU collaborates closely with our sister institution, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a Historically Black Institution (HBCU) of Maryland. The Master of Arts in Teaching is a joint program between the two universities and a continuous shuttle service allows students to enroll in courses and enjoy cultural experiences at their sister institution. An Office of Institutional Diversity is housed within the Academic Affairs division and reports directly to the Provost and the President. SU seeks to provide diverse experiences for students through its international programs. Students are encouraged to study abroad for a semester. Within the Professional Education Unit, teacher candidates may do part of their internship abroad through special arrangements with educators in New Zealand or Ecuador.

At the curriculum level, teacher candidates are required to complete the pre-professional course, *EDUC 210 - Schools In A Diverse Society*. Within the Professional Teacher Education Program, all candidates must successfully complete a course on inclusion of special needs students. Candidates are continuously taught to see diverse students and diverse teaching situations as an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally as a mature teacher educator.

COMMITMENT TO TECHNOLOGY

The Professional Education Unit has seen major growth in the use of technology since the last review. This growth has been enhanced substantially by a major Preparing Tomorrow's Teacher to Teach Technology (PT3) grant awarded to Salisbury University in the amount \$1,026,528 from October, 1999 to

January, 2004. The expressed goals of this grant and sub-grants were to: provide faculty professional development in technology; procure hardware and software to support integration of technology into the curriculum; implement electronic portfolios for candidates; promote handheld technology in school classrooms; develop rubrics to assess portfolios; and prepare teacher candidates to use technology to interpret and analyze student, class and school data.

The Unit has its own dedicated technology lab housed in Caruthers Hall, in addition to access to other computer laboratories located across campus.

In 2003 the University began converting to PeopleSoft as a system-wide computer program. All scheduling, class registration and posting of grades is done via GullNet, the SU terminology for the PeopleSoft program. In 2004, faculty in the Unit began using LiveText as a system for posting rubrics on common assessments across multiple sections of course offerings. Assessments can now be aggregated and analyzed for program development and modification.

CANDIDATES PROFICIENCIES ALIGNED WITH PROFESSIONAL AND STATE STANDARDS

The following chart demonstrates the alignment of the Unit’s Conceptual Framework with NCATE and Maryland Redesign.

Table B Alignment of the Unit’s Conceptual Framework with NCATE and Maryland Redesign of Teacher Education		
NCATE Unit Standard	Maryland Redesign Components	SU Conceptual Framework
Standard 1 Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions	Component 1 Strong academic background Component 4 Linkage with P-12 Priorities	Themes: Scholarship Informed & Reflective Pedagogy Dispositions: Caring & Committed Skills: Assessment, Technology & Action Research
Standard 2 Program Assessment & Unit Capacity	Component 3 Performance Assessment Component 4 Linkage with P-12 Priorities	Themes: Informed and Reflective Pedagogy & Enhanced Student Learning
Standard 3 Field Experience & Clinical Practice	Component 2 Extensive Internship Component 4 Linkage with P-12 Priorities	Themes: Collaboration, Enhanced Learning & Informed and Reflective Pedagogy
Standard 4 Diversity	Component 2 Extensive Internship Component 4 Linkage with P-12 Priorities	Threaded throughout Conceptual Framework: Caring; Collaboration; Informed and Reflective Pedagogy; Enhanced Student Learning
Standard 5 Faculty Qualification	High quality faculty assumed in the Redesign	Theme: Scholarship & Collaboration
Standard 6 Unit Governance		Conceptual Framework directs the Unit’s work

The Unit’s Conceptual Framework is a document that pervades our work. The Conceptual Framework speaks to our overall purpose of preparing caring, competent and committed educators. In addition, the Conceptual Framework is a constant reminder to teacher candidates of what it means to be a competent educator in a democratic society.