



## Unit Alumni Survey: Report (Draft)

The following report summarizes results from the Unit Alumni Survey. The results summarized for the current data collection period (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017) are taken from a larger data collection effort based on alumni graduating in 2015, 2016, and 2017. The overall response rate – based on the number of alumni for whom contact information was available across the three years – for this administration was 20.94%; the completion rate was 18.32%. Where possible and to support a comparative examination of alumni satisfaction, data based on the current data collection period (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017) are presented and compared with data spanning the three year collection period. Notes outlining in more detail specific statistical procedures and analyses are appended to this document.

### Section I. Background and Descriptive Information

The current data represent 140 alumni from 2015 to 2017 and 41 alumni for the current data collection period (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017). Alumni for the current data collection period ranged in age from 24 to 51+ years of age. Approximately 4.9% of alumni who completed the survey identified as Black, while 92.7% identified as white. About 2.4% identified as bi- or multiracial, while 4.9% identified as Hispanic or Latina/o. The majority of participants (90.2%) indicated completing their degree in the time that they expected. While the obtained data represented completers at both the initial and advanced levels, there were not enough responses (i.e., < 10) from completers of advanced programs to warrant disaggregating results of the alumni survey by level.

Approximately 46.3% of responses were from alumni of either early childhood or elementary education programs, while 31.7% were from alumni of secondary programs. The majority (75.6%) of completers were employed full time as teachers, while 7.3% were employed as substitute teachers. The remaining alumni who completed the survey served either as paraprofessional educators, educational administrators, or were currently enrolled in a graduate program related to education. Alumni surveyed were primarily employed in a public school either in Maryland (65.9%) or outside of Maryland (14.6%, representing Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania); approximately 7.3% of respondents reported being employed in a private school in Maryland.

Alumni were also asked the number of months (after graduation) it took to secure employment. Available data based on this item indicated that alumni in the current data collection period took, on average, 1.81 months to secure employment (median=2.00). Data based on the entire sample indicated that alumni took, on average, 2.78 months to secure employment (median=2.00). Across these estimates, the majority (94.4%) of alumni obtained employment within 12 months.<sup>1</sup>

### Section II. Alumni Evaluation of Preparation

To assess completers' perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of their preparation, a series of items (25) were administered that assessed standards-based competence across multiple areas. All items included in the alumni survey underwent extensive revision and were approved by the Seidel School's Unit Assessment and Accreditation Committee. Specifically, items were created, revised, and aligned directly with

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<sup>1</sup> Some alumni could feasibly have secured employment prior to graduation. To avoid negative values, responses from alumni who obtained a job prior to graduating were coded as '0'. As a result, results based on the length of time to employment should be regarded as overestimates.

Table 1. Alumni Evaluation Items – Descriptive Information

| Item  | 2016 – 2017 |        | 2015 – 2017 |        |
|---|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|   | Mean        | Median | Mean        | Median |
| 1. Understand how learners develop (InTASC 1; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.55        | 4.00   | 3.69        | 4.00   |
| 2. Support developmentally appropriate learning experiences (InTASC 1; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.47        | 4.00   | 3.63        | 4.00   |
| 3. Support inclusive learning environments for diverse learners (InTASC 2; CAEP, 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.42        | 4.00   | 3.60        | 4.00   |
| 4. Enable diverse learners to meet high standards (InTASC 2; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.32        | 3.00   | 3.43        | 4.00   |
| 5. Support the development of English proficiency among English language learners (InTASC 2, CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2; CAEP/State AFI 1)                                   | 3.55        | 4.00   | 3.53        | 4.00   |
| 6. Implement strategies to make content accessible to English language learners (InTASC 2, CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2; CAEP/State AFI 1)                                     | 3.74        | 4.00   | 3.74        | 4.00   |
| 7. Implement strategies to address the learning needs of gifted and talented learners (InTASC 2, CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2; CAEP/State AFI 1)                               | 3.50        | 4.00   | 3.66        | 4.00   |
| 8. Manage learning environments effectively (InTASC 3; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.53        | 4.00   | 3.60        | 4.00   |
| 9. Support collaboration and positive social interaction among learners (InTASC 3; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.61        | 4.00   | 3.63        | 4.00   |
| 10. Acquire in-depth understanding of the major concepts, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to my discipline (InTASC 4; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2) | 3.68        | 4.00   | 3.66        | 4.00   |
| 11. Promote learners' achievement on content standards (InTASC 4; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.58        | 4.00   | 3.60        | 4.00   |
| 12. Support learners' ability to work collaboratively to solve complex problems (InTASC 5; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.71        | 4.00   | 3.74        | 4.00   |
| 13. Implement varied assessment methods that align with learning objectives (InTASC 6; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.58        | 4.00   | 3.60        | 4.00   |
| 14. Implement appropriate assessments to monitor learning needs and progress (InTASC 6; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.37        | 4.00   | 3.51        | 4.00   |
| 15. Plan instruction to ensure students' learning goals are met (InTASC 7; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.71        | 4.00   | 3.75        | 4.00   |
| 16. Use existing formative and summative assessment data to guide instructional planning (InTASC 7; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.53        | 4.00   | 3.56        | 4.00   |
| 17. Support learners' use of higher-order thinking skills (InTASC 8; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.74        | 4.00   | 3.80        | 4.00   |
| 18. Engage in ongoing professional learning opportunities to further develop knowledge and skills (InTASC 9; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)                                     | 3.89        | 4.00   | 3.91        | 4.00   |
| 19. Apply and support technology standards to design, implement, and assess learning experiences (CAEP 1.5, 4.4/A.4.2; ISTE 5, 6)                                     | 3.39        | 4.00   | 3.48        | 4.00   |
| 20. Model safe, legal, and ethical uses of information and technology (InTASC 9; ISTE 6; MCEE V; CAEP 1.5, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.50        | 4.00   | 3.53        | 4.00   |
| 21. Model ethical behaviors and practices in professional settings (InTASC 9; MCEE I; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 3.76        | 4.00   | 3.69        | 4.00   |
| 22. Work collaboratively with learners and their families to support student achievement (InTASC 10; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 3.84        | 4.00   | 3.82        | 4.00   |
| 23. Engage effectively in leadership roles within the school (InTASC 10; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)   | 2.89        | 3.00   | 2.99        | 3.00   |
| 24. Work collaboratively to advance professional practice (InTASC 10; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)  | 2.74        | 3.00   | 2.93        | 3.00   |
| 25. Reflect on my own professional dispositions and develop a plan when they need to be adjusted (MCEE II; CAEP 1.1, 4.4/A.4.2)                                       | 3.00        | 3.00   | 3.12        | 3.00   |

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) principles, as well as, more broadly, CAEP Standards. Accordingly, the use of these items is supported by validity evidence based on test content (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014, pp. 14-15). A subset of these items also assessed competence in the cross-cutting themes of diversity and technology. Specific items were also administered that targeted areas for improvement (AFIs) in the competencies of teaching English language learners and teaching gifted and talented learners that were identified in previous review; these items provided a basis for examining completers' perceptions of their preparation in these areas, and for evaluating program-level changes made in response to these AFIs.

Items were administered using a 4-point scale: 1–Unprepared, 2 –Somewhat unprepared, 3–Somewhat prepared, 4–Prepared. To evaluate reliability evidence for the items used in the alumni survey, internal consistency reliability was examined. Internal consistency reliability is commonly used to evaluate the reliability of a set of test or questionnaire items. Internal consistency reliability provides an indication of an instrument's reliability by estimating the extent to which items on an instrument consistently measure the same construct (e.g., intern performance).<sup>1</sup> Reliability for the items was strong ( $\alpha=0.95$ ).

In Table 1 (p. 2), item-level descriptive information is presented for the 25 evaluation items. This information is presented both for the current data collection period (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017) and for the obtained sample as whole (across fall and spring semesters of the 2015, 2016, and 2017 academic years). Completers' item-level ratings indicated largely positive evaluations of their preparation across standard and principle areas. Item-level ratings were somewhat lower for InTASC standard 10 as well as for select dispositional/MCEE items.

To support an examination of completers' overall evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of their preparation, a composite score was created across the 25 evaluation items. Specifically, scores across the items were averaged for each completer to provide an estimate of completers' average ratings of effectiveness of their programs. Table 2 provides descriptive information for this evaluation composite score, both for the current data collection period and for the sample as a whole.

*Table 2.* Alumni Evaluation Items – Overall Composite Score Information

| Evaluation Items – Composite Score | Mean | Median | <i>SD</i> | Min-Max   |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| 2016 – 2017                        | 3.49 | 3.60   | 0.58      | 1.00-4.00 |
| 2015 – 2017                        | 3.56 | 3.66   | 0.44      | 1.00-4.00 |

As can be seen in Table 2, completers' scores largely fell toward the higher end of the scale, between 'Somewhat prepared' and 'Prepared'. Completers' scores across groups/time periods were comparable.

Because the evaluation items used spanned all areas of the InTASC standards as well as a subset of the ISTE standards and MCEE principles, separate (i.e., subscale) composite scores were also created to represent and support an examination of each standard or standard area. Specifically, average scores were created to represent InTASC Standards 1-10 as well as select ISTE standards and MCEE principles (see Table 3).

The findings from these descriptive analyses suggested, overall, positive completer evaluations of preparation related to each of the standard and principle areas. Scores largely fell within the 'Somewhat prepared' and 'Prepared' range, with median scores often falling at the 'Prepared' level of evaluation. Scores were somewhat lower for InTASC standard 10 and, to a lesser extent, the MCEE/dispositional score.

*Table 3. Alumni Evaluation Items – Standards-Based Composite Score Information*

| Standard(s)                | 2016 – 2017 |        | 2015 – 2017 |        |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Mean        | Median | Mean        | Median |
| InTASC Standard 1          | 3.51        | 4.00   | 3.66        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 2          | 3.51        | 3.80   | 3.59        | 3.80   |
| InTASC Standard 3          | 3.57        | 4.00   | 3.62        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 4          | 3.63        | 4.00   | 3.63        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 5          | 3.71        | 4.00   | 3.74        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 6          | 3.47        | 3.75   | 3.56        | 3.50   |
| InTASC Standard 7          | 3.62        | 4.00   | 3.66        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 8          | 3.74        | 4.00   | 3.80        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 9          | 3.71        | 4.00   | 3.71        | 4.00   |
| InTASC Standard 10         | 3.16        | 3.33   | 3.25        | 3.33   |
| ISTE Standards (3, 5, 6)   | 3.45        | 3.50   | 3.51        | 4.00   |
| MCEE Principles (I, II, V) | 3.42        | 3.50   | 3.45        | 3.67   |

### Section III. Alumni Satisfaction

Items (5) were also administered to assess completers' satisfaction with their preparation. Specifically, the items evaluated completers' perceptions of the value of their preparation, their satisfaction with their preparation in their education program(s), and their likelihood of recommending Salisbury University to others interested in pursuing a career in education. Items were administered using a 5-point scale: 1–Strongly disagree, 2–Disagree, 3–Neither agree nor disagree, 4–Agree, 5–Strongly agree. Internal consistency reliability for the items was strong ( $\alpha=0.90$ ).

In the following table (Table 4), item-level descriptive information is presented for the 5 satisfaction items. Again, this information is presented both for the current data collection period (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017) and for the obtained sample as whole (across fall and spring semesters of the 2015, 2016, and 2017 academic years).

*Table 4. Alumni Satisfaction Items – Descriptive Information*

| Item   | 2016 – 2017 |        | 2015 – 2017 |        |
|--|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|  | Mean        | Median | Mean        | Median |
| 1. Overall, if I could do it all again, I would still pursue a career in education. (CAEP 4.4/A.4.2)               | 4.47        | 5.00   | 4.41        | 5.00   |
| 2. Overall, my courses at Salisbury University helped me become a better educator. (CAEP 4.4/A.4.2)                | 4.56        | 5.00   | 4.39        | 5.00   |
| 3. I am satisfied with the preparation I received at Salisbury University. (CAEP 4.4/A.4.2)                        | 4.44        | 5.00   | 4.36        | 5.00   |
| 4. I would describe the preparation I received at Salisbury University as effective. (CAEP 4.4/A.4.2)              | 4.50        | 5.00   | 4.41        | 5.00   |
| 5. I would recommend Salisbury University to others interested in pursuing a career in education. (CAEP 4.4/A.4.2) | 4.64        | 5.00   | 4.55        | 5.00   |

In general, completers' item-level satisfaction ratings were quite high, with median values falling at the 'Strongly agree' level. Satisfaction was also comparable across groups/time periods.

To support an evaluation of completers' overall satisfaction with their preparation, a composite score was also created across the 5 satisfaction items. Specifically, scores across the items were averaged for each completer to provide an estimate of completers' average satisfaction. Table 5 provides descriptive information for this satisfaction composite score for the current data collection period and for the sample as a whole.

*Table 5. Alumni Satisfaction Items – Composite Score Information*

| Satisfaction Items – Composite Score | Mean | Median | SD   | Min-Max   |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|------|-----------|
| 2016 – 2017                          | 4.52 | 4.80   | 0.76 | 1.00-5.00 |
| 2015 – 2017                          | 4.42 | 4.60   | 0.71 | 1.00-5.00 |

As can be seen in Table 5, completers' average or composite satisfaction scores were also quite high.

#### **Section IV. Examining the Relations Among Completers' Evaluation of Their Preparation and Their Satisfaction**

To explore the relations among completers' evaluations of their preparation and their reported satisfaction, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between composite scores based on the satisfaction items and scores based on each of the standards-based composite scores (see Table 6). These correlations provide convergent evidence based on expected relationships between teachers' preparation and their perceptions of effective teaching (i.e., validity evidence based on relations to other variables; see Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, AERA, APA, NCME, 2014, p. 16). The analysis was based only on data for the current data collection period.

*Table 6. Correlations Among Completers' Evaluation and Their Satisfaction*

| Score           | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 12   | 13 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----|
| 1. Satisfaction | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 2. InTASC 1     | .65* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 3. InTASC 2     | .71* | .77* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 4. InTASC 3     | .70* | .64* | .72* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 5. InTASC 4     | .80* | .65* | .78* | .84* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 6. InTASC 5     | .72* | .66* | .82* | .67* | .81* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 7. InTASC 6     | .69* | .65* | .85* | .81* | .81* | .72* | -    |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 8. InTASC 7     | .68* | .76* | .79* | .79* | .75* | .72* | .82* | -    |      |      |      |      |    |
| 9. InTASC 8     | .59* | .53* | .44* | .44* | .62* | .59* | .54* | .61* | -    |      |      |      |    |
| 10. InTASC 9    | .76* | .68* | .66* | .66* | .74* | .68* | .72* | .67* | .55* | -    |      |      |    |
| 11. InTASC 10   | .45* | .68* | .54* | .54* | .60* | .65* | .71* | .63* | .50* | .60* | -    |      |    |
| 12. ISTE        | .63* | .65* | .59* | .59* | .74* | .68* | .76* | .62* | .52* | .88* | .69* | -    |    |
| 13. MCEE        | .73* | .80* | .92* | .74* | .81* | .77* | .83* | .75* | .55* | .88* | .79* | .87* | -  |

Overall, correlations were positive and were moderate to strong in magnitude indicating, as expected, a strong pattern of relationships among candidates' evaluations of their preparation and their satisfaction with their teaching education and preparation.

#### **Section V. Predicting Completers' Satisfaction**

To explore the ability of scores on the evaluation items (based on Section II) to predict completers' satisfaction (based on Section III), a linear regression analysis was conducted<sup>2</sup>. This analysis was based in part on existing research that has linked teacher preparation with teacher self-efficacy and satisfaction and has also identified the influence of teacher preparation on teacher candidates' beliefs about effective teaching

(e.g., Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Vasquez Heilig, 2005; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Ng, Nicholas, & Williams, 2010).

This analysis also provides validity evidence in support of the items used in the alumni survey based on relations to other variables and, more specifically, test-criterion relationships (formerly referred to as concurrent or predictive validity; see Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, AERA, APA, NCME, 2014, p. 17). The analysis was based only on data for the current data collection period. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 7.

*Table 7. Regression Analysis – Predicting Completers’ Satisfaction*

|  | $\beta$ (SE) | $t$  | 95% CI<br>[LL, UL] |
|--|--------------|------|--------------------|
| Evaluation composite predicting satisfaction | 0.80         | 7.65 | [0.59, 1.01]       |
| $F=58.44, p < .001$                          |              |      |                    |

As can be seen in Table 7, completers’ composite scores based on the items evaluating the preparation they received significantly predicted their satisfaction with their preparation. In addition, the evaluation scores accounted for a substantial amount of the variance in their reported satisfaction ( $R^2=0.64$ ). Overall, the findings provide predictive evidence and, thus, support the validity of the assessment items used.

### **Conclusions and Next Steps Based on the Alumni Survey Results**

The results of the alumni survey support a number of important conclusions and next steps for the Seidel School of Education to leverage to provide meaningful preparation experiences for its candidates:

1. Alumni provided positive evaluations of the effectiveness of their preparation across a range of standard areas, including InTASC standards (1-9), dispositional principles, and select technology standards.
2. Alumni also provided positive evaluations of the effectiveness of their preparation specifically in areas related to English language learners (e.g., support the development of English proficiency among English language learners, implement strategies to make content accessible to English language learners) and gifted and talented students (implement strategies to address the learning needs of gifted and talented learners). These competencies reflect specific areas of concern for the professional education unit at Salisbury University and were designated as areas for improvement in our prior Accreditation Action/Decision Report. The feedback from our alumni suggest that they feel we are providing them with the preparation they need to effectively teach varied learners from a range of backgrounds and with a range of abilities. We will continue our efforts to assess competencies in teaching English language learners and gifted and talented students.
3. Somewhat lower scores were obtained on measures of completers’ evaluation of their preparation on InTASC standard 10 (leadership and collaboration) as well as completers’ ability to reflect on their own dispositions. Based on the findings obtained, we plan to further monitor and assess both candidates’ and completers’ competencies in these areas over time, and will also discuss implementation of curricular experiences to support candidates’ ability to collaborate effectively and meaningfully with multiple stakeholders (e.g., learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals) to support learning outcomes. In addition, the unit recently implemented a revised dispositions policy (the Seidel School Dispositional Expectations Policy; <http://www.salisbury.edu/seidel/ssdep.html>) that includes explication on as well as self and instructor assessments of candidates’ dispositions at multiple points in both initial and advanced programs. These unit level and programmatic changes aim to improve our completers’ abilities to serve as reflective, ethical educators.

4. Alumni also indicated overall satisfaction with their preparation. We will continue our efforts to assess completers' satisfaction as well as perceptions of the relevance of their preparation.
5. Finally, the unit needs to take steps to bolster both the sample size and representativeness of the alumni/completers that are successfully surveyed. In future assessments, we will employ more targeted strategies to ensure stronger response and completion rates as well as adequate representativeness of the responses obtained (i.e., additional completers of advanced programs). Overall, the findings of this report provide a strong foundation against which to compare future examinations of completers' satisfaction with their preparation.

### References

- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, 13.
- Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2010). Effects on teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Teacher gender, years of experience, and job stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(3), 741.
- Ng, W., Nicholas, H., & Williams, A. (2010). School experience influences on pre-service teachers' evolving beliefs about effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(2), 278-289.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Internal consistency reliability was evaluated through calculation of Cronbach's alpha as a lower-bound estimate of reliability. Cronbach's alpha effectively evaluates the mean of all possible split-half correlations among items in an instrument. Standardized item alpha values were also computed and compared with Cronbach's alpha values.
- <sup>2</sup>Given the nature of the data analyzed, both Pearson correlation coefficients and Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients were computed and compared. Findings with respect to the significance and magnitude of obtained correlations were similar across correlation type.
- <sup>3</sup>Scores were standardized prior to analysis to allow for the creation of confidence interval values around the standardized beta coefficient.