

## Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at Mills College

### Professional Services Division March 2018

#### Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at Mills College. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is made for the institution.

#### Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution

	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	X		
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	X		
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	X		
4) Continuous Improvement		X	
5) Program Impact	X		

#### Program Standards

	Total Program Standards	Program Standards		
		Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Preliminary Multiple Subject	6	6		
Preliminary Single Subject	6	5	1	
Preliminary Early Childhood Special Education	8	8		
Education Specialist Added Authorizations: Autism Spectrum Disorders	3	3		
Education Specialist Added Authorizations: Emotional Disturbance	3	3		
Preliminary Administrative Services with Intern	9	9		

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Committee on Accreditation  
Accreditation Team Report

Institution: Mills College

Dates of Visit: March 4-7, 2018

2017-18 Accreditation

Team Recommendation: Accreditation with Stipulations

Previous History of Accreditation Status	
Date <a href="#">March 8-11, 2009</a> <a href="#">April 15, 2010</a>	<a href="#">Accreditation with Stipulations</a> <a href="#">Accreditation</a>

**Rationale:**

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel. The team felt that it obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Preliminary Multiple/Single Subject Credential Program

After a review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and cooperating teachers, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject credential program. All programs standards are **met** for the Preliminary Single Subject credential program except for the following: **Standard 2:** Preparing Candidates toward the Mastery of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), which is **Met with Concerns**.

Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program: Early Childhood Special Education and Added Authorizations: Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance

After a review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and cooperating teachers, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education Credential, for the Added Authorization in Autism Spectrum Disorders, and for the Added Authorization in Emotional Disturbance.

### Administrative Services Credential Program

After a review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and field supervisors, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program.

### Common Standards

Common Standards 1, 2, 3 and 5 are **met**. Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement is **Met with Concerns**.

### **Rationale:**

### Overall Recommendation

The team completed a thorough review of program documents, program data, and interviewed institutional administrators, program leadership, faculty, field supervisors, cooperating teachers, candidates, completers, and Advisory Board members. All program standards were **Met** for the Administrative Services Credential program and the Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education Credential Program with the Added Authorizations of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance.

All program standards for the Preliminary Multiple Subject credential program were **Met**. All program standards for the Preliminary Single Subject standards were **Met** with the exception of Standard 2: Preparing Candidates towards Mastery of the Teaching Performance Expectations which was **Met with Concerns**. All of the Common Standards were **Met** with the exception of Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement which was **Met with Concerns**. As unit assessment was previously identified as an area for improvement in the prior site visit, the team felt it was important for the unit to meet all requirements of Common Standard 4. Based on the findings, the team unanimously recommends a decision of **Accreditation with Stipulations**.

The team recommends the following stipulations:

1. That Mills College shall submit evidence that the unit regularly and systematically collects data for analysis and use in program and unit improvement efforts.
2. That Mills College provide biannual documentation to the Commission consultant documenting all actions to address the stipulation noted above.
3. That within one year of this action, the institution has collected evidence of actions to address the stipulations noted above.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements.

Multiple Subject

Preliminary Multiple Subject

Administrative Services

Preliminary with Intern

Single Subject

Preliminary Single Subject

Education Specialist Credentials

Preliminary Early Childhood Special Education

Education Specialist Added Authorizations

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Emotional Disturbance

Staff recommends that:

- The institutions response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Mills College be permitted to propose new educator preparation programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Mills College continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

**Accreditation Team**

<b>Team Lead:</b>	<b>Mark Cary</b> Retired, Davis Joint Unified School District
<b>Common Standards:</b>	<b>June Hetzel</b> Biola University
	<b>Lory Selby</b> California Lutheran University
<b>Programs Cluster:</b>	<b>Elizabeth Keithcart</b> University of the Pacific
	<b>Robert Perry</b> Los Angeles Unified School District
	<b>Glenn Sewell</b> National University
<b>Staff to the Visit:</b>	<b>Sarah Solari Colombini</b> Commission on Teacher Credentialing

**Documents Reviewed**

Accreditation Website	Cooperating Teachers Handbook
University Catalog	Survey Data
Common Standards Submission	Field Experience Notebooks
Course Syllabi	Course Matrices
Candidate Files	Advisement Documents
Fieldwork Handbooks	Faculty Vitae
Follow-up Survey Results	PACT data
Needs Analysis Results	Assessment Rubrics
Program Review Feedback	Course Scope and Sequence

## Interviews Conducted

Stakeholders	TOTAL
Candidates	50
Completers	22
Employers	11
Institutional Administration	9
Program Coordinators	7
Faculty	23
TPA Coordinator	2
Advisory Board Members	10
Field Supervisors – Program	8
Field Supervisors – District	12
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Admissions Staff	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>

*Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed by more than one cluster because of multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.*

### Background Information

Mills College, located in Oakland, CA, was founded in 1852 and is an independent liberal arts college for women with graduate programs for women and men. About half of the undergraduates identify as women of color, Mills brings together students with a wide range of ethnicities, interests, backgrounds, and ages in an inclusive, welcoming community. Mills College embraces diversity and social justice as key components of academic, co-curricular and residential life. The college encourages every member of its community to embrace this vision and works to attract, support, and retain students, faculty, and staff who reflect the diversity and social justice values of Mills.

In the 2017-18 academic year, Mills College serves 762 undergraduate women and 549 graduate men and women representing 42 states and 9 countries. Of the undergraduate students, 32% are first generation undergraduate students, 51% are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ), and 57% are students of color. The graduate program has 46% students of color

with 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 10% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11% Black or African American, 17% Hispanic/Latino, 7% two or more races, 49% White, and 5% Unknown. Mills College has a total of 174 faculty consisting of 82 full time members and 92 part time members. The average class size is 17 students.

**Education Unit**

Mills offers an undergraduate baccalaureate degree to women as well as 12 graduate programs open to both women and men within the School of Education at Mills College. Mills College offers both the Multiple and Single Subject Preliminary Credential Program and an Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education Preliminary Credential with Added Authorizations in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbances. It also offers a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program.

A unique feature of the Mills College campus is the Mills College Children’s School which is a laboratory school for preschool and elementary school children located on campus which allows candidates to develop teaching practice through close mentorship from teachers and administrators reflective of the Mills College mission and vision.

**Table 1  
Program Review Status**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Number of Program Completers (2016-17)</b>	<b>Number of Candidates Enrolled (2017-18)</b>
Multiple Subject	21	16
Single Subject	20	20
Early Childhood Special Education*	6	6
Administrative Services Credential – Preliminary	5	9
Added Authorization- Autism Spectrum Disorder*	6	6
Added Authorization – Emotional Disturbance*	6	6

*\*All Early Childhood Special Education candidates are required to earn both the ASD and ED Added Authorizations as part of the Mills College credential program.*

**The Visit**

The visit proceeded in accordance with all normal accreditation protocols.



**Program Reports  
Preliminary Multiple/Single Subject Credential Program**

**Program Design**

The Mills College School of Education (SOE) Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools (TTS) is designed to enable candidates to earn a Preliminary Multiple Subject (MS) or Single Subject (SS) credential. Single Subject credential preparation is offered in the humanities (art, English, foreign language, or social science) or in mathematics and science. Depending on enrollments, not all of these options may be available in a given year.

The program's mission is to prepare professional, reflective, collaborative, and visionary teachers who are committed to improving K–12 education in urban schools. Relying on a principled approach, the program intentionally integrates research, theory, and practice through concurrent coursework and fieldwork that is characterized by collaboration among teachers pursuing different credentials while remaining attentive to social, moral, and political dilemmas common to teaching.

Motivated by a conviction that theory and practice are both integral components of sound teaching practice, candidates are required to spend time at their student teaching placements primarily in the mornings and attend courses at Mills during the evening. Furthermore, most assignments and related coursework include an explicit and purposeful practical component, requiring candidates to carry out inquiry projects at their student teaching field placements.

Leadership in the program is provided by a program chair/director who oversees both the overall program and its day-to-day operation. The chair is a full-time faculty member who reports to the dean of the SOE. Because of the highly collaborative structure of the SOE, the TTS chair is regularly and fully involved in the overall operation of the unit and represents the perspectives of the TTS in unit decision making. Stakeholder input into the program is provided through regular contact between university field supervisors and cooperating teachers as well as through an advisory board whose membership includes teachers and administrators from partner districts.

**Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)**

Over the span of two semesters, TTS candidates take between 11 and 13 courses for Mills College graduate credits depending on the requirements for each credential program and candidates' academic development. Courses are organized with the goal of building upon the candidates' background knowledge and, especially with two-semester courses, previously taught skills and knowledge, and learning experiences. Furthermore, the coherence of the content and pedagogical approaches used in courses throughout the program deliberately build upon the content and experiences in each course in a synergistic manner. The content in courses also are organized to support candidates' ability to successfully complete teaching performance assessment (TPA) tasks during the spring semester.

Both Multiple and Single Subject credential candidates are required to take two foundation courses—Introduction to the Profession of Teaching Diverse Students and Perspectives on Disability, Inclusion, and Assessment—which candidates take in cross-program classes. Other coursework reflected in both programs includes child or adolescent development and learning; methodology of ELD and content instruction; teaching language arts and literature (or teaching reading and writing); curriculum and instruction; and student teaching seminar, which is taught in separate courses depending on the credential being sought. In addition, candidates take pedagogy courses specific to their credential and/or academic specialization, however, several discipline areas are grouped together in a single pedagogy course. Interviews with some single subject candidates, particularly those pursuing science teaching credentials, indicated that this approach may not provide sufficient subject specific pedagogical support. Interviews with both full-time faculty and adjunct instructors who teach in the program provided clear evidence that courses are academically rigorous and demand that candidates be fully engaged in both class work and assignments/projects. Similarly, interviews with candidates and completers confirmed this. Both groups reported that, while the work was very challenging, the result was that they were very well prepared for the demands of teaching. It was also clear from both sets of interviews that the SOE’s focus on academic rigor, equity, diversity, caring, and commitment is deeply imbedded in both faculty and candidates.

Candidates begin their student teaching assignments when the public school year starts at their field placement sites. They are expected to spend at least 20 hours per week at their sites, typically in the mornings, before attending courses scheduled during the afternoon and evening at Mills College. Assignments often include an inquiry dimension and this concurrent design allows candidates to apply, both informally and formally, the concepts, ideas, and theories that they study in their courses within their respective placements. Candidates in the multiple subject program have placements at two different grade levels, one in fall and one in spring. Because of the need for candidates to design and implement curricular plans that are a crucial component of the TPA, the program keeps single subject candidates in the same placement for both semesters.

Field placement sites are selected from a pool of classrooms and cooperating teachers at surrounding schools that are representative of most urban schools in their demographic student composition. Furthermore, field placements are made based on faculty assessment of each candidate’s strengths and needs, in addition to their credential subject and grade level emphasis. Each candidate is assigned both a university field supervisor and a cooperating teacher. Cooperating teachers are selected on clearly-defined SOE criteria to ensure that they are experienced, are appropriately credentialed, and have demonstrated excellence in working with diverse student populations. SOE field supervisors meet with cooperating teachers to provide an orientation to the program, their role in mentoring student teachers, the means that will be used to assess candidates throughout the student teaching assignment, and their role in supporting candidates in completing the TPA (Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) in previous years, edTPA beginning in 2017-18).

Both the university field supervisor and the cooperating teacher conduct regular observations of candidates during their field placements. Three of these are “triad” observations focused on demonstrating proficiency in the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) in which both the field supervisor and the cooperating teacher observe the candidate teaching a lesson using a common rubric, and the three meet after the observation to discuss the evaluations. Candidates, completers, and cooperating teachers all reported in interviews that triad observations were especially important in providing a multi-dimensional measure of candidate progress to use in promoting candidate growth and focusing support. In interviews, candidates and completers reported that their supervisors provided continuous support and that they were always accessible if a candidate needed anything. (On a broader scale, the same candidates reported that throughout their program, they “always knew who to go to” for whatever support they needed, whether it was content- or program-specific support, general advisement, credential information, or “just someone to talk to.”)

During student teaching, candidates’ field experiences serve as content for in-class discussions, both in content coursework and in the Student Teaching Seminars, where candidates explore issues specific to their respective credential/subject areas. During interviews, candidates cited these seminars as being particularly helpful since they are held on a weekly basis and enabled candidates to discuss a wide range of topics.

### **Assessment of Candidates**

Candidates are assessed throughout program coursework against course learning outcomes adopted by the SOE. These learning outcomes, and the rubrics used for measuring candidate proficiency, provide a structure for formatively assessing candidates’ development in relation to program goals and standards requirements. Formative assessment is also a continuous component of student teaching. As mentioned above, fieldwork observations play a critical role in demonstrating that candidates meet TPE requirements. By employing multiple measures during both coursework and student teaching, the TTS program ensures that candidates are progressing satisfactorily through the program and demonstrating proficiency in meeting program standards. When asked whether they received adequate feedback on their progress throughout coursework and student teaching, both program completers and current candidates indicated that feedback from course instructors, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers was consistent and effective in guiding them through the program and helping them grow as beginning teachers.

Summative assessment of candidate proficiency is determined by the Teaching Performance Assessment. In prior years, the SOE used PACT to fulfill TPA requirements. In the current academic year (2017-18), the SOE has changed to using the edTPA as its summative performance assessment. Evidence gathered at the site visit indicated that the TTS program chair, faculty, and field supervisors have been working hard to ensure that candidates and cooperating teachers understand the new TPA process and how it needs to be implemented. Interviews with current

candidates indicated that program faculty and supervisors have been providing considerable support in helping them prepare for edTPA, including offering a “mock TPA” experience for candidates. At the time of the visit, candidates were just beginning to videotape lessons for submission. When asked whether they understood what sorts of TPA-related support could be offered to candidates under the newly-implemented MS/SS standards, both candidates and cooperating teachers indicated that they were getting the information they needed to comply with edTPA requirements as the new assessment was implemented.

### **Findings on Standards**

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, faculty, employers, and cooperating teachers, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject program. All standards are **met** for the Single Subject Program except for the following which is **Met with Concerns**:

#### *Standard 2: Preparing Candidates toward Mastery of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs)*

Evidence from candidate interviews indicated that some single subject candidates are not getting the support they need from the program regarding content specific subject matter methods to effectively address the TPEs.

### **Preliminary Education Specialist Credential: Early Childhood Special Education and Added Authorizations: Autism Spectrum Disorders & Emotional Disturbance**

#### **Program Design**

The Early Childhood Special Education Program, with its two fully integrated added authorizations in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance, is a part of the Early Childhood Education Master of Arts degree program. Candidates have the opportunity to earn a Master's degree, a California credential, and dual authorizations in autism spectrum disorders and emotional disturbance qualifying them to provide educational services to children from birth to pre-kindergarten who are eligible for early intervention or special education services, who are diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum, or who exhibit serious emotional concerns.

The Early Childhood Special Education Program of Mills College is housed in the School of Education. Operational oversight of the program is provided by the chair of the Early Childhood Special Education, who along with the program director, report to the dean of the SOE. The chair and director share responsibility in teaching, advising, and coordinating the program, with the chair providing program oversight and the director overseeing the day-to-day operation of the program.

Including the chair, the program has three full-time faculty and five adjunct faculty who teach program courses. The dean, chair, and director are available to offer support and mentoring to

all faculty in the program as needed. Interviews with program leaders and faculty confirmed that there is a permeating spirit of collegiality within the program that affords all staff the opportunity to communicate with one another regularly – both formally and informally – and to request support whenever it is needed.

In the last two years, a stronger emphasis has been placed on preparing candidates to teach in an inclusive setting by realigning the program's courses to eliminate duplication and to better demonstrate accommodation and modification in curriculum planning and instruction for fully including children with diverse learning needs. For example, Education 258: Early Childhood Curricula for Children with Special Needs is integrated into Education 291 A&B: Theory and Practice of ECE 0-8. This allows a year-long focus addressing theory and practice in curriculum development for neuro-typical infants to preschoolers in the fall semester, and curriculum and instruction for including infants and preschoolers with special needs in the spring semester.

Another significant change is that the program has developed a student exit survey and will be administering that survey at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. This survey is designed to generate responses informing the overall program. The data gathered will help the School of Education obtain critical information to assess the operation of this credentialing program.

### **Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)**

Candidates admitted to this Commission-approved program can expect to complete the program in two years. The following required course sequence will allow the candidate to earn a master's degree and the ECSE credential with added authorizations in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance.

#### Year 1 Semester 1

- EDUC 254 Medical Information: Children in Hospitals and Clinics
- EDUC 255 Children with Special Needs: Infants and Young Children
- EDUC 291A Theory and Practice of ECE 0-8: Infants and Preschoolers
- EDUC 260 History and Theories of Play in Human Development, Culture, and Education

#### Year 1 Semester 2

- EDUC 231 Assessment and Intervention for Children with Special Needs
- EDUC 238 Social, Emotional, and Moral Development and Learning Communities, and Hospital Setting
- EDUC 214 Family Systems and Cultural Diversity: Connections with Schools,
- EDUC 291B Theory/Practice: Curriculum and Instruction for Infants and Preschoolers with Special Needs

#### Year 2 Semester 1

- EDUC 237 Language Development: Literacy, Communication, and Multilingualism (EL emphasis)

- EDUC 276 Leadership and Administration in Early Childhood
- EDUC 275A Field Experience: Special Education & Infant Mental Health
- EDUC 294A Graduate Seminar: Research in Education

Year 2 Semester 2

- EDUC 275B Field Experience: Special Education & Infant Mental Health
- EDUC 294B Graduate Seminar: Research in Education

According to the Early Childhood Special Education Student Teaching Handbook, “the Mills College faculty will make every effort to enhance the connection of the coursework taken at Mills and the fieldwork done at the student teaching placements.” Interviews with current candidates, completers, cooperating teachers, field supervisors, and the program director, indicate that assignments within courses are aligned to relate the coursework and fieldwork. The field supervisor is the key connecting link between the two, in consultation with the candidate. All of the coursework at Mills involves reflective inquiry. During the field experiences, the candidates use journaling for reflection. Links to this journal are provided by the candidate to the cooperating teacher, the field supervisor, and the program director, who work together to ensure relevance between the course requirements and the candidate’s field experience.

The field experiences are intended to provide the candidate with opportunities that include a broad spectrum of experiences with diverse populations of children with various special needs and their families. The student teaching sequence begins with placements in the Mills College Children’s School during the first two semesters fulfilling the requirement for teaching experience in a regular educational setting with infants and toddlers and with preschool children.

During the second year, the candidate fulfills the special education teaching placement assignments by providing early intervention (EI) services for infants and toddlers with special needs one semester, and working with preschool children with disabilities in a special education program the other semester.

These student teaching placements are arranged by a Mills faculty member who works with district representatives to identify suitable placements. The candidate is placed with qualified cooperating teachers. The criteria used to select placements include: (a) the competency of the cooperating teacher, including special education training and ECSE authorized credential; (b) the experiences available to the candidate; and (c) the placement’s compliance with local, state, and federal law pertaining to equal access and opportunity for those served and employed by the site. Diversity of population is a criterion for site selection. Feedback from current candidates, completers, cooperating teachers, and field supervisors showed that great care is given to match the candidate with placements that will maximize growth and development opportunities. Candidates and completers alike shared that they felt completely supported by the Mills College staff and added that they would not have changed anything about their placement experience

other than to have more time learning about all the paperwork expected of an early childhood special educator.

At some sites, a candidate may begin his/her fall placement prior to the beginning of the Mills fall term. Spring placement usually begins the first week of school and continues until approximately mid-June. The candidate is expected to be in the student teaching placements between 15 to 20 hours per week (a minimum of 240 hours per semester), as arranged by the site and the Mills supervisor. The candidates are expected to arrange their schedules to attend staff meetings at the placement sites. In early intervention placements, the schedules are arranged to maximize home visiting opportunities.

### **Assessment of Candidates**

The evaluation of candidates' growth is an ongoing process in both the courses they take and the student teaching placements. The student teaching experience has multiple opportunities for assessment built in. Candidates participate in 5-7 observations per semester by their field supervisor. Goals for the observation are discussed in advance and feedback provided in post-observation conference. At the end of each student teaching placement, a summative evaluation takes place in a three-way meeting between the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and the Mills field supervisor. Each participant brings to that meeting a completed copy of the *Mills College Evaluation of Student Teaching Fieldwork* form. All responses are shared and discussed. Mills faculty use the information from this conference to formulate a final grade for the field placement using a comprehensive program rubric.

The student teaching portfolio that candidates compile is another form of assessment which brings together examples of various skills assessments including:

- Journal entries that provide analysis of the student teachers' evolving perspective on teaching;
- Field supervisor's observation reports and progress evaluation that result from periodic visits to the student teaching placements and consultations with the cooperating teachers; and
- Evaluation of effective implementation of special education services, from theory to practice, throughout the field experience.

Finally, candidates are evaluated using the *Program Rubric: Credential Candidate Evaluation* form at the end of each year to mark their progress and to determine competency for credential recommendation. This evaluation form is completed by a team composed of the ECSE program chair, the program student advisor, and a major professor in the program at the end of each school year. An ECSE credential candidate must show a minimum of "Satisfactory" with "Consistent" across all program standards in order to be recommended for a credential.

### **Findings on Standards**



After a review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that **all program standards are Met** for the Early Childhood Special Education Program, and the Added Authorizations in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance.

## **Preliminary Administrative Services Credential**

### **Program Design**

The Mills College Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) Program is designed to prepare candidates to provide leadership in a variety of school environments, with the main focus of their preparation being on working effectively in large urban schools. Interviews provided clear evidence that Mills College has developed strong relationships and partnerships in the surrounding communities and school districts, and many program candidates are currently leaders in the local school districts. Stakeholder input into the design, operation, and evaluation of the program comes not only from the direct participation of program faculty in the surrounding communities but also from an advisory board that meets twice each year.

Credential candidates complete the program in two semesters plus an additional six-week summer term for a total of 24 semester units of coursework. The program includes six content courses and two fieldwork courses. Candidates may earn a master's degree in educational leadership by taking an additional 16 semester units over two years. Oversight of the program is provided by a program chair, with day-to-day operations overseen by a program director—both of whom report directly to the dean of the SOE.

The PASC program is designed to engage candidates in authentic activities to demonstrate competencies in the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs). Geared toward working professionals, classes take place in the evenings or occasionally on weekends at the Mills College campus. Coursework and fieldwork are designed with a focus on adult learning needs and recognize that learning is greatest when it can be applied to situations of interest to the learner and where there are immediate and concrete benefits. Interviews with faculty, current candidates and program completers confirmed that the program puts a high priority on candidates' learning how to address achievement gaps linked to race and social standing, providing the skills and knowledge needed to successfully and effectively educate children of poverty and children of color. Interviews with employers indicated that Mills candidates are reflective of their practice, prioritize equity and diversity of students in schools today, have strong leadership skills, and are "self-starters."

Acceptance to the program involves a rigorous process of admission that includes an initial screening of candidates, documentation of candidate qualifications and experience, a written essay designed to assess desired candidate dispositions, and a formal interview with program



faculty. At the visit, the program director explained that the interview stage of the admission process is very important since the program is committed to graduating highly effective school leaders.

**Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)**

The PASC program has been structured to provide a logical sequence for supporting candidate learning. The curriculum is designed to develop candidates’ knowledge and skills in conducting informal assessments, using specific assessment tools, techniques, and rubrics, and promoting effective instruction and learning at their school sites. Courses are offered in developing strong overall school leadership skills, instructional leadership qualities, knowledge of school law and policy, knowledge of budgeting and school finance, human resource management, and effectively working with diverse communities and families. In addition, a newly-developed course designed to prepare candidates for the various “trauma” situations students face in schools today was added to the program based on input from partner districts. Interviews with program faculty indicated that the coursework is sequenced in a manner that effectively meets program goals. The effectiveness of the course sequence was also confirmed through interviews with candidates currently enrolled in the program as well as with program completers.

Coursework includes experiences that include “culminating assignments” to assess key learning goals, reflective writing assignments, and a personal leadership journal or portfolio. Fieldwork is coordinated with each candidate’s fieldwork course instructor, the fieldwork supervisor, and a site administrator from the host school. Each experience has been designed to align with the real world of school leadership and assess a set of candidate learning outcomes and program standards. The assessment activities and experiences have been designed to be relevant and realistic and to directly apply what is learned in coursework throughout the program. Interviews with candidates and program completers confirmed that coursework and fieldwork assignments are highly relevant and flexible so that candidates are able to adapt assignments to their particular school environments and learning needs.

During fieldwork, all candidates are supported by a university fieldwork course instructor, a fieldwork supervisor and site/district mentor. Program candidates’ coursework is enhanced, and program standards are mastered, by performing administrative tasks as a major component of the fieldwork course. Interviews with current program candidates and completers confirmed that outstanding support was provided from university supervisors and program faculty. Fieldwork supervisors were very helpful in assisting candidates to adapt assignments to their specific work settings and in guiding candidates’ successful completion of all fieldwork assignments. Current candidates and recent graduates indicated that the fieldwork course offers a variety of opportunities for candidates to apply content they learn in courses to successfully complete fieldwork activities. While providing candidates flexibility in tailoring fieldwork assignments to their specific situations, interviews confirmed that the coursework and fieldwork, combined with university and site supervisor support, were very effective in preparing candidates for a wide range of school leadership roles.

### **Assessment of Candidates**

A review of program documents and interviews with faculty, candidates, and program completers provided clear evidence that candidates are assessed in multiple ways throughout the program. Candidates are assessed regularly in their courses with a variety of assignments, including project-based assignments, writing assignments, journal writing, and the like. Coursework and fieldwork assignments are designed to introduce, practice, and demonstrate mastery of program standards. The value of coursework and attention to rigorous academic study and thought is reflected in the candidate's ability to apply theory to practice with a focus on educational leadership, equity, and diversity of student populations, and reflecting on what they learn and how that learning applies to school administration. Throughout the program, candidates compile evidence of their fieldwork activities and their reflections on these, as well as fieldwork evaluations, in a portfolio that is reviewed by program faculty in an exit interview with the candidate.

### **Findings on Standards**

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that **all program standards are Met** for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program.

## Common Standards

### Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation

Findings: Met

Mills College credential programs seek to prepare educators to shape the future of urban education by serving diverse constituencies and evaluating and using new ideas for teaching and learning. Equity, diversity, academic rigor, and community engagement are central to the School of Education's (SOE) mission and are clearly evident in all program and unit operations. Core beliefs that serve as foundations for all SOE programs include the notions that practice is reflective and requires active and systematic inquiry for learning throughout one's career; that practice is collegial in that professional learning happens in a collegial context that promotes community; and that learning is developmental and constructivist and is best guided by developmental conceptions of how learners acquire knowledge. All SOE programs clearly reflect the SOE vision and mission and are designed to effectively implement California's adopted standards and curricular frameworks in ways that are tailored to the needs of urban schools. Interviews with university faculty, instructional personnel, district partners, and completers from all programs provided clear evidence that Mills not only effectively prepares candidates to support students in meeting adopted standards, but consistently goes beyond that with the ultimate goal of transforming urban education.

Mills College faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in credential program operations. Department chairs and program directors are responsible for organizing and coordinating each credential program under the direction of the Dean of the SOE. In addition, program directors are responsible for academic advisement in each program. A combination of Mills faculty, adjunct instructors, and contracted employees provide instruction and supervision of candidate fieldwork. Cooperating teachers from partner districts provide onsite support and supervision of candidates as well as evaluating candidates in field placements and maintaining regular communication with university supervisors to apprise them of ongoing candidate progress and needs. Community involvement in SOE organization and decision making occurs through advisory boards that are appointed annually by each program and through a multitude of community partnerships and grants that involve regular collaboration between Mills faculty and partner schools and/or districts. During interviews, community members and cooperating teachers who work with Mills consistently reported feeling "honored" or excited to work with Mills because of the outstanding record of service the SOE has in the Bay Area.

As part of their responsibilities, the SOE requests its faculty to regularly engage and collaborate with the P-12 communities of Oakland and surrounding cities. Some examples of this collaboration include serving on district advisory boards; acting as principal or co-principal investigators and collaborators on multiple grants and programs to support students in Oakland and West Contra Costa County; collaborating on teacher action research projects in partner districts; providing professional development and/or coaching for teachers and administrators in partner districts; and curriculum development. As the visit progressed, the team heard about

more and more ways in which Mills faculty not only engage and collaborate with surrounding districts and schools, but in which Mills is a driving force in promoting transformative actions that are contributing significantly to student success in public schools at all levels.

The Dean is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the SOE, overseeing faculty and staff, participating in key SOE committees and making financial decisions with input and participation of faculty and staff. Interviews with the Dean and Provost confirmed that the Dean has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all SOE programs, and interviews with faculty and staff consistently indicated that the Dean is effective in addressing these needs. At the institutional level, the Dean meets regularly one-on-one with the Provost as well being a member the Dean's Committee, comprised of the Provost, Associate Provosts, Deans of Mills' three other schools, and the college registrar and librarian. Within the SOE, the Dean has created a highly-collaborative structure in which faculty and staff are regularly involved in a wide range of decision making. Personnel may meet as program faculty, unit faculty, focus groups, or "all-hands" gatherings that bring together all members of the SOE for collaborative engagement. Interviews with the Dean, Provost, and SOE faculty confirm that the institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the operation of each credential program. The SOE receives an annual allocation from the institution for personnel costs and operating expenses. The unit also receives indirect dollars from multiple grants and projects which enable to Dean to fund special events and projects, to invite speakers, and to cover other one-time expenses. Sufficient faculty and instructional personnel are funded to maintain small class sizes and to provide effective advisement, field-based supervision, and clinical experiences. The SOE also has dedicated personnel for recruitment and admissions. In addition to college funding for faculty development for ranked faculty, the Dean supports professional development activities to which all SOE faculty and instructional personnel are invited. Examples of these include faculty workshops in inclusive teaching strategies; rethinking the lecture for increased student engagement; teaching for rigor, inclusion, and retention; and incorporating metacognition into daily classroom practices. All full-time faculty (ranked and contract) have offices in the SOE building, which is instrumental in supporting access and collaboration within and between programs.

The Provost acknowledged that the SOE is highly regarded at Mills for its "high value" programs and serves as a "flagship" school which has significantly contributed to Mills' reputation not only in the Bay Area, but across the state and nation. As such, the institution is strategic in assigning resources for faculty to ensure the continuing strength of its programs. In the most recent round of hiring at Mills, the SOE was granted two of the four faculty lines approved for the college.

Faculty diversity is central to Mills' effectiveness in preparing candidates for work in urban schools. In recruiting new tenure-track faculty, the SOE works with the institution to ensure that positions are advertised and filled in compliance with Mills' diversity guidelines. Positions are advertised nationally to promote attracting the most qualified candidates, and in the most recent hiring attracted over 100 applications. The selection process involves careful screening to identify candidates who are not only well-qualified, but who also demonstrate the experiences and values

that will contribute to the effectiveness of the SOE and to the community partnerships in which the SOE is engaged. Interviews with full-time faculty provided multiple examples of how new hires are supported to promote their full participation in the life and culture of the SOE. It was clear from talking with faculty, both in groups and individually, that each of them embodies the mission and values that drive SOE efforts in transforming urban education. Adjunct faculty are hired on a per-course basis, with many adjuncts having prior or ongoing connections to Mills through projects, partnerships, or district initiatives in which the SOE participates. A review of documents and interviews with the Dean and full-time faculty confirmed that adjunct faculty are also highly qualified for the courses they teach and consistently model best practices in teaching and scholarship. This was also echoed in interviews with candidates and completers.

Interviews with candidates, completers, community partners, advisory board members, and adjunct instructors provided unanimous testimony about the quality of SOE faculty and instructional personnel. As the team proceeded through the visit, every member reported meetings that affirmed that strength, depth, and commitment of SOE instructors, providing clear evidence that the SOE's reputation for outstanding instruction is well-deserved. Candidates and completers consistently reported that SOE faculty and instructors demonstrated expertise in the content they taught, employed effective instructional practices, and promoted a learning environment characterized by academic rigor, attention to individual differences and needs, and a caring community. In addition, every conversation team members had with completers, candidates, and community partners noted the consistent and powerful ways in which faculty demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, and service.

The SOE utilizes a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates who are recommended for a credential have met all requirements. The chair or director of each program is responsible for advising, monitoring, and documenting a candidate's progress through the program. Once all program requirements have been met, the chair or director signs the tracking form and submits it for the Dean's signature. This information is then submitted to the Mills Center Record Office which reviews the forms, and once that review is completed, the Record Office indicates on the candidate's transcript that all coursework for the credential has been completed.

When applying for a credential, candidates must submit the required credential documentation, including an official transcript reflecting the completion of program coursework, to the credential analyst, who is responsible for tracking credential program progress. Interviews with program chairs and the credential analyst confirmed that all academic advising and monitoring is done by chairs and directors, and the credential analyst only does credential-specific advising.

## Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support

Findings: Met

All members of the education unit, including the Dean, faculty, and staff, recognize the critical importance of recruiting, admitting, and supporting diverse candidates to serve students in California schools. In the diverse context of the Oakland community and greater San Francisco Bay Area, Mills recruits and admits a diverse student body, providing support, advice, and assistance to promote successful matriculation through the program.

Interviews with Dean, program directors, and the SOE Director of Admissions and Enrollment, along with an examination of admissions materials, confirm that the unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications. Mills recruits from a diverse urban setting to recruit potential candidates in multiple ways through special events, information sessions, application workshops, as well as events focused on each specific teacher educator program.

Interviews with program chairs and directors, technical advisors, university supervisors, staff, completers, and the credential analyst provided ample evidence of a clearly defined process to guide advisement, support candidates, and assist those in need of additional support. Scaffolding of performance expectations begins with candidate interviews and carries through in the summer day-long retreat which sets the tone, goals, expectations, and community mindset of a learning community as candidates matriculate through SOE programs. Technical advisors are also the faculty/directors of MS/SS seminars, which means that candidates in that program see their advisors weekly in seminar. This ensures that advisors have regular, frequent opportunities to check in with candidates and provide any needed support.

Faculty ensure that candidates meet all qualifying requirements for each credential via key assignments, formative and summative assessments, cooperating teacher evaluations, and university supervisor evaluations. In addition to communication from technical advisors, faculty, and staff, a Blackboard system, developed by the credential analyst, ensures that each requirement of the credential is systematically met and collected. Included in the Blackboard system is also an online tutorial to assist students throughout the process. Candidates can also contact the credential analyst directly for credential-specific information. Issues of concern are regularly brought to faculty meetings during a “student issues” time that is regularly on the faculty meeting agenda.

In cases where a candidate encounters a situation that might lead to a semester off or a delay in the program, an Alternative Path document is drafted and the candidate and the advisor sign the document. Records are in both paper and electronic forms. The team ensures a plan of support to help the qualified candidates complete the program in a time frame that works for the candidate. Similarly, candidate performance is monitored throughout each program and used to guide support efforts both in coursework and fieldwork. In the event a candidate is not meeting program expectations or requirements—or is not making satisfactory progress—a system of

documented support is initiated along with a remediation plan. In the event a candidate is not able to successfully complete the remediation plan, the candidate is not allowed to continue in the program. Evidence was triangulated through interviews with faculty, staff, and completers to confirm the support, advice, and assistance provided by Mills teacher educator programs.

In addition to support during the program, interviews with faculty, staff, university supervisors, completers, cooperating teachers, and employers confirm seamless support, advice, and accessibility of professors and staff as candidates matriculate into the first years of their teaching profession. The Mills Scholars program, a multi-grant supported program, is yet another example of how professors stay relationally linked to their cohorts, leading to strengthened support for in-service teachers, and contributing to retention in the field. The Mills Scholars program has existed for ten years and has become such an esteemed community of inquiry-based educators that more than half of the 300-plus teacher educators who are Mills Scholars are from other institutions. School districts are using Mills Scholars round tables and research conferences on ongoing dilemmas of practice as professional development.

As reported by several employers during site visit interviews, the diverse, well-prepared population of completers from Mills are equipped for the realities of the P-12 classroom and are retained in their schools longer than their peers. One administrator stated that 9 of 52 of his teachers were hired from Mills during the last 3 years and that none of them had left. This has not been the case with hires from other institutions. Administrators volunteered that they are enthusiastic about hiring candidates from Mills, not just for their readiness to teach, leadership, and commitment to social justice, but because they stay in their positions and raise the performance, not only of their own classroom, but of their grade level teams. As confirmed through numerous interviews, Mills' graduates are effectively prepared for the realities of urban education, as employers, cooperating teachers, and candidates themselves testify to the embodied values of Mills' guiding principles—leadership, justice, care, collegiality, inquiry, reflection, motivation, analysis, and reflective assessment—demonstrated by Mills' preservice candidates as well as currently-employed graduates.

**Standard 3: Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice**

**Findings: Met**

The unit has designed and implemented a coherent sequence of coursework and clinical experiences to prepare candidates to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards. Program sequences are clearly described on the SOE website, in marketing materials, and on program advising sheets and were confirmed through interviews with the Dean, program chairs and directors, faculty, completers, and employers. Coursework and fieldwork are closely integrated and directors, faculty, fieldwork supervisors, and candidates reported that the intentional linkage between coursework and field experience provided the foundation for candidates being able to learn, practice, and demonstrate essential research-based teaching practices and competencies required by the credential for which they are applying. Examination of course syllabi also indicated up-to-date research on effective practice,

and interviews with faculty consistently indicated ongoing syllabus revision based on current research.

All programs, under the direction of the Dean, collaborate with colleagues and partners in the selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to each program. Interviews with program directors, faculty, university supervisors, and employers confirmed this collaboration. Site-based supervisors are certified and experienced in teaching the specified content authorized by the credential. Chairs, directors, faculty, and university supervisors described a process, before the beginning of each semester, in which they discuss in detail the placement possibilities, according to the appropriate standardized criteria, and then identify partners that would be best matches for the specific Mills College candidates. Partners selected consistently reflect schools and classrooms with diverse student populations and Mills' courses of study consistently teach research-based practices for improving teaching and student learning in highly diverse P-12 schools.

Mills College faculty are productive researchers in the area of diversity and social justice. For example, *Teaching as Principled Practice: Managing Complexity for Social Justice* (Sage), is collaboratively authored by seven Mills College professors. The Spencer Foundation Grant, authored by Wanda Watson from the Multiple Subject Program, provides support for development of an ethnic studies curriculum. Throughout the interviews and over the course of the visit, the faculty consistently described a reflective practice that centers around knowing each candidate and providing the best possible support to ensure candidate success in coursework, field experience, and clinical practice, preparing them to enter the field of education as knowledgeable practitioners in the area of research-based strategies for diverse, urban P-12 settings.

Interviews with program chairs, directors, faculty, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors verified that site-based supervisors are trained in supervision and oriented to the supervisory role. The supervision and orientation of the site supervisor happens through providing a handbook and an initial orientation/triad meeting that helps the site supervisors understand their role. Site supervisors are invited to on-campus meetings for orientation, and/or provided online webinars and multi-media presentations. As the semester progresses, each site supervisor receives regular emails from staff/faculty to inform them regarding the progression of the semester and critical dates and junctures in the program sequence. The university supervisor provides orientation to each cooperating teacher, training on how to mentor candidates, and instruction about program components, including candidates journals, portfolio, edTPA, triad meetings, regular visits by the university supervisor to the campus, and crisis intervention meetings, should these be needed. There is frequent, ongoing evaluation of candidate progress, the quality of mentoring by the site supervisor, and decisions to be made to enhance the support of the candidate. These collaborative decisions are made by the team based upon observational data, candidate input, and data collection. Site supervisors are recognized through invitations to campus events and ongoing relationships with the Mills faculty and staff.



Programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice through weekly communication with the candidate and site-supervisor via candidate journals, emails, phone conversations, triad meetings, and campus visitations and observations. The faculty maintain a database with details about each cooperating teacher and their effective mentoring of Mills College candidates which informs the next round of placements, as well as the current placement. The supervisors monitor the progress of the candidate and the input of the master teacher as they regularly read the candidates' reflective journals. As part of this process, field-based supervisors also monitor candidates' lessons and supervisory feedback. Any concerns from fieldwork supervisors are communicated to the program director.

For each educator preparation program Mills offers, candidates have significant experience in school settings where the curriculum aligns with California's adopted content standards and frameworks, and where the school reflects the diversity of California's student population. Candidates work with a wide range of diverse students identified in the program standards, primarily placed in the Oakland and greater San Francisco Bay Area school districts. SOE documents and interviews with program chairs, directors, faculty, completers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors confirmed these findings.

#### **Standard 4: Continuous Improvement**

#### **Findings: Met with Concerns**

Evidence provided prior to and during the site visit confirmed that Mills College incorporates a range of data to inform change decisions for continuous improvement. Interviews with administration, faculty and staff confirmed programs annually provide the Dean with various types of data about candidate and program effectiveness. Examples of these data include TPA and RICA pass rates, feedback from cooperating teachers and university supervisors and from employers one year beyond program completion. University supervisors and cooperating teachers in the Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential programs complete three triangulated evaluations with candidates over the course of student teaching. Additionally, Mills College has a system of course evaluations in which candidates provide feedback on course content and the instructor/faculty teaching the course. Course evaluations are reviewed by the program directors and the Dean and the results are shared with instructors. These are a major source of data used in determining whether course revisions are needed.

Interviews with unit administration and faculty indicated that the unit follows a consistent and deliberative process for change that involves addressing an identified need, sharing the need with the departments, seeking input from faculty and other constituents, moving through the administrative approval process and ultimately leads to the desired change. The particular individuals and groups that are involved in the process may vary depending on the specific nature of the change being considered—and whenever appropriate, will include institutional administration—but the process itself ensures that all stakeholders at the program and unit level

are represented at appropriate points in the implementation effort regardless of the particular need that initiated the process.

Interviews with administration, faculty, staff, advisory board members, and field supervisors confirms that due to the small size of the programs, much of the evaluation process is informal, based on regular conversations with candidates, cooperating teachers, and other faculty members. Each group acknowledged the need to move toward a more deliberate, systematic data collection process to further inform the decision making and change process. To this end, a unit assessment development plan was launched in Fall 2017 in which each credential program provided 2016-2017 data on admissions, ranked faculty, adjunct faculty, field supervisors and student achievement. These data, in combination with student exit survey data, course evaluations and information collected at program meetings, has been analyzed by the Dean to set goals for continuous improvement for the credential programs which the program faculty review and approve.

There was universal agreement among employers and advisory board members interviewed at the site visit that SOE graduates are—and have consistently been—well-prepared and their top choices for new hires. In order to make the continuous improvement process more explicit and transparent across all programs and to fully meet standards requirements, the team feels it is essential that the unit implement a system of regular and systematic data collection for use in guiding improvement efforts across all programs.

**Rationale:**

The team saw clear evidence that the unit uses a consistent process to guide improvement efforts, but data are not currently collected from multiple sources in a regular and systematic manner across all programs.

**Standard 5: Program Impact**

**Findings: Met**

Each program has identified key assessments and fieldwork evaluations that allow candidates to demonstrate their preparedness to educate and support all students in meeting state-adopted academic standards. Interviews with administration, faculty, field supervisors and candidates confirmed that formative assessments throughout the program provide valuable support for candidates as they develop increased knowledge and skills.

Results of assessments reviewed during the visit indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements prior to being recommended for a credential. The credential analyst described the process all programs use in reviewing that candidates meet all state requirements including successful completion of assessments. District personnel who hire graduates consistently report that the graduates from Mills are some of the best prepared

professionals they hire. Program completers across programs indicate that they are well prepared to begin their professional careers as educators.

Mills College program completers demonstrate a positive impact in the schools and surrounding community. School administrators consistently reported that the teachers and other school personnel they hire from Mills are the best that they hire. When they have openings, they reach out to Mills before seeking other candidates.

The SOE continues to clearly demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on schools in the districts they serve. The Mills Teacher Scholars program is a professional learning organization that brings together local educators to explore key topics. Since 1999, the Mills College Lesson Study Group has conducted research on lesson study in U.S. settings, including schools, districts and pre-service education where teachers jointly plan, observe, analyze and refine actual lesson plans. Through a grant with the National Science Foundation, the NSF Mills Teacher Residency program provides educational opportunities for low-income talented women to enter undergraduate majors in STEM. The Mills College Children's School serves children from birth to age 10 in four developmentally-appropriate programs: Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, and K-5 elementary. In addition, the SOE has multiple partnerships with local schools and districts that are having a demonstrated impact on improving student learning in those schools.