**Education Department**

**Common Curriculum Visioning Committee**

1. **What are the strengths of your department/program? What do you already do well?  Remember that these responses will be shared with the community at large, so please use this opportunity to brag a little bit.  What do you want people outside your department/program to know about your successes and strengths?**

Advising, teaching and support for students is outstanding in this department. For example, students have very strong field experiences and experiential learning starting with the first course. We develop strong relationships with students and in the community. Comments from the community (attached below) demonstrate our strong relationships.

Students move through as a cohort through their block system where they can support to each other. This has been a positive experience.

We take pride in the number of students who are employed (In the 90 percentile upon graduation).

One principal once was asking for a reference for a student from CSB/SJU told a faculty member that that student was immediately moved to the top of the pile because he/she was a graduate from CSB/SJU. This is a real complement to our faculty and the program

Student teaching is a positive experience.

Districts want our students to return to the districts where they have interacted.

Collaboration and support within the department is a strength. Faculty are willing to pitch in and work together and get things done. The quality of teaching is high. The faculty in the department laugh together (try to enjoy and demonstrate an optimism important for lives and student life).

Content that we teach is integrative and relevant for preparing for teaching and for their real lives (think critically and reflectively). We prepare them for future positions and citizens and are always working to improve this as well.

1. **What do you wish you could do better, or do more of?  What would it take (resources, support, etc.) for you to reach those goals?**

Facilities. We are in one of the oldest buildings and it needs updates. To name a few issues: acoustics in classrooms are poor, flooring, lighting, heating, cooling all need updating.

We have a lack of public transportation for students to complete their practicums and student teaching. How do they get to these other schools? There are likely liability issues and this limits opportunities for students to see and witness complex situations (diversity, etc. that they might see at schools further away from our campuses).

Outside fees: Our majors have incredible outside fees (board of teaching, testing, background checks, outside of the institutions). These students could almost go on a study abroad trip with the fees that they spend to get licensed.

We would like all students to do a study abroad (at least one semester).

We would love to see the first semester be free or a type of internship or perhaps the last semester (or fifth year was free where they would be allowed to engage in additional coursework, travel..) would be optimal for teaching; would love more flexibility (but requires time and money)

More support for engaging students to teach in the 21st century in regards to technology. They are teaching a generation with pocket technology (not necessarily the solution to teaching but can be a vital attribute) but we would like to prepare them purposefully.

More publicity for students that are highly commended in schools they are teaching (more publicity for alums that are successful) or even active students-have a list of vignettes that were unsolicited and raving about specific students; would be great to highlight their accomplishments

1. **Leaving aside discipline specific knowledge, in what ways does your department/program best contribute to providing our students with a liberal education for their lives beyond college, as informed and engaged citizens, productive employees, ethical beings, etc.?**

Liberal arts: Even though we are a professional department, we do a wonderful job having a vision for the true purpose of education which fits into liberal arts: how do we support human flourishing? Students have to think beyond professional development. They have to address questions like: what is the purpose of education? They have to examine their self-growth and develop citizens meeting the common good.

All of the faculty have an eye towards ethics.

Historically, have to respond to accreditation agencies. In doing so, we have addressed diversity across our curriculum and have identified how to do this through various lenses; embedded in curriculum is intercultural issues (part of common curriculum requirements); high value for our students

We have opportunities to share our areas of expertise in pedagogy and assessment. We would like to see more space or ways that education department can share this with our colleagues. This expertise is applicable to any field.

We really support a study abroad experiences, cultural experience and try to make this work which requires careful advising.

Gender and diversity and experiential learning: they are loaded and honored in the coursework and do a great job meeting these needs and go beyond what the requirements are; Guide our students to be thinking about these factors as they go into their own classrooms

A lot of the common curriculum requirements sit in our coursework. Therefore, we have this opportunity to contribute. Eled majors have a tight schedule so this allows them to see these requirements (but difficult to take this coursework outside of eled-difficult to take courses outside of the department if they want to graduate in four years) (their requirements are quite substantial for graduation).

1. **Are there ways in which you would like to see your department/program contribute to liberal education that so far it has not been able to?**

Already doing this but study abroad is a hallmark feature of the liberal arts mindset; we have an ability to engage in diversity and how it impacts the world (bring the world back home); can we do more to help students with diverse experiments

Sometimes when working with first year students, they can complete a lot of their common curriculum within the eled requirements; this does help eled students travel abroad (even if they don’t take a lot of courses outside of the eled department) but they don’t get to experience as many courses outside the department.

**Comments from principals and cooperating teachers**

From an email from Eric G. Olson Pinewood Elementary K-2 Principal Monticello

“I want to let you know that your teacher candidates from St. Ben’s/St. John’s do an awesome job of coming into our school before their student teaching experience and making a great first impression.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (student teacher) really impressed Ms. Derby. She already knows all the names of the students in the second grade classroom and her experience is not supposed to begin until January 5. Way to go! We should think about taking this concept to a new level with St. Ben’s/St. John’s. How can I get the best of the best or help the best of the best get jobs? We should get together for some brain storming some time. I can tell you that I am a BIG supporter of the teachers from your college.”

From an informal discussion with Allyson Kuehn, the principal at Annandale Elementary School:

(This school has hired many of our graduates.)

Your students interview differently than students from other universities. They not only know the ‘textbook’ answers, but they have the experience to back up their responses.

From cooperating teachers: (fall, 2014)

\*Super preparation by St. Ben’s again on this student teacher. Thank you!

\*This school does a fabulous job of getting the student teachers prepared. Kristi was fabulous to work with and a great support to her students she was supervising.

\*Thank you for always providing top-notch candidates. I so appreciate their readiness to step on board.

\*I’ve had several student teachers from three different programs. I feel CSB/SJU prepares the teacher candidates very well. Thanks for the opportunity to have a Bennie in our class.

\*My intern is ready to have her own classroom. I am impressed with how competent she is.

From cooperating teachers: (spring, 2014)

\*Excellent program. I really like it.

\*I could not be more pleased to have been a part of this process. She was great before I met her…character and skills. Would love to do it again!

\*I continue to appreciate the CSB/SJU teaching program. Professionalism, knowledge, and enthusiasm always shine through. Thank you for sharing \_\_\_\_\_\_ with me. I know I also improved my teaching through this experience. I look forward to working with you again soon!

\*My student teacher was an exceptional student teacher…very well prepared and professional. Supervising her was a privilege.

\*Lesson plans are organized and well taught. Discussions with small groups is a strong area.

Fabulous. Loved it!

\*This was the first time I have been a cooperating teacher. Susan was great to work with and the packet of information was very helpful. I especially liked the rubrics for evaluations.

\*I really enjoy having a student teacher from St. John’s/St. Ben’s. They are always very motivated and prepared.

\*Great program! I love having CSB student teachers.

\*I am impressed with the level of preparation my student teacher had from CSB. Also, Marsha Elg was very competent and pleasant to work with.