FIELD EXPERIENCES ADVISORY BOARD (FXAB)

WHY FXAB

Below, the recruitment letter to potential members, sent by the Director of Field Experiences, explains why the FXAB was established and the rational for a diverse membership:

Hello [potential member],

Now is the time. We are embarking on a new chapter in the College of Education. I want to reconfigure the Office of Field Experiences by expanding its reach through the creation of the Field Experience Advisory Board. This board will enhance the collaboration between our College and school partners as well as increase communications and coordination within our College.

We have the opportunity to become a top tier College and that’s why the Field Experience Advisory Board (FXAB) is being established. The FXAB will have a vital role in determining the outcome of the next accreditation and setting the standard for all other Universities to follow. Why settle for just the gold standard – the best available under reasonable conditions… Let’s raise the bar and take charge of our destiny, ensuring our students have the best field experiences under the best conditions. The platinum standard!

Please accept this personal invitation to be a FXAB member! We are recruiting members with certain professional alliances and diverse experiences and backgrounds – talent just like you! Members will include colleagues from each of these groups: IETP, Secondary, HDSF, SUPER, Educational Leadership, Counseling, Student Advisement, student representative, other UNR college, TMCC, and WCSD. You are being recruited because of your specific involvement with the one of these groups.

In the fall, the FXAB will design a protocol for evaluating practicum experiences using relevant standards from CAEP (NCATE), INTASC, CACREP, NAEYC, NCFR, NBPTS, Nat’l Academy of Sciences 2010 report, Next Generation Science Standards, and the NCATE Accreditation Action Report (May 2013). In the spring, the evaluation protocol will be implemented with the findings and recommendations submitted to the dean.

Our first meeting will be early September 2013. We anticipate more than one meeting this fall; however, once the protocol has been designed, we would likely meet just one time per semester thereafter with an annual report complete every May.

I am personally emailing you because I know you are a key player in the College of Education. Please let me know as soon as you can, no later than August 22nd, if you accept this invitation to be a FXAB member.

Thank you!
Dr. Mary L. Sedgwick, Director of Field Experiences
**FXAB MEMBERS**

The Director of Field Experiences also is the FXAB director. The FXAB was purposeful comprise of a diverse membership who share a common tie to the director and the Office of Field Experiences. The following are the FXAB members and the director’s rationale for their recruitment:

1. **MELISSA BURNHAM**: COE faculty in early childhood and human development and family studies programs, COE integrated elementary teaching program committee member and convener, and serves on the Nevada Professional Standards Commission.
   a. **JOHN CANNON** will replace Melissa Burnham: COE faculty in elementary education program, heavily involved in STEM education, and frequently engages in staff development for p-12 teachers.

2. **PAM ELGES**: Truckee Community College Education Department instructor overseeing field experiences, Washoe County School District trainer for Volunteer Serves, involved in family and community engagement programs, and received her doctorate from UNR COE.

3. **MARGARET FERRARA**: COE faculty in secondary education program, secondary teaching program committee convener, involved in service learning, member of the school-university partners for educational research committee (SUPER).

4. **KELLIE GEORGE**: represents the business community, United Federal Credit Union business and community liaison, involved in k-12 financial literacy initiative, partners with the local retired teacher’s association to support p-16 education, business partner for the Office of Field Experiences, and parent.

5. **TOM HARRISON**: COE associate dean overseeing the teaching preparation programs and Office of Field Experiences, UNR faculty and department leader in the counseling program, and oversees accreditation.

6. **GUS HILL**: COE professor is educational leadership, involved in agriculture field experiences, and associated with numerous school administrators.

7. **NANCY HORVATH**: COE undergraduate advisor, deals with recruitment and retention, and international experiences.

8. **BOB IVES**: COE faculty in special education, international experiences including field experiences in Romania, and convener of school-university partners for educational research committee (SUPER).

9. **JENNY MAHON**: COE faculty in the secondary program, involved in a UNR programs that brings teachers from other countries to UNR, international experiences including field experiences, and intercultural diversity.

10. **COLLEEN PARKYN**: parent, active school and community volunteer, personally associated with many educators, and 19 years’ experience in the Office of Field Experiences.
11. AMY POETSCHAT: faculty in human development and family studies program, and oversees field experiences in that program.

12. JANET PULLEYN: Washoe County School District Coordinator of Staffing and University Partnerships, coordinates local practicum and intern placements, former middle school teacher and high school administrator, and UNR doctorate in educational leadership.

13. HOWARD ROSENBERG: Washoe County Board of Education member, UNR faculty in College of Liberal Arts in the art department, actively involved with internship program, former Board of Regents member, and former teacher.

14. GEORGIA TACHOIRES: retired teacher 4th through 12th grades in multiple subjects, active member of the Washoe Retired Teacher’s Association, intern supervisor for 4 different universities including UNR, executive supervisor for COE Office of Field Experiences, and COE specialist certificate in educational leadership.

15. COLLETTE WITT: student in the secondary teaching program and president of the COE student organization known as the UofNEA.

MEETINGS

FXAB met two times in fall 2012. Agenda items were: (1) parochial and private school field experience placements and (2) supervision of field experiences.

1. PAROCHIAL AND PRIVATE SCHOOL FIELD EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

The FXAB reached consensus allowing field experience placements in parochial and private schools. If the delivery model of these schools differs substantially from traditional public school, then the placement shall be split such that the candidate gains experience in both settings.

Regarding a concern one FXAB member had about the motives of parochial and private school personnel requesting a practicum or intern, the Director of Field Experiences responded: Requests for parochial school placements occur a couple times per year and are generated by individual students. Parochial school personnel often contact me on behalf of a particular student. Such was the case presented at our meeting. Hosting a student teacher is far from free help. It is time intensive and inspiring. In my many years as director (over a baker’s dozen now), I have always viewed the motivations for such requests, whether from students or parochial schools, as honorable.

Though the FXAB concurred that placement in a parochial school was fine, it was suggested that the Director of Field Experiences obtain a legal opinion. Following is a summary of a conversation between the Director of Field Experiences and the UNR Assistant General Counsel, Melissa Barnard about placing a student teacher at a parochial school:

There is no case law in Nevada or the 9th Circuit pertaining to placing student teachers at a parochial school; however, many states are following the ruling of the 8th Circuit: No student
teaching placement may advance or inhibit religion. Secular courses are intertwined with the mission of the parochial school and this permeation cannot be separated.

Additionally, the UNR Assistant General Counsel recommends against a case by case determination for parochial school placements because (a) that puts UNR in a position of judging how much religion is too much and (b) such a judgment may appear that UNR is advancing one religion over another.

A student teacher’s desire for a parochial school placement is beside the point. The fact that 74% of student teachers feel such a placement is ok (survey results from 4 semesters) is irrelevant.

Surprisingly, paying the lead teacher for mentoring the student teacher is not at issue because the public institution, UNR, does not financially contribute to the school but rather compensates the individual.

The College of Education policy was revised as follows: student teachers may not be placed at parochial schools. On the subject of student teaching in a private school, this is fine. Further, this policy applies to all College of Education field experiences.

2. **SUPERVISION OF FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Statement of problem: College of Education field experiences need to be supervised. Only some course syllabi include statements about supervision so the perception is that some field experiences are not supervised when in fact they are. Different interpretations and models of supervision exist. The accrediting agencies do not define supervision yet they require field experiences to be supervised.

FXAB reached consensus on a ‘broad’ definition for field experience supervision: to observe, gather data, evaluate and guide an individual or group of individuals to facilitate the application of learned knowledge. Further, the FXAB concluded that:

- Supervision may be delegated – for example: to an internal person such as a graduate assistant or even an external person where the field experience is hosted such as a teacher or agency director.
- Supervision may be direct, focusing on the candidate [student]. Supervision may be indirect, focusing on an activity, assignment or task. Indirect and direct supervision may be used concurrently.
- Supervision may differ depending on the number of candidates to be supervised (large numbers versus small numbers) and school locations (at the same school verses at various schools).
- Supervision may differ among courses, depending on the level of the candidate or student and the purpose of the field experience.
- All courses with field experiences shall be required to include a statement about supervision in the syllabus.