Standard 5. Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance; they also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

1. How does the unit ensure that its professional education faculty contributes to the preparation of effective educators? [maximum of three pages]

Faculty members in the PEU are distinguished educators who provide meaningful contributions to the professional education community. They are accomplished teachers, principals, and researchers with earned doctorates or exceptional expertise that qualifies them for their assignment. For Fall 2010, the Unit was comprised of 87 members: 55 full-time and 32 adjunct faculty members. Within the Unit, 35 members have earned doctorates in subjects that are specific to the education curriculum within the areas of curriculum and instruction, elementary education, exceptional student education, physical education, educational leadership, or educational research. Many of the Unit’s ten full professors assume primary leadership responsibilities ensuring governance, resources, and personnel are provided for the teacher preparation unit. The Unit’s remaining tenured and tenure earning faculty (20) along with its qualified instructors and adjuncts provide research, curriculum expertise, and support to assure quality programming for candidates.

The instructional practices of Unit faculty members represent the art and science of teaching. Each faculty member is expected to maintain pedagogical and content currency that demonstrates best professional teaching practices in instruction. To accomplish currency, faculty members practice continued professional development as a lifelong learner by attending conferences and workshops. Annually, faculty members report their recency of experience by identifying ways they contributed to the educational community. The report includes ways that the faculty member uses the information gained from the experience in his or her teaching or research.

Faculty members model best professional practices in teaching by using benchmark standards, serving as mentors, and providing remediation for those in need. Faculty design curriculum [KNOWLEDGE] based on professional, state, and institutional standards and thus, model the process for FLDOE’s Next Generation Sunshine State Standards used by our candidates in Florida’s classrooms [ACTION]. Faculty members serve as Lead Instructors by developing the course curriculum and serving as mentors to others who teach the course [LEADERSHIP]. Additionally, faculty members use assessments to monitor candidate progress on required standards and provide remediation and additional support through the Unit’s Response to Intervention (RtI) process.

The University of West Florida (UWF) is a comprehensive regional university. As such, scholarly activities are defined with the educational, cultural, and economic development of the region in mind (University of West Florida Strategic Priorities and Measurable Achievements 2008-2012, p.3). However, it is clear that a regional comprehensive university will ultimately impact a wider area than its immediate region. The Boyer (1997) model of scholarship suggests that faculty engage in scholarly activities that are recognized as meeting necessary standards for tenure and promotion at UWF. To this end, faculty members of the PEU engage in scholarly
activities that enable them to both enhance and inform their teaching. By doing so, faculty within the PEU have gained recognition for excellence while supporting the missions of the Unit and the University.

Faculty research and scholarly activity are aligned with teaching, learning, and their fields of specialization. As educational researchers, the professional education faculty is actively engaged in contributing to the literature and professional practices in their specialty areas. Faculty members in tenure-track positions conduct research that covers a wide range of topics. Evidence is found in publications such as books, book chapters, and articles in refereed journals, funded grant activities, and presentations at national and state conferences. In addition, faculty members serve as journal editors and on research committees of professional organizations.

Consistent with the mission of a comprehensive regional university (Boyer 1997), UWF developed a strategic focus of investing in people (p. 10 of UWF’s Strategic Priorities and Measurable Achievements 2008-2012). To this end, service is of critical importance. Indeed, when research is used to help provide answers to pressing issues within society, it must be considered not only service but an application of scholarly work. This scholarly service is an outgrowth of the scholarly activities that are expected within UWF’s PEU. This very same service is mandated as an integral component of UWF as evidenced by its inclusion in the criteria to be met by Unit faculty for tenure and promotion.

The faculty is actively involved in service to the educational community through volunteer efforts, mentoring, direct service and collaboration with P-12 school sites. Dr. Craig Jones and his students have been leaders in the development of an Early Childhood Center on the UWF campus. Dr. Kathleen Heubach and her students provided over 43,900 hours of tutoring instruction to 1,800 students in the four-county area through the Supplemental Education Services grant. Dr. Leasha Barry established an office for autistic learners. Drs. Keith and Stacie Whinnery developed an international training and direct service effort for MOVE International, which has provided remarkable improvements in the mobility of persons with severe physical mobility issues. Dr. Susie Jans-Thomas focuses on multi-cultural and diversity through years of research on the civil rights era photographing thousands of images of the vanishing social history of African Americans in Mississippi. The region, state, and nation have benefited from the talents of our faculty.

The evaluation of full and part-time faculty is based on the PEUs mission, the College and Departmental/School Bylaws, individualized Faculty Development Plans, and student evaluations. The process begins early in the fall semester. Each faculty member submits teaching [KNOWLEDGE], scholarship [ACTION], and service [LEADERSHIP] goals for the coming year. The faculty member meets with the Chair/Director to review the goals and develop a strategic plan to accomplish the identified goals. At the end of the academic year, each faculty submits Statements of Contributions that outlines the accomplishments of the teaching, scholarship and service goals along with any supporting documentation. The Chair/Director uses these statements and documentation to evaluate the performance of each faculty member. The faculty and Chair/Director then discuss the evaluation and future directions. The evaluation is forwarded to the Dean who writes evaluation letters based on the Statement of Contributions and the chair’s evaluation. The evaluation process is used systematically to improve the teaching, scholarship, and service of the faculty. Evaluations for 2010 rate 96% of faculty as meeting or exceeding expectations and 4% not meeting expectations. Faculty members not making adequate
progress are assigned a mentor. Mentors work with the faculty member providing guidance as needed and periodic updates to the Chair/Director.

Adjunct faculty members and graduate teaching assistants are evaluated using the student evaluations and recommendations from the Lead Instructor. Together, the student evaluations and Lead Instructor evaluation inform the Chair/Director regarding performance of the adjunct faculty member. At the completion of each semester, the Chair/Director completes an adjunct rehire document and submits it to the University SACS credentials database forming the basis for eligibility for continued employment. Fall 2010 data reveal that 96% of our adjuncts are eligible for rehire.

The Unit’s evaluation system includes annual comprehensive reviews of the faculty member’s teaching, scholarly activity, and service at the community, professional, and institutional levels. Areas needing improvement are addressed in the individual Faculty Development Plan.

A variety of professional development opportunities are offered by the School/Department, Unit, College, and University for the purpose of increasing skills and enhancing the expertise of faculty members. Unit faculty have attended workshops addressing technology integration, instruction, distance learning strategies and techniques, ESOL workshops, Clinical Education Training, curriculum mapping, and rubric development.

A specific focus for the Unit is Quality Matters (QM). QM is a professional development opportunity offered by the UWF Academic Technology Center (ATC) in direct response to faculty requests to provide excellence in online learning. The ATC responded with a Quality Matters model that is a nationally recognized, peer review process tied to a literature-based rubric for quality online courses. Many of our faculty participated and courses are recognized as national QM courses.

2. Continuous Improvement [maximum of three pages]
   • Briefly summarize the most significant changes related to Standard 5 that have led to continuous improvement. (If no significant changes related to this standard have occurred since the previous visit, indicate “None” in this section.)

   Three significant changes in Standard 5 have led to continuous improvement: 1) development of the Faculty Advancement Plan, 2) Quality Matters Professional Development program, and 3) continued culture of academic excellence.

1. Faculty Advancement Plan
   School/Department Tenure and Promotion guidelines were revised to include a Faculty Advancement Plan. The Faculty Advancement Plan supports faculty members in their quest to pursue tenure and/or promotion. This effort is consistent with the seamless system that assures continuous assessment, if needed supports and self and administrative integration for faculty improvement and advancement. This focus has advantages for all major stakeholders. Faculty members have an understanding that administration understands their importance and will make commitments of resources to enable faculty to realize their Advancement Plan Goals. Faculty members are also aware that their
annual evaluations are aligned with their plan and that these evaluations will provide the foundation for needed support for tenure and promotion. In 2005 a Taskforce on Promotion and Tenure was formed. This group consisted of faculty and administration and was charged by the Provost to develop needed revisions of the promotion and tenure process. One of the main tenets of the guidelines was that a strong interconnectivity exist among all levels of faculty assessment. Recommendations included that all levels of assessment assure that the faculty member was assessed on criteria that were consistent across measures. It is this foundation that assures that there is a continuity that will lead to improvement in all aspects of the individual’s performance in the integrated areas of Teaching, Scholarly Activity and Service. Not only does this help to assure a fair and equitable assessment of the faculty member it enables the teacher candidate to have access to the best possible instruction and development that the PEU tenure eligible faculty member may provide. Additionally the Faculty Achievement Plan allows administrators to allocate development dollars based upon targeted needs that are consistent with our teacher-training mission.

2. Quality Matters

Currently 76% of the FTE that is generated in the School of Education (SoE) comes from online courses. Consistent with this reality and the geographic and demographic constraints that the SoE must meet it is essential that we be able to expand our online offerings. Faculty and administration understand and are united in affirming that this expansion will be based upon a recognized commitment to excellence. The PEU recognizes the Guidelines for Quality Distance Learning developed by the Academic Technology Center as a quality framework for all distance learning at UWF. Additionally, the Dean appointed a COPS Distance Learning Task Force (2010-11) to recommend ongoing efforts to maintain quality for distance learning courses and programs throughout the college. To assure this basic value of course quality we have identified Quality Matters as the structure that will provide the essential components of excellent curriculum development and maintenance. QM is a structured rubric of online components that are necessary in the development of quality programming in an online environment. In the past nine months (June 2010), the SoE has made a major commitment to the certification of each course within each of our Teacher Education Programs. To date this has resulted in the completion of course assessments using the Quality Matters Rubric and a Dean’s funded training opportunity Summer 2010 for SoE faculty to apply the rubric and the peer review process to their courses. Funding will be available again for Summer 2011. From this initial step the foundation for course modification will be structured. While placing no restraints on content (in compliance with academic freedom) the structure will assure that are students receive course instruction that is consistent with accepted best online instructional practice. The QM structure will be the foundation for our continuous improvement plans as well as ongoing monitoring of student satisfaction and course completions completed annually by the Online Campus. It is our intention to complete all course reviews by the end of academic year 2011/2012 and modifications by the end of academic year 2012/2013.
3. **Academic Excellence**  
There is a culture in the education unit that has persisted for many years. We have been known for both excellence in preparation as well as attention to the individual needs of our students. The geographical population limitations of our region have required that we meet state mandated enrollment targets through strategies other than face-to-face instruction. This has resulted in the investment of resources in technology that enhances the quality and accountability of our program. Faculty members receive consistent support for their course development and instructional activities through a nationally recognized center, The Academic Technology Center. Programming is designed to provide additional student engagement through face-to-face accommodations as well as on-demand access to enhancement materials. Our faculty is also cognizant of the increased need to provide structure to our online offerings. To this end, we judiciously promote multiple opportunities to accomplish the student learning outcomes.