

## Quality I: Moral and Ethical Dimensions of the Learning Community

**Statement of Distinction:** An exceptional AILACTE institution views teaching as a moral activity. Preservice teachers are rooted in moral and ethical positions that are influenced by multiple views. The institution is one that creates an intellectually safe environment that promotes dignity and respect for all people within the academic community. The institutional ethos is communicated through its people, policies, and programs.

Working Definitions:

*Moral* incorporates a “way of acting in relationship to others and situations; the sense of taking responsibility for one’s actions as an individual in the professional environment.”

*Ethical* involves consideration of ideas such as “the good life” and “what is good and evil.”

*Faculty* includes all instructors and administrators who work in the initial teacher education program.

*Students* are candidates in the initial teacher education program.

### A. A. Category: Culture/Institution

1. The conceptual framework for the initial teacher education program and program requirements is clearly articulated, dynamic and reflects a moral and ethical stance. *The institution’s stated policies articulate moral goals and its programs and experiences embody those goals. A church-related institution illustrates in its conceptual framework its religious grounding.*
2. The program operates from a published set of policies and procedures that assures fairness and consistency with the defined mission statement/conceptual framework of the institution. *The program has a written policy for continuation in student teaching that includes consistent monitoring and support for problematic experiences. All students have access to policies, procedures and support resources that will allow them equal opportunity to finish the program successfully.*
3. The institution demonstrates its support for program goals by providing resources. *The teacher education program is equipped with computer technology for students that is upgraded and compatible with P-12 schools. Funds are allocated for a program goal of team teaching interdisciplinary courses.*
4. All faculty members have a formal voice regarding the program. *The program is developed through a collaborative effort of all faculty members and is based on consensus. Faculty meetings include times for new ideas and research and suggestions for program change to be presented by any faculty member.*
5. The program and institution assure opportunities for student participation in the organization, decision-making and curriculum of the program. *A field experience was changed based on input from students during a systematic assessment of that experience. Students serve on the education advisory committee.*
6. The institution strongly mentors candidates from their entry into the institution until they complete the teacher education program and beyond. *There is a coherent, fair and thorough advising system. The institution has a listserv for education conversation and problem solving by graduates and faculty members.*
7. The program is viewed by outsiders as having integrity and making positive contributions to the wider community. *The local community recognizes the program for*

*bringing Native American community members to campus to help with a literacy curriculum. Local school hiring personnel recognize the program graduates for their ability to and willingness to work in “troubled” schools.*

## **B. B. Category: Curriculum/Programs**

1. The curriculum provides a transition for students to move from having moral and ethical knowledge to personal internalization of that knowledge to serve as a basis for decision-making regarding teaching dilemmas. *Students are required to analyze their values, beliefs and biases and to view issues from other points of view. Actual situations of teachers who have suspended licenses are used as case studies for students to explore ethical/moral implications of teachers’ actions.*
2. The program and its curriculum support teaching as a moral and ethical act. *Graduates make educational decisions and take educational actions based on moral and ethical considerations. Course and program assessment of students includes issues/areas of moral and ethical considerations.*
3. The program and its curriculum are dynamic, based on input from education stakeholders, and change is viewed as positive and essential. *The program monitors changes in P-12, national standards, and other pertinent areas, and adjusts the program accordingly. Graduates value and solicit the input of peers, parents and their P-12 students in curricular and programmatic decisions.*
4. The program and its curriculum support students’ learning to work constructively and honestly in difficult interpersonal situations. *Faculty members use role-playing and case studies to help students practice their interpersonal skills. Students have a designated weekly group meeting, facilitated by faculty members and students, to work on issues within the cohort group.*
5. The program draws upon moral and philosophical resources outside of “self” to help students develop their own explicit moral and ethical frameworks. *The program works with faculty members from philosophy or religious studies to choose appropriate readings for education courses. The program requires service-learning experiences that include examination of the larger cultural context in which moral and ethical teaching decisions are made.*
6. Students are taught ways of learning and living that support self-inquiry, self-assessment and monitoring of their own behavior. *As standard supervisory practice, before the supervisor gives input after a student teaching observation, students are asked to give their assessment of their work, stating what they did well and what they need to improve. Students are given the choice of topics in every one of their education courses for at least one assignment.*

## **C. Category: Faculty**

1. The classroom climate created by faculty members is learner centered; nurturing yet challenging; safe, yet allowing for exploration of difficult issues and risk-taking. *Faculty members have articulated guidelines for class discussions that encourage students to tackle controversial topics and to explore and challenge theirs and others’ beliefs and ideas in safe ways. Students participate in carefully created education internships while living in a culture different from their own.*

2. The faculty members model ethical and moral decision-making in their relationship with students, both inside and outside the classroom. *Faculty members demonstrate respect, efficacy, and reflection, and engage students in discussions about their process of thinking and acting. As faculty members discuss with students actions taken by the state department of public instruction, they include moral and ethical considerations.*
3. Established faculty members mentor and inform new colleagues about the moral, ethical and community dimensions of the program. *New faculty members are assigned mentors or team teachers during the first year they are working in the program. Time is allotted in program faculty meetings for new faculty members to ask questions about the philosophical and moral/ethical basis of the program.*
4. The faculty takes an active interest in the moral, ethical and community dimensions of education and teacher preparation. *Faculty members attend conferences or sessions or read materials that focus on moral and ethical development or issues. Faculty members attend classes or talk with colleagues in philosophy, religious studies, or sociology to learn about how those disciplines help students learn about community-building or moral and ethical decision-making.*