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SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY RECEIVES HIGHEST SEAL OF APPROVAL FROM INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

NEWARK, Del. (October 30, 2023) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) announced today that Sam Houston State University (SHSU) in Texas has earned the organization’s highest institutional honor: ILA National Recognition With Distinction.

SHSU’s master’s program in reading and language arts, with a reading specialist certification, was honored earlier this year with ILA National Recognition for meeting the rigorous standards set forth in ILA’s [Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals](#). This advancement to National Recognition With Distinction signifies that the university *exceeds* those standards, firmly placing the institution among the best literacy professional preparation programs in the United States.

National Recognition is a prestigious program designed to set institutions of higher learning apart. A university that has received National Recognition has undergone a rigorous review process to determine if it aligns with ILA’s high benchmarks used to determine outstanding licensure, certificate and endorsement programs for literacy specialists and elementary/intermediate classroom teachers.

SHSU joins just four others that have earned the distinction status: Grambling State University, University of North Georgia, The University of Texas at San Antonio and West Virginia University.

“The Sam Houston Program demonstrates thorough alignment to and application of the ILA Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals throughout program instruction, course work, key assessments and the program’s valuable and strong field experiences,” the National Recognition reviewers wrote in their final report.

“Truly,” the report continued, “the program has demonstrated consistency in creating reflective practitioners and literacy leaders who continue to influence their field and profession post-graduation through involvement, research and presentations within ILA and other relevant organizations on local, state and national levels.”

Patricia Gonzales Durham, associate professor at SHSU and the graduate program coordinator of the master’s program, said their faculty, students and staff have long known SHSU has a stellar program (in fact, graduates have a long history of a 100% pass rate on the Texas Reading Specialist Exam). However, she said, “the validation of receiving ILA National Recognition With Distinction builds upon our reputation and clearly displays to prospective students and other stakeholders that SHSU is exceeding expectations when it comes to preparing today’s teachers for tomorrow’s needs.”

For more information on ILA’s National Recognition program, visit literacyworldwide.org/natrec.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization of literacy educators, researchers and experts spanning 112 countries. For more than 65 years, ILA has set the

standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated, connecting research and practice to improve the quality of literacy learning across the globe. Through its Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, ILA provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, which include three peer-reviewed and edited journals—The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy and Reading Research Quarterly. Learn more at literacyworldwide.org.

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