The BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE is designed to share the actions of the Unit Accreditation Board and refinements of NCATE’s review process. It is disseminated at the start of onsite visits in the fall and spring. Issues and changes reported here should be reviewed by team members during their first team meeting.
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BOARD UPDATES

Guidelines for P-12 School Visit Available for Fall 2010

As mentioned in the Spring 2010 BOE Update, the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) believes that critical information can be gleaned from visits to the P-12 schools in which education candidates complete their field work. Those visits should provide valuable data for determining whether standards are met. The guidelines provide specific types of evidence to gather during the P-12 school visit and can be found both in AIMS under the BOE Resources and on NCATE’s website at http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/Guidelines%20for%20P12%20Visits.doc.

The Full Picture of an Education Unit

The Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) recently requested that BOE chairs respond whenever an institution submits a rejoinder. The percentage of responses to rejoinders was 66 percent in spring and fall of 2009 and fell to 55 percent in spring 2010. The UAB finds chairs’ responses very helpful in order to get a full picture of how the unit is meeting standards. Without a response to the rejoinder, the UAB is left with only one side of what could be a deciding issue. In many cases the team chair’s response can be as important as the BOE report. When the institution agrees with the BOE report in the rejoinder, or when the chair agrees with the rejoinder, a statement acknowledging the rejoinder is important as well.

Consolidation of NCATE and TEAC

In May and June of 2008 the NCATE Executive Board and TEAC Board approved a motion to collaborate on a plan for the consolidation of the two organizations into a single accrediting agency. The Design Team included equal representatives from both accreditors, including three members of the NCATE boards (Rachelle Bruno, Calvin Johnson, and Blake West), Janice Poda of the South Carolina Department of Education, James Cibulka, and Donna Gollnick. The Design Team has now completed the penultimate draft of a proposal for presentation to the respective boards in October. It can be accessed from NCATE’s home page at www.ncate.org.

The proposal recommends the creation of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The new organization would have three common standards that incorporate NCATE’s current six unit standards and the TEAC principles. It proposes four accreditation options, including NCATE’s continuous improvement and transformation initiative options plus two options that have been developed by TEAC. State options for program approval have been expanded to three options that include the current SPA review for national recognition, the program review by states, and a new option for CAEP’s review of programs that would require assessments of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and student learning.

The proposal outlines a new governance structure that includes a CAEP Board of Directors, two accrediting commissions, and a number of committees. The current Unit Accreditation Board would become one of the Commissions; TEAC’s Accreditation Board would become the other Commission. One Commission would oversee the two options that are currently NCATE’s options; the other Commission would oversee the other two options. The current NCATE stakeholders would nominate members to serve on the CAEP Board of Directors, the Commissions, and the Committees. A Nominating Committee would ensure that all stakeholders have at least one representative in the system. The bylaws, which are attached to the proposal, provide the details about the proposed governance system.
How will the Board of Examiners fit into CAEP? First, the creation and establishment of CAEP will require a two-year transition period in which the organizational and structural details will be developed. During this transition period, NCATE and TEAC will continue to conduct visits and make accreditation decisions independently. When the new Commissions begin their work, the Commission managing the continuous improvement and transformation initiative options will continue to operate much as the current UAB does, at least for the first few years. Teams to conduct offsite meetings and onsite visits will continue to be drawn from the Board of Examiners. Any changes in the nominations process and training of new BOE members will be developed by the new Commission in its early years of existence.

The Design Team will be reviewing the feedback on the proposal at its meeting on September 26-28 as it finalizes the proposal and recommendation to the NCATE Executive Board and TEAC Board of Directors. The two boards will vote on the recommendation when they meet in Washington, DC, on October 22.

**REDESIGN UPDATE**

**Offsite Meetings for Pilot Visits**

The Offsite BOE Team is generally comprised of 6-7 members plus a state consultant and NCATE staff member. The team chair of the offsite meeting also chairs the onsite visit with as many of the other offsite team members as possible. If you accept an invitation to serve on a pilot continuous improvement or transformation initiative visit, you will also be asked to join the Offsite Team and will become a member of that team if you are available on the day of the offsite meeting. Because the size of the Onsite Team is usually 3-5 members, additional BOE members are asked to join the offsite meeting.

Prior to the electronic offsite meeting, the team members review the IR and the exhibits. They are also expected to write their preliminary findings for the standard(s) that they have been assigned in the BOE Offsite Feedback Report template, which includes the following sections for each standard:

1. Statement about the evidence
2. Progress toward meeting the target level on the standard
3. Feedback on correcting previous areas for improvement
4. Areas of concern related to continuing to meet the standard
5. Evidence for the Onsite Team to validate during the onsite visit

Samples of the BOE Offsite Feedback Report are available in the “Resources” section of AIMS and on NCATE’s website.

During the electronic offsite meeting, each team member reviews the evidence examined for his/her standard and discusses previous areas for improvement (AFIs), other areas of concern that could result in an AFI at the onsite visit, and evidence that needs to be validated during the onsite visit. Evidence that supports each element of a standard should be discussed with the offsite team. Team members have reported that the offsite meeting is similar to team meetings on Saturday and Sunday of a regular NCATE visit. The NCATE staff member edits the report as offsite team members discuss the findings.

Following the offsite meeting, the NCATE staff member finishes editing the report for one more review by the offsite team. After the team chair finalizes the BOE Offsite Feedback Report, the institution can access it in its AIMS workspace. The institution prepares an IR Addendum, which is submitted
1-2 months before the onsite visit. The addendum responds to areas of concern raised in the BOE Offsite Feedback Report. During the previsit, which is generally conducted electronically, the BOE and state chairs clarify issues raised in the BOE Offsite Feedback Report. The BOE Offsite Feedback Report, the IR Addendum and updated exhibits help the Onsite Team focus its visit to address any areas of concern raised and validate that standards continue to be met.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Program Review Recognition Decisions

To accurately review National Recognition Reports on programs for Standard 1, BOE members should have a good understanding of the possible decisions Program Reviewers can make. Reviewers have four options when making a final decision on a program: National Recognition, National Recognition with Conditions, Further Development Required, and Recognized with Probation. Explanations of each of the possible decisions and the action taken after the decision are below.

National Recognition
• The program substantially meets standards.
• No further submission is required; program will receive full national recognition when the unit receives accreditation.
• Program will be listed on the NCATE website as Nationally Recognized if the unit is already accredited. If the unit is not accredited the program will be listed as Nationally Recognized pending unit accreditation.

National Recognition with Conditions
• The program generally meets standards; however a “Response to Conditions” report must be submitted within 18 months to remove the conditions. Conditions could include one or more of the following:
  • Insufficient data to determine if standards are met.
  • Insufficient alignment among standards or scoring assessments or scoring guides.
  • Lack of quality in some assessments or scoring guides.
  • An insufficient number of SPA standards met.
  • The NCATE requirement for an 80 percent pass rate on state licensure tests not met.
• The program has up to two opportunities within 18-months after the decision to remove the conditions. If the program is unsuccessful after the 18 month deadline, the program status will be changed to Not Nationally Recognized.
• The program is listed on the NCATE website as Nationally Recognized until it achieves National Recognition or its status is changed to Not Nationally Recognized, in which case the program will be removed from the list on the website.

The following decisions are applied when a program has not documented that it is substantially meeting standards:

Further Development Required (used for programs that are going through the NCATE program review process for the first time):
• The standards that are not met are critical to a quality program and more than a few in number OR are few in number but so fundamentally important that recognition is not appropriate.
• The program will have up to two opportunities within the 12 to 14 months after the first decision to attain National Recognition or National Recognition with Conditions. If the program is unsuccessful, the program status will be changed to Not Nationally Recognized.
Recognized with Probation (Used for programs that received National Recognition during the previous review cycle. This decision means the program will not be in jeopardy of losing its recognition status immediately after their first review in a cycle.):

- The standards that are not met are critical to a quality program and more than a few in number OR are few in number but so fundamentally important that recognition is not appropriate. To remove probation, the unit may submit a revised program report addressing unmet standards within 12 to 14 months, or the unit may submit a new program report for national recognition within 12 to 14 months.

- The program will have up to two opportunities within the 12 to 14 months after the first decision to attain National Recognition or National Recognition with Conditions. If the program is unsuccessful, the program status will be changed to Not Nationally Recognized. The program is listed on the NCATE website as Nationally Recognized (based on its prior review) until the end of the semester in which the UAB makes an accreditation decision for the Unit. At that point, the decision will be changed to Not Nationally Recognized and the program will be removed from the website.

BOE VISITS

New Tutorials Available for BOE

Although NCATE staff will continue to offer web seminars that update BOE members on accreditation policies and procedures each semester, new archived web seminars are being developed as references for BOE members. These archived sessions can be viewed on a 24/7 schedule and accessed as needed to be reminded of critical components of a BOE member’s work. The following four tutorials are under development now and should be available in early October:

Offsite BOE Meetings for the Continuous Improvement Option (Pilots)

1. BOE Members: Preparing for an offsite BOE team meeting, including writing the assigned section of the Offsite BOE Report before the meeting
2. BOE Team Chairs: Preparing for and conducting the offsite BOE team meeting.

Writing the BOE Report in AIMS during the onsite visit

3. BOE Members: Step-by-step directions for writing the BOE report in AIMS.
4. BOE Team Chairs: Step-by-step directions for writing, editing, and submitting the BOE report in AIMS.

Options for Accreditation Visits

NCATE will continue to conduct the following types of visits in fall 2010 and through spring 2012: (1) regular continuing and first accreditation visits, (2) focused visits when at least one standard has not been met, (3) continuous improvement pilot visits for new and accredited institutions, and (4) transformation initiative pilot visits. A growing number of institutions have elected to pilot the continuous improvement visits with 19 scheduled in fall 2010 and 30 in spring 2011.

Some institutions with a regular visit may choose a shorter visit if all exhibits are available electronically. The Sunday through Wednesday regular visit should be negotiated with team chair(s) and the state consultant. Team members will be notified of the length of the visit through AIMS and routine chair communications.

NCATE will be updating the visit templates for these different types of visits to assist teams in planning and conducting visits. Descriptions of each type of visit are available in the institutional section of the website at http://www.ncate.org/subhomepage.asp?audience=institutions. If further clarification is needed, please contact the NCATE staff.
Date of Availability Form Updated

You may have noticed that you are receiving requests for your date availability and conflict of interest form several semesters in the future. Soon you will receive a request for visits in fall 2011. Under the redesigned accreditation system with the continuous improvement and transformation initiative options, NCATE staff will be assigning the onsite and offsite team 12-15 months before an onsite visit.

Beginning with fall 2012 visits, all institutions must submit their institutional reports (IRs) one year before the visit. A few pilot institutions are already submitting their IRs on this timeline. The offsite team meets electronically to review the IR and exhibits approximately two months after the IR is submitted to NCATE. This will enable the institution to receive feedback from the offsite team 8-9 months before the onsite visit.

Please promptly submit your date availability and conflict of interest form online from your AIMS workspace. You cannot be assigned to a team if you have not submitted the form in AIMS. If you cannot serve on a team during a specific semester, indicate that you are not available for any of the dates on the AIMS form. As your schedule changes, please update your availability in AIMS by asking Marva Atwater (Marva@ncate.org) to unlock your date availability form. Once the form has been unlocked you will be notified by Marva so that you can go into AIMS and adjust your availability dates.

USDE and CHEA Recognition Issues

Now that the National Commission on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) has been reconstituted with new members appointed by the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and U.S. Department of Education, the revised schedule for the review of accrediting organizations has been published. TEAC is scheduled for a review in spring 2011, followed by NCATE’s review in fall 2011. Both organizations will be reviewed under the new USDE regulations that reflect the requirements in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. The *Guidelines for Preparing/Reviewing Petitions and Compliance Reports* can be accessed at the USDE’s website at ed.gov.

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is currently finalizing its revised standards, but NCATE will be required to meet its 2006 standards for its 2011 review. The specialized accrediting community has expressed serious concerns about the proposed CHEA standards, especially with regard to (1) public information, (2) meeting with CHEA, and (3) accreditation and degree mills. Both the 2006 and revised standards are available on the CHEA website (www.chea.org).

If you follow higher education issues in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or the online *Inside Higher Education*, you will find numerous articles that suggest that accreditation agencies are being bashed by Congress and the U.S. Department of Education. The current requirements are very compliance oriented, forcing agencies to be more regulatory in nature. Issues on which consensus was not reached during recent negotiated rulemaking include (1) the definition of a credit hour, (2) state authorization, (3) misrepresentation, and (4) gainful employment.

Both the House and Senate education committees have also taken an interest in the loan default issues, particularly focusing on for-profit institutions. They worry that some postsecondary institutions are not adequately preparing college students for gainful employment in which they will earn high enough salaries to repay their student loans.
Although for-profit institutions are the primary targets of Congress at the moment, the non-profit sector worries that proposed regulations will soon apply to the non-profit sector as well.

As an active member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), NCATE is involved in following the USDE and CHEA developments. NCATE recently was a signator with 70 higher education and accrediting organizations on a letter from the American Council of Education that raised concerns about some of the issues described in the previous paragraph. This letter can be accessed at: http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=LettersGovt&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=37640.

BOE REPORT EVALUATIONS

The Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) has expanded the rating scale on which BOE reports are evaluated. Previous to the April 2010 meeting, the UAB used a 4-point scale. The Board is now using a 5-point scale similar to that used to evaluate BOE members, team chairs, and NCATE procedures.

The item that received the highest rating for reports written for fall 2009 visits was item 12, “the report made distinctions between initial and advanced programs,” with a rating of 3.95. Item 16, “the report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards,” received the second highest rating, 3.73. Other items with high ratings were Item 2, “the introduction and conceptual framework sections were sufficiently informative,” and Item 7, “the report drew on multiple sources of evidence.” Item 2 received a rating of 3.67 and Item 7, 3.62.

Items that received the lowest ratings were 9, “the areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated”; 10, “the report was internally consistent—i.e., it did not include contradictory information”; and 14, “the report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.” Item 9 received a rating of 3.03, Item 10 received a rating of 3.17, and Item 14 received a rating of 3.22.

Teams are reminded to write areas for improvement if the findings section indicates a concern. This will encourage the institution to address the issue in their rejoinder. Areas for improvement should clearly summarize the concern so the institution understands what actions they need to take. Sample areas for improvement statements are available on the NCATE website at http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/AreasforImprovementSamples.pdf.
UAB Evaluation of BOE Reports Items

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The report was adequately edited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The introduction and conceptual framework sections were sufficiently informative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The report incorporated evidence that adequately addressed each element of the standards, including elements related to advanced programs.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The report included a clear presentation and synthesis of evidence.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The report presented the evidence in enough detail to “make the case” for its findings in the narrative.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>The report included recommendations that were derived logically from the narrative and areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The report drew on multiple sources of evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The report stated when sufficient evidence was not available for review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The report was internally consistent—i.e., it did not include contradictory information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The report placed comments, concerns, and areas for improvement related to the conceptual framework under the appropriate standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The report made distinctions between initial and advanced programs.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>The report addressed the areas for improvement that were cited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The report adequately addressed previously cited weaknesses/areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>When the report cited strengths, they described work being done at the target level.</td>
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STAFF UPDATE

We are happy to announce that NCATE has welcomed several new members to the staff recently.

**Yi Huang, Vice President, Accreditation.**
Yi (pronounced “E”) joined NCATE from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), where she led and participated as a faculty member, policy advisor, and system designer on a wide range of educational change projects with teacher education programs, local school systems and state, regional, and national accreditation agencies. She has worked extensively in the fields of accreditation, assessment, technology, and arts infused education. She has served as an accreditation examiner at state and national levels and has chaired numerous Board of Examiner (BOE) teams for NCATE. Yi holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, an M.A. and two post baccalaureate certificates in Instructional Systems Development, Training Systems and Computer/Web-Based Training from UMBC, and a professional certificate in Integrated Planning and Assessment from the Society for College and University Planning. She will bring to NCATE a variety of skills that support transformation of educator preparation and NCATE’s redesign, such as assessment, technology, use of performance criteria to improve student achievement, and a focus on assessment and accountability of clinical experiences. Her email address is yi@ncate.org.

**Justin Codd, Webmaster.**
Justin's professional background is in information technology and graphic design. He has worked for the University of Baltimore, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, IKEA Direct, and a startup technology firm in Rockville, Maryland, planning, deploying, and supporting technology systems. Most recently Justin worked as a program recognition report editing consultant for NCATE while attending graduate school full time. As NCATE’s new Webmaster, he is leading the effort to redesign the NCATE website (ncate.org), using his writing, artistic, and technology skills. Justin holds an M.A. in Publications Design and a B.A. in English from the University of Baltimore, and an A.A.S in Computer Information Systems from Harford Community College (MD). Justin is a member of the Tech Team, working with Frank Huang. His email address is justin@ncate.org.

**Elizabeth Vilky, Accreditation Associate, Program Review.**
Elizabeth recently worked as a Policy Intern at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C. There she assisted the Secretariat of Education in researching information for the upcoming reauthorization of NCLB legislation. Elizabeth is an accomplished educator serving as vice principal, acting principal, math resource teacher, and third and fourth grade teacher. At NCATE Elizabeth will maintain, update, and check the accuracy of program data, and manage program report submissions. She will create reviewer teams, monitor reviewer progress, evaluate reviewer reports, and work with audit teams. Elizabeth holds master's degree in education from Catholic University of America (DC), and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Chowan College (NC). Elizabeth works with Margie Crutchfield. Her email address is elizabeth@ncate.org.

**Staff Moving On**

Robin Marion’s last day was August 13. Robin was an Accreditation Associate for Program Review. She is pursuing a master’s (her second) in Public Policy at American University in DC.